

Armenian Pro-Govt. Lawmaker Encouraged By Erdogan Statement

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — An Armenian pro-government parliamentarian on Monday, August 30, hailed Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s stated readiness to normalize Turkey’s relations with Armenia.

Opposition lawmakers insisted, by contrast, Ankara continues to set unacceptable preconditions for establishing diplomatic relations with Yerevan and opening the Turkish-Armenian border.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan spoke on Friday of “some positive signals” sent by Ankara of late, saying that his government is ready to reciprocate them.

Commenting on Pashinyan’s remark the following day, Erdogan said regional states should establish “good-neighborly relations” by recognizing each other’s territorial integrity and sovereignty.

“If Yerevan is ready to move in that direction Ankara could start working on a gradual normalization of relations with Armenia,” he reportedly told journalists.

In that context, Erdogan noted that Azerbaijan has expressed readiness to negotiate a comprehensive “peace treaty” with Armenia after last year’s war in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev complained in July that Yerevan is reluctant to sign such a treaty with Baku which would commit the two sides to recognizing each other’s territorial integrity. This would presumably mean a formal Armenian recognition of Azerbaijani sovereignty over Karabakh.

The Armenian government maintains that the disputed territory’s status should be determined only through renewed peace talks mediated by the United States, Russia and France.

The government did not officially react to Erdogan’s latest statement as of Monday afternoon. Still, Maria Karapetyan, a parliament deputy representing the ruling Civil Contract party, described it as a “positive message for discussing regional peace.”

“This is just an indirect exchange of public messages,” she told RFE/RL’s Armenian Service.

Karapetyan, who is a member of the parliament committee on foreign see STATEMENT, page 3



Liturgy Held in Armenian Holy Trinity Church in Malatya for the First Time Since Genocide of 1915

MALATYA, Turkey (Public Radio of Armenia) — For the first time in 106 years, Christians have been able to attend a religious service in the Armenian Holy Trinity Church in Malatya, Turkey. The church had been closed for community use since the genocide of 1915, ANF news reported. The liturgy on August 28 was presided over by the Archbishop Sahak Mashalyan, the Armenian Patriarch in Turkey.

The homily was delivered in Armenian and Turkish. About 150 participants came from different cities. Among them were members of the Syriac community.

Sahak Mashalyan, the Armenian Patriarch in Turkey and Grigoriyos Melki Urek, the Metropolitan Bishop of Adiyaman and Surrounding Provinces and the Deputy Patriarch, as well as the mayor and governor of Malatya, attended the opening ceremony.

“The opening of the Surp Yerrortutyun Church is a milestone for this region. For the Armenians of Malatya, this opening is a day of the feast,” said the Patriarch.

Also speaking at the ceremony, Nuran Gezdirici, the chair of the Malatya Philanthropic Armenians Culture and Solidarity Association said the reopening of the church is a great pride. She commemorated Hrant Dink, an Armenian journalist who was assassinated in 2007, noting that he had grown up “two streets away from the church.”

see LITURGY, page 4

Armenian FM Slams Azerbaijan On Moscow Trip

MOSCOW (RFE/RL) — Armenia’s new Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan accused Azerbaijan of not fully complying with a Russian-brokered agreement that stopped last year’s war in Nagorno-Karabakh as he met with his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov in Moscow on Tuesday, August 31.

Mirzoyan, who previously served as speaker of the Armenian parliament, flew to the Russian capital on what was his first visit abroad in his current capacity.

Lavrov emphasized this fact at the start of their talks. “This once again underscores the special character of our relations,” he said.



Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan (left) with his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov in Moscow, August 31, 2021

“Russia is a military-political ally and the main economic partner of Armenia,” Mirzoyan said for his part. “In this regard I would like to reaffirm the Armenian side’s readiness to continue forging relations with Russia on the basis of the 1997 Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance.”

Closer ties with Russia, he said, are even more important for Armenia after the six-week war with Azerbaijan.

“Peace and stability in the region is part of our strategy and we are prepared for active dialogue in this direction,” Mirzoyan went on. “But the situation in the region remains quite tense and that is greatly determined by Azerbaijan’s destructive policy. I want to point out that Baku is not fulfilling its obligations stemming from the trilateral statement of the leaders of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia adopted on November 9, 2020.”

see VISIT, page 2

George Bournoutian
(1943-2021)

Prolific and Dedicated Scholar

Prominent Armenian Studies scholar and Society for Armenian Studies member Prof. George Bournoutian died on August 22, 2021 in New Jersey. He was 77.

He was a retired professor of history and the author of more than 30 books, particularly focusing on Armenian history, Iran and the Caucasus.

see BOURNOUTIAN, page 8



STEPANAKERT
Hellenistic-Era Necropolis Discovered in Karabakh

Page 2



MONTREAL
Black Suede Studio Made Bold Decision to Move Production Out of China

Page 10



UTAH
Gev Manoukian: Our All-Around-Hip-Hopping Guy

Page 12





ARMENIA

NEWS from ARMENIA

Defense Minister Received US Ambassador

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — Armenian Defense Minister Arshak Karapetyan received on Monday, August 30, Ambassador of the United States to Armenia Lynne Tracy, accompanied by the newly-appointed Deputy Head of Mission William Laitinen and Military Attaché of the Embassy, Colonel Gregory Pipes.

As the press service at the ministry reported, Karapetyan congratulated Laitinen and Pipes for assuming their posts and wished new achievements for the benefit of developing Armenian-American cooperation.

Ambassador Tracy, in turn, congratulated Minister Karapetyan on assuming the post of the Minister of Defense, noting the appointment comes in a challenging period for Armenia.

Karapetyan presented the situation on the borders, speaking about periodic provocations by the Azerbaijani side. The minister reiterated the readiness of the Armenian side for peaceful settlement of issues, at the same time stressing decisiveness to protect the Armenian borders and their inviolability.

1000 Social Businesses to Be Established in Karabakh to Improve Economy

STEPANAKERT (PanARMENIAN.Net) — One thousand social businesses will be established in Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) to promote entrepreneurship and improve the quality of life of the citizens, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of Armenia reported on August 30.

One thousand families from Armenia and the Diaspora will be involved in the project, with Hayastan All-Armenian Fund set to help 100 of them to create greenhouses. The Armenian General Benevolent Union and a number of other organizations and individuals too will join the initiative.

Azerbaijani Troops Set Fire to Armenian Pastures In Gegharkunik

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — The Azerbaijani military on August 29, set fire to areas near the villages of Sotk and Kut in Gegharkunik province, Human Rights Defender Arman Tatoyan said on social media.

Fires approaching Sotk were extinguished, while those near Kut began to spread due to the wind, Tatoyan noted, also publishing photographs and videos showing the situation on the ground.

“I want to emphasize that there were pastures and meadows in these areas, which have now been destroyed by fires. Considering that the Azerbaijani armed forces have invaded and are in the immediate vicinity of the villages, on the sovereign territory of the Republic of Armenia, the fires pose a real threat to the civilian population,” Tatoyan said.

Hellenistic-Era Necropolis Discovered in Karabakh

STEPANAKERT (PanARMENIAN.Net)

— A necropolis dating back to the Hellenistic period has been unearthed during gardening in the village of Astghashen of Nagorno-Karabakh's Askeran region, Karabakh Monuments reported on August 28.

Excavations carried out on August 24-25 under archaeologist Vardges Safaryan revealed that the tombs belong to the Hellenistic period, evidenced by fragments of ceramics found at the site. Colorful dishes covered with barley have parallels with the ceramics discovered at ancient tombs in Artsakh, including in Tigranakert, as well as on the territory of Armenia.

The necropolis dates back to the 1st-2nd centuries BC.



The location in Karabakh and pottery fragments from the necropolis

Armenian Official Comments on ‘Russian Objections’ to His Ministerial Job

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — A senior official in Yerevan has implicitly denied reports that Russia blocked his widely anticipated appointment as Armenia's new foreign minister.

Armen Grigoryan was the secretary of the Armenian government's Security Council before being named first deputy foreign minister on July 14 in what some political allies of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan described as a prelude to his appointment as the country's new top diplomat.

The key ministerial post remained vacant, however, even after Pashinyan hand-picked in early August the 13 other members of his new cabinet formed as a result of the June 20 parliamentary elections.

Media reports claimed that the prime

minister is having second thoughts about appointing Grigoryan as foreign minister because of Russian objections. Grigoryan, 37, worked for or cooperated otherwise with Western-funded civic groups and criticized Russia up until the 2018 “velvet revolution” that brought Pashinyan to power.

Pashinyan gave the job to another ally, former parliament speaker Ararat Mirzoyan, and sent Grigoryan back to the Security Council on August 18.

In a weekend interview with RFE/RL's Armenian Service, Grigoryan insisted that Pashinyan still had no “final decision” on whom to name foreign minister when he began effectively running the Armenian Foreign Ministry in July.

Asked whether Russia indeed thwarted his ministerial appointment, Grigoryan said: “I have worked with Moscow very productively for the last three years.”

He specifically claimed to have enjoyed a good rapport with Nikolay Patrushev, the influential secretary of Russia's Security Council.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov congratulated Mirzoyan, his new Armenian counterpart, on August 20. The two men are scheduled to meet in Moscow on Tuesday.

Armenia's previous foreign minister, Ara Ayvazyan, stepped down on May 27 amid mounting tensions on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border. At a May 31 farewell meeting with the Armenian Foreign Ministry staff, he signaled strong objections to Pashinyan's policies on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and national security.

All of Ayvazyan's four deputies tendered their resignations in the following days. Three of them — Artak Apitonian, Avet Adonts and Gagik Ghalechian — were formally relieved of their duties on June 8.

Adonts launched a thinly veiled attack on Pashinyan in an open-ad article published by the Mediamax news agency on June 24. He said that Armenia's and Nagorno-Karabakh's security is being jeopardized by “emotional and primitive one-man governance.”



Armen Grigoryan



British Military Trainers Offer Lessons to Armenian Counterparts

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) — As part of the UK-Armenia defense cooperation activities, a month-long Junior Command and Leadership course kicked off this week, the UK Embassy in Armenia reported.

Four members from the British Military Advisory Training Team, pictured above, have arrived in Armenia to deliver the course.

They will be working with the Armenian Peacekeeping servicepersons to improve their leadership skills and prepare them for planning and conducting similar training courses within their own units.

Armenian FM Slams Azerbaijan in Moscow Trip

VISIT, from page 1

Mirzoyan singled out Baku's refusal to free dozens of Armenian soldiers and civilians remaining in Azerbaijani captivity nearly ten months after Moscow helped to stop large-scale hostilities in and around Nagorno-Karabakh. He also pointed to cross-border Azerbaijani incursions into “sovereign territory of Armenia” and Azerbaijani leaders' continuing “Armenophobic rhetoric.”

In a statement issued ahead of the talks, the Russian Foreign Ministry said the situation in the Karabakh conflict zone — and the Armenian-Azerbaijani border in particular — will be a major theme of Lavrov's talks with Mirzoyan. It said the two ministers as well as other diplomats accompanying them will also discuss “the process of unblocking economic and transport links” between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

That process is handled by a trilateral working group which was set up by the Russian, Armenian and Azerbaijani governments in January. The group co-headed by deputy prime ministers of the three states met in Moscow on August 17 for the first time in more than three months.



ARMENIA

AGBU Helps Overcome Deficits in Armenia's Global Media Outreach with Training Program

YEREVAN/MADRID — Among the many hard lessons learned by the Armenians in the 2020 Artsakh War was their inability to mount a cohesive and compelling counterforce to the rampant false narratives disseminated in the international media by Azerbaijan and Turkey. By all accounts, this resulted in a clear bias in favor of these two countries, not only in the foreign media, but also the geopolitical and diplomatic communities. AGBU Young Professionals (YP) of Madrid, Spain decided to take action in the form of a six-day workshop in Armenia called “Storytelling in Journalism: From Hard Data to Harder Narratives.”

YP Madrid Chair Diran Guiliguian further explained the motivation. “Armenia clearly lost the communications war in Artsakh. That’s because we didn’t have a solid strategy to coordinate our efforts during the war. It’s also because we spent the better part of it talking to each other instead of addressing the outside world. Uncertain about how to approach the issue, it took the advice of a foreign journalist for us to come up with a media training program.”

Happening in Armenia’s southern city of Goris from August 2-7, the program put the energetic team of Ronak Press in a room with budding and working journalists from Armenia and Artsakh to teach them to reach international audiences with stories from home.

A non-profit based out of the Basque Country in Spain, Ronak convenes world reporters working in print, photo and video to cover war stories from hotspots along the 33rd parallel from Western Sahara in Africa to Eastern Baluchistan in West Asia. The group of five has also conducted media

workshops for local reporters in Algeria, Libya and Iraqi Kurdistan.

“During the war in Artsakh, I noticed that many local journalists engaged in self-censorship and propaganda to aid the Armenian cause,” says Karlos Zurutuza, the Ronak Press co-founder who initially suggested the program in Armenia to Guiliguian and later led the charge on print journalism. “At the same time, you had battle-hardened war reporters from abroad who, while on the ground, lacked the historical and cultural bandwidth to cover the conflict in a way that didn’t give way to clichés. It’s that vacuum — of an Armenian reporter capable of talking about the issue in an informed and unbiased manner — that prompted the Storytelling in Journalism training,” explains the Basque journalist whose reporting on war in Iraq, Syria and elsewhere has colored the headlines of Deutsche Welle, Al Jazeera, and Middle East Eye.

The workshop was organized in two parts, with the first half of the day spent learning about the theory behind print, photo and video journalism, including the art of pitching stories to the international press and handling a photo and video camera. The second part pushed trainees to hit the streets of Goris to hunt for stories about the local community, who must contend with an Azerbaijani presence at its gates, following the handover of the previously Armenian-controlled region of Lachin. This exercise served as their end-of-program assignment.

The third day was punctuated with a surprise visit from Artsakh Foreign Minister David Babayan, who answered questions about the ongoing situation in the region



PhD student Anahit Margaryan Antonyan asks questions of Artsakh Foreign Minister David Babayan (left).

and the issues faced by journalists in accessing Artsakh. The minister substantiated the partial ban on the media by citing the threat of information leaks that he claimed could further endanger the already fragile security of the area.

Anahit Margaryan Antonyan, 27, is a Ph.D. student researching genocide in Spanish sources at the universities of Cádiz and Granada in southern Spain. On break and in Armenia to explore the archives of the Armenian Genocide Museum and Institute for her thesis, she applied to the training program to “learn to export the many deserving stories of Armenia to the world” in her capacity as the occasional contributor to a local newspaper. “The course taught me to look at the issues facing my country from a less emotional and more objective standpoint so that their coverage may better meet the standards of an international readership,” she says.

For Anush Ghavalyan, 33, an anchorwoman with Artsakh Public TV, the chances of that happening seemed far less likely. “When I first joined the program, I didn’t believe that stories from Artsakh produced by an Armenian journalist could appeal to foreign audiences. I was convinced that they would be brushed off as subjective despite our best efforts to the contrary,” she admitted.

Five days into the training, Ghavalyan

experienced a thought revolution. “They helped me understand that it’s not about the nationality of the reporter, but rather the quality of the work being submitted,” she says. “And that’s exactly what we were here to achieve,” adds the photojournalism trainer for the course Andoni Lubaki, who co-founded Ronak Press with Zurutuza in 2016 and whose works have appeared in the Associated Press, Newsweek and The New York Times.

That change of perspective became more obvious to all the participants, according



Trainees of the Storytelling in Journalism program and Ronak Press team during a workshop on video journalism.

to Jewan Abdi, a staff cameraman and producer with the BBC who led the course on video journalism. He noted that by the end of the training the majority of the students exhibited “a hunger to work and bring about change” in the news industry in Armenia. “I’m sure it won’t be long till we see the names of some of our trainees in the bylines of major publications,” he said.

The program concluded with a certificate handout ceremony joined by AGBU Armenia president Vasken Yacoubian and YP Yerevan chair Haykaz Nahapetyan, who also attended the farewell dinner organized later that evening. “AGBU has always sought out meaningful ways to engage the Armenian diaspora in its projects for the betterment of Armenia. The Storytelling in Journalism program is the perfect example of a Diaspora group, in this case our YPs in Madrid, proving that they are constantly thinking of ways to help improve the country in their respective fields,” says Yacoubian.

The good news about this pilot program in Armenia will undoubtedly spread among local journalists who agree with their Diaspora counterparts that mastering the art of telling the Armenia and Artsakh story to the world is a national priority.



Artsakh Foreign Minister David Babayan (center) with Andoni Lubaki (left), Karlos Zurutuza (third from the right) and Jewan Abdi (second from the right) of Ronak Press, Diran Guiliguian (second from the left) and Levon Grigorian (right) of YP Madrid and the journalists attending AGBU’s media training program.

Armenian Pro-Govt. Lawmaker Encouraged By Erdogan Statement

STATEMENT, from page 1

relations, said Erdogan’s remarks contained no preconditions unacceptable to the Armenian side.

Senior members of the two opposition groups represented in the Armenian parliament claimed the opposite. They said the Turks want Yerevan to agree to the restoration of Azerbaijani control over entire Karabakh and to stop campaigning for greater international recognition of the 1915 Armenian genocide in the Ottoman Empire.

“Throughout his tenure Erdogan has pe-

riodically made such statements and has been rebuffed by the Armenian authorities and told to talk to Armenia, open the border and normalize relations without preconditions. Now Erdogan is coming up with a huge package of preconditions,” said Gegham Manukyan of the Hayastan alliance.

“The current authorities must categorically reject all those preconditions,” he told RFE/RL’s Armenian Service. “But judging from their actions and constant readiness to make concessions, I have no such hope.”

Tigran Abrahamyan, a senior lawmaker from the Pativ Unem bloc, said, for

his part, that Ankara and Baku continue to coordinate their actions relating to the Karabakh conflict. He said those include Azerbaijani cross-border incursions into Armenian territory and Aliyev’s regular threats to forcibly open a “corridor” connecting Azerbaijan to its Nakhichevan exclave via Armenia’s Syunik province.

Turkey provided Azerbaijan with strong diplomatic and military support during the six-week war stopped by a Russian-brokered ceasefire last November. It has kept its border with Armenia closed since 1993.

INTERNATIONAL

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Lavrov Calls on Azerbaijan To Release All Armenian Captives Without Preconditions

MOSCOW (Public Radio of Armenia) — Russia calls on Azerbaijani to release the Armenian prisoners of war and other detainees without preconditions, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said at a joint press conference with Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan in Moscow on Tuesday, August 31.

He said this signal has been sent to Azerbaijan on the presidential and other levels.

“This would be a landmark confidence-building measure that we are currently lacking, and of course, an important humanitarian step,” the Russian FM noted.

He said Russia will continue to insist on this position, but added that the final decision does not depend on them.

He attached importance to implementation of any trust-building measure, including the handover by Armenia of landmine maps to Azerbaijan.

Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan said, in turn, that Armenia has fulfilled the provision on exchange of POWs according to “all for all” principle and expects Azerbaijan to release all Armenian detainees.

He said the return of Armenian prisoners of war and other detainees would help build trust and create an atmosphere conducive to the discussion of a final settlement of all issues.

Armenia Again Denies Plans to Provide Land ‘Corridor’ to Azerbaijan

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — The Armenian side has not and will not discuss the provision of a “corridor” or anything resembling a “corridor” to Azerbaijan, Armenia’s Deputy Prime Minister Mher Grigoryan said on August 31, Civic.am reports.

The Azerbaijani side has on multiple occasions spoken about a “corridor” through the province of Syunik that would connect Nakhichevan to Azerbaijan. The Armenian side, however, has repeatedly denied being involved in negotiations for the provision of a corridor to Azerbaijan, stressing that they have only agreed to unblock transport communications in the region.

Grigoryan, who co-chairs a trilateral working group on the unblocking of transport communications in the region, said the Armenia-Russia-Azerbaijan trilateral working group resumed its work at the suggestion of the Russian side.

“Encroachments and provocations on the borders of Armenia negatively affect the effective course of work, but the Armenian government intends to use any negotiating platform and opportunity for constructive dialogue in order to promote the interests of the Republic of Armenia,” Grigoryan noted.

Seeking Justice After War

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BERLIN — It was supposed to be the war to end all wars. But once it had ended, there was “no peace to end all violence.” On the contrary, even with the establishment of the League of Nations, which was to usher in the new era of peace, the world witnessed new forms of nationalism and imperialism, new conflicts, and continuing human suffering on a mass level. At the same time, new concepts of humanitarian intervention and international law developed. It is this dialectical tension that occupied the attention of scholars during the last weekend of August in Potsdam Germany, joined via internet by colleagues worldwide. “Genocide, Mass Violence and International Justice after 1919” was the title of the conference that opened on August 27 at the European Academy.

Welcoming remarks came from Céline Gulekjian of the AGBU and Atanas Stoyanov of the Roma organization of Phiren Amencia, two of the groups that had joined with the Lepsiushaus Potsdam and the European Union of Jewish Students (EUJS) to sponsor the event. The keynote was read by Roy Knocke of the Lepsiushaus. It had been prepared by Dr. Rolf Hosfeld, who passed away on July 23. Hosfeld, a historian, author and academic director of the Lepsiushaus for a decade, had developed such transnational networks of scholars and was the driving force behind this conference. It was dedicated in his honor.

The keynote set the theme: “No peace to end all violence — Nationalism, Imperialism and Internationalism,” reviewing key events following the October 1918 armistice, from the abdication of Kaiser Wilhelm II to the escape from Constantinople of the leading Young Turk perpetrators and the signing of the Versailles Treaty. Aggressive anti-Semitism had spread, along with the “fascist aesthetic of violence,” massacres destroyed Armenian lives in 1894-96 and 1907, the Boer war raged in 1902, masses of Herero and Nama peoples succumbed to starvation, and step by step such imperialist violence led to total war. The Armenian genocide, the “worst single act of violence in World War I,” launched the process of ethnic cleansing and deportation which would engulf Jews and other subject minorities in Russia, Roma people and Muslims in central Asia. In the Ottoman Empire the eradication policy would eliminate a multi-ethnic society to usher in a Muslim-Turkish order. It was the “final solution” in its first form, and the Young Turks, whom Hitler admired, became a model for totalitarian rule.

Post-Versailles Europe

Stefan Ihrig of Haifa University picked up this concept in his talk on “Learning from the Turks. Interwar Germany, the Nazis and the Quest for Violent Solutions.” Already before the war, German media had devoted great attention to events in the Ottoman Empire, and this increased in the early Weimar period. The question being pondered was: how did the Turks manage to resist Versailles? Why didn’t Germany do the same? Can one learn from Turkey? In the 1920s, some Germans considered themselves similar to the Turks. Ihrig, au-

thor of *Atatürk in the Nazi Imagination*, cited a remark made by Hitler to the Turkish ambassador, prior to the attack on Poland, to the effect that the Germans were copying the Turks. Hitler would also call Atatürk a “guiding light.”

The German press covered Turkey’s transformation into a monoethnic country, as if that constituted a model. Turkey was considered a most modern country, thanks to its having rid itself of ethnic minorities. Before Hitler’s seizure of power in 1933, there was open discussion of the Armenian Genocide in Germany, and the Nazi standpoint viewed it in a positive light. Implications for a Nazi extermination policy against the Jews were obvious and open. Himmler had been well aware of the developments and showed great interest in Turkey. German public opinion could read about it in the press and could draw the obvious parallels to a Nazi party propagating similar “solutions.” If they knew this and then voted for such a party, Ihrig said, it was criminal. This raised the question, why has this topic has been ignored? And he suggested it might derive from Eurocentrism in historical studies. That said, it is also true that Ihrig’s books have sparked more interest in the Armenian Genocide, including in Israel.

Momme Schwarz, from the Saxonian Academy of Sciences in Leipzig, followed with a discussion of “Jewish Minority Protection during the Interwar period - The Comité des délégations juives and the Schwarzbard Trial.” For the millions of Jews who survived the collapse of three empires, the Comité sought protection at the Paris peace conference, but its calls for parliamentary representation and self-government received limited support. The Comité continued its campaign through publications and protested against the pogroms in Ukraine. A rallying point in their campaign appeared in the trial of Jewish watchmaker Sholom Schwarzbard, who had killed the head of the Ukrainian Peoples Republic, Symon Petliura, for being responsible for the pogroms. Committees emerged in his defense and in October 1927 he was acquitted. Schwarz concluded that although the acquittal did not solve the problem of stateless Jews, it did illustrate the development of collective action and solidarity and the need for a sovereign state. The obvious parallels to the trial of Soghomon Tehlirian, who assassinated Talat Pasha in Berlin in 1921, were noted. The response to the Schwarzbard trial generally in the Jewish community was split: some said the case showed that they should rely on self-defense, not government action, while others stressed the importance of abiding by the law.

Another minority group that suffered statelessness, persecution and mass murder was the Roma, whose case was presented

by Chalak Kaveh of Volda University College. In remarks on “The Apex of European Traditional ‘Gypsy Policy’ in the Interwar Period – A History of Policy Radicalizations,” he focused on Norway and its extremely restrictive policy. In 1924 Roma people, called Gypsies, were turned back at the border, even if in possession of a passport. In the 1930s many of those denied entry would become victims of the Nazi concentration camps. German policies were viewed as models in Norway, whereas Sweden was more moderate, and Denmark the least radical.

Remembrance, Trauma and Denialism

The policy of denying the genocide has been a constant in Turkey, but it has not been undifferentiated, as Fatma Müge Göçek, from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, explained. In the immediate post-war period, the two rival governments followed different approaches. The one in Istanbul acknowledged the massacres in trials held under occupation and the other in Ankara observed total silence on the matter.

The triumvirs had escaped to Germany, leaving Mustafa Kemal to lead the 1919-1922 independence campaign. Everything that had occurred prior to the establishment of the republic was labelled “pre-history,” and therefore had nothing to do with the new Turkey. Atatürk was the center of this new history and his government had no room for Greeks, Armenians and Jews. In a second phase, from 1923 to 1933, the Ankara government promised the Kurds some autonomy, but reneged on that pledge. After Lausanne, the new national history assumed more distinct contours, with the creation of the national language and alphabet, “independence tribunals” to eliminate opposition to reforms, mandatory Turkish names and western apparel; the Hagia Sophia was turned into a museum. Following Atatürk’s death and the takeover by İnönü in 1938, Göçek concluded, the systematic denial of the genocide continued.

If the Turkish response has been denial, in the Arab world the approach carries different nuances. Michael B. Elm, from Tel Aviv University and the Free University of Berlin, illustrated this with reference to English-language documentaries prepared by Al Jazeera, and the “construction of cultural trauma.” On the centenary in 2015, while several films (“The Cut,” for example) dealt with the genocide, Al Jazeera avoided the word and the issue, focusing on such themes as the heritage of Sykes-Picot in the division of the Arab world, the Balfour Declaration leading to the establishment of Israel, civilian suffering in Syria, the elimination of the Caliphate and its impact on Arab-Turkish relations, etc.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Liturgy Held in Armenian Holy Trinity Church in Malatya for the First Time Since Genocide of 1915

LITURGY, from page 1

Armenians from across the country also attended the opening ceremony.

The construction of the Sourp Yerrortutyun (Holy Trinity) Armenian Church began in 1878 with the participation of a Greek architect and Armenian stonemasons.

In 1893, the construction of the church was completed. The dome of the church was destroyed in the earthquake of 1893. The building was repaired between 1905-1907. After 1915, the church building was used as barracks and a prison.

The dome of the church burned in the fire of 1969. The church was in ruins. In 2010, the restoration of the building was planned by the order of the Governor of Malatya, Mr. Ulvi Saran. Construction work began in 2012. Work on the project was stopped due to technical problems and lack of funding.

In 2021, restoration works were completed under the chairmanship of Malatya Mayor, Mr. Selahattin Gürkan. Malatya’s HAYDER association also participated in the process. HAYDER also provided financial support for the restoration of the church’s altar/ dome section and the baptistry.



INTERNATIONAL

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Why should there be such indifference among Arab intellectuals in the Armenian genocide? This question was at the center of remarks by Vicken Cheterian, from the University of Geneva and Webster University in Switzerland. The geographical links to the genocide are obvious in names like Der Zor and its concentration camps, the last station for an estimated 870,000 deportees, women and children. Cheterian explained the absence of these facts from Syrian historiography in terms that echo Atatürk's method: Arab nationalism considered what occurred before their nations came into being as outside history, or at best, as part of Ottoman or Turkish history. Arab history, in contrast, unfolds as a narrative about a break with the Ottoman past. Cheterian stressed the role of post-colonial studies, which did not help overcome this denialism, as they located the genocide outside of, or prior to Arab history. The implications of this for understanding problems in the region today were discussed, from the failure of secularization to the concepts of religion, state, citizenship and identity.

International Justice and Human Rights

In sharp contrast to the tradition of denialism — whether deliberate or by omission — in the interwar period new, advanced concepts in international law come into being. Introducing this subject, Hülya Adak, from Sabancı University and the Free University of Berlin, spoke about Andrei N. Mandelstam and his legacy. A graduate in law from St. Petersburg university, he served as dragoman at the Russian embassy in Constantinople until the outbreak of war and was engaged in discussion of Armenian reform. Following the Russian revolution he was in Paris, and dedicated his efforts to human rights issues, particularly pertaining to minorities from the former Ottoman empire. He was a critic of the Treaty of Lausanne, because it brought “neither peace nor

justice,” and ignored Armenian interests. In his 1929 Declaration of the International Rights of Man, he articulated demands for rights of minorities to life, liberty, property, language and religion, and asserted there should be no legal distinctions on basis of race, sex, language or religion. Adak regretted that these advanced ideas are very little known in Turkey and proposed that Mandelstam's works be made available in translation.

The urgent need for such internationally acknowledged rights could not be more obvious in the case of women and children. Edita Gzoyan, from the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute in Yerevan, presented an overview of violence committed against women and children, seen in the context of the development of international law. Refugee Armenian women and girls were particularly vulnerable, and often forced into slavery; their plight attracted public attention, but was scarcely alleviated by charitable interventions of single individuals and organizations. Despite its commitment to providing security and cooperation, the League of Nations was reluctant to act on behalf of women's rights, even though it formally asserted the equality of the sexes. But this changed. Its covenant contained articles condemning female slave markets in the region, and in 1920 and 1921 a permanent body came into being, a Committee for the Protection of Women and Children. Ultimately the Geneva Declaration on the Rights of Children appeared in 1924.

New states had come into being after the war, but masses of refugees had no access to citizenship and therefore the protection of a state. Roy Knocke of the Lepsiushaus examined this issue in a speech on “Fridtjof Nansen: the Plight of Statelessness as an International Challenge.” By 1926, he said, of 9.5 million refugees, one third were stateless. Nansen, a Norwegian explorer and scientist, had been an observer at the Paris peace conference, regarding the rights of small states, and became President of the League of Nations Society in Norway, which became a member in 1920. The following year Nansen was League of Nations' High Commissioner for Refugees. He is best remembered for his development of the “Nansen passport,” a travel document devised for stateless refugees. It was not a universal document, nor a passport in fact, but was recognized and provided the means to acquire aid, housing and employment. Nansen also negotiated terms in the Greek/Turkish population transfer; this forced exchange, which was a form of ethnic cleansing, was accepted by Nansen and the League as a pragmatic solution to a pressing problem, and a form of protection for minorities. Nansen was involved in the Armenian case, but a 1924 approach to resettle them in the Caucasus failed in light of Russian and Turkish opposition. Some 10,000 found resettlement in Yerevan and Lebanon. In his book, “Armenia and the Near East,” Nansen expressed his dismay with the European and American powers who had reneged on their pledges to the Armenians: had they possessed oil or gold or other precious raw materials, perhaps they would have found aid in their time of greatest suffering.

Atrocities against Civilians and the Rise of Humanitarian Movements

Aid did come to the persecuted Armenians, largely in the form of independent initiatives. Melanie Telanian, from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, spoke on “Violence, Aid and Non-State Actors: Humanitarian Interventions in Nineteenth Century Anatolia.” At the center of her presentation was the Kaiserswerth Deaconate, a humanitarian social, educational and health institution founded in 1836. Following the Adana massacres in 1919, the Deaconate

organized housing for Armenian children in orphanages. To finance their work, they appealed to the German public to fund child sponsorships. They often would appeal to a reading public fed on Gothic novels, playing up images of “the terrible Turk” and the virtues of Christian charity. Due to imperial Germany's geopolitical interests in the Ottoman empire, the government and military, as well as press, were reluctant to issue condemnations, and private initiatives had taken responsibility for aid.

Geopolitical factors played a role also in those cases where great powers did intervene with humanitarian aid, for example the United Kingdom and America. In a talk on “The Anglo-Americans Struggle to Save the Armenians and Remake Global Order,” Charlie Laderman of Kings College, London posed the question: why should such a struggle for the survival of a small state like Armenia be so important for two great powers? Already in the 1890s, at the time of the Hamidian massacres, debate was raging in the USA, public outrage led to petitions urging government action. In 1896, when Congress sent a resolution to President Cleveland to intervene, appeals were made to the UK to cooperate. Though no government action ensued, in 1901 Theodore Roosevelt denounced the “crimes against civilization” and three years later gave a speech on humanitarian intervention.

In 1915 as the deportations were underway, Roosevelt (out of office) became the leading proponent of US entry into the conflict and when America declared war on Germany, Roosevelt was outraged that Turkey remained untouched. Wilson's aim was to defeat Germany not to save the Armenians. Following the war, geopolitical interests continued to prevail when the British supported a US mandate for Armenia as what Milner called “a bond of union,” i.e., an Anglo-American colonial alliance. In Wilson's thinking, a US mandate would secure a role for the US against Europe. The failure of the mandate, the early end of the Armenian Republic and the pressures

of Russia and nationalist Turkey were the outcome. Laderman concluded his remarks by showing a portrait of a young Armenian woman holding a white flower, symbolizing hope. The painting, entitled “L'Espérance,” was a gift from an Armenian delegation to President Wilson in the White House in 1917, an expression of gratitude for the American people's humanitarian aid to Armenians.

Indeed, the mobilization of Americans to provide humanitarian aid was unprecedented, and the work of groups like Near East Relief became a model. Hilmar Kaiser from Yerevan State University shed new light on this, by examining “The Armenian Origin of Near East Relief.” In September 1915, Near East Relief representatives succeeded in organizing British support for their cause, and the influential Toynbee/Bryce “Blue Book” documenting the atrocities had an impact on public awareness. Armenians reportedly attended NER meetings, to campaign for more relief.

In July 1915, Kaiser said, no Armenian networks were functioning on the ground, the AGBU were considered “terrorists” and faced grave security threats. The Armenian missionaries were thus the only actors left, Catholics, Apostolics and Protestants. A central figure organizing humanitarian resistance networks was Reverend Hovhannes Eskijian, who worked with all church groups, in Aleppo, for example, as well as with German and American diplomats, Walter Rössler and Jesse Jackson. The Armenian Revolutionary Federation was also involved, until 1916. Eskijian was the key person distributing funds, contributions from NER, as well as information. Kaiser concluded that NER never would have functioned had it not been for the Armenians. The missionaries continued their work, the Protestants in the Armenian Missionary Association of America launched educational and social projects. The Eskijian family, among others, have maintained the commitment for generations, active today in America and in Artsakh.

Azerbaijani Soldier Arrested after Breaking Into Artsakh Apartment

STEPANAKERT (Panorama.am) — An Azerbaijani soldier, who was detained in an apartment in the Artsakh Republic on August 26, has been remanded into pre-trial custody, Artsakh's Investigative Committee said in a statement on Monday.

The serviceman, identified as Jamil Babayev, forcibly entered an apartment in the town of Martakert and threatened to kill the children living in the house.

A criminal case has been initiated and charges on illegal crossing of the Artsakh border, threatening to murder the minors and espionage have been brought against him under the country's Criminal Code.

A preliminary investigation is underway.



The soldier under arrest.

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Community News

COAF Soiree Raises More Than \$535,000 For Smart Village Initiative

LOS ANGELES — The 11th Annual Children of Armenia Fund (COAF) Summer Soiree held virtually on Sunday, August 22, was aptly titled “Building a Resilient Nation: Achieving New Heights” in support of the organization’s signature SMART Village initiative.

This year’s event raised more than \$535,000, surpassing the set goal of \$350,000. Funds will go towards COAF’s ongoing efforts aimed at revitalizing rural Armenia, providing children and families opportunities to advance themselves and achieve their full potential.

Debet, where the COAF Smart Center is located, is in Lori, one of Armenia’s most impoverished regions, with more than 70 percent of the population categorized as socially vulnerable. COAF is prioritizing cutting-edge, sustainable solutions to strengthen Debet’s education, health-care, and social services systems, in addition to critical infrastructure development and economic stimulation.

These initiatives form the backbone of COAF’s transformation of Debet into a Smart Village, where community-focused and comprehensive approaches to development will raise the quality of life, make the Lori region globally competitive, and help stem the tide of emigration.

“The Debet community is facing the very real threat of depopulation within the next 20 years. The grim reality is that nobody else in Armenia is investing the same energy in our neglected rural communities as we are. Now more than ever, we need to act as a collective and fight for the revival of our overlooked areas,” stated COAF Managing Director Korioun Khatchadourian during his address.

The event was hosted by Araksya Karapetyan of “Good Day L.A.,” COAF Head of Development Haig Boyadjian, and world-famous auctioneer Gabriel Butu. The program featured spectacular performances by Universal Dance Studio and Voices of Artsakh, along with stunning jewelry pieces graciously donated by TACO-RI for the Soiree’s auction.

From building regional health centers to providing homes for displaced families from Artsakh, COAF is committed to strengthening and supporting the Homeland. The organization’s supporters have consistently demonstrated the will of the Armenian people to collectively build a strong, high-achieving nation, built on resilience and innovation.

The full recording of the 11th Annual COAF Summer Soiree can be viewed free of charge at www.givebutter.com/coafsoiree where you may also contribute to empowering rural Armenian youth through the organization’s ongoing education, health, social and economic programs in over 60 villages.



Left to right: Edward Mardigian, Jr., Matthew Mardigian, Gary Reizian

Annual Golf Outing Supports Michigan’s AGBU School

By Harry Kezelian
Mirror-Spectator Staff

WEST BLOOMFIELD, Mich. — The AGBU Alex and Marie Manoogian School has served the Metro Detroit Armenian community for 49 years, and for all of that time, the AGBU Special Projects group has supported the school through its annual Golf Day and Backgammon Tournament.

The Golf Day this year, which took place at the Pine Lake Country Club on August 9, raised over \$100,000 for the school this year.

The Special Projects group, a committee of 45 Detroit-area Armenian-American businessmen and professionals, has supported the school since its inception. These dedicated individuals come together every year in support of their community institution, regardless if they have children and grandchildren that attend the school or not.

The Special Projects organization has raised more than \$5.5 million for the school over the years.



AGBU School 2021 Co-Valedictorian Yuliya Velhan addressing attendees

see GOLF, page 9



Golfers teeing off at the 49th Annual Detroit AGBU Golf Day

Virtual Medical Conference Will Connect Armenia’s Health Professionals To the World’s Leading Experts in Digestive Disease

By Christopher H. Zakian

NEW YORK — An online medical conference scheduled for September will gather some of the world’s leading authorities on digestive diseases to network and share their expertise with medical professionals in Armenia and Artsakh.

The International Digestive Disease Conference is scheduled to convene on September 11-12, 2021, as a “virtual” gathering. It will honor the memory of the late Dr. Raffy Hovannessian (1938-2020): a distinguished gastroenterologist and heroic benefactor of countless Armenian causes.

Chairing the conference is world-renowned gastroenterologist Dr. Asadur Jorge Tchekmedyian, of Uruguay. Keynote speaker Dr. John Bilezikian (Columbia University, US) will lead a roster of 54 speakers representing 23 countries — each an authority on an aspect of digestive diseases and care. Lectures will be presented in English, with simultaneous Armenian translation.

The conference organized by the International Center for Professional Development (ICPD) is being made possible by the generous sponsorship of the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR). The two have collaborated in the past, as well, in pursuit of a common goal of making world-class resources available to physicians, nurses, and other healthcare providers in Armenia and Artsakh.

Advancing knowledge and improving healthcare practice in Armenia and Artsakh are the key motivations behind all of ICPD’s efforts. Via conferences, workshops, and simulations — both live and online — the center brings the latest advances in healthcare to the medical specialists, health practitioners, and biomedical technicians of Armenia, Artsakh, and beyond.

The ICPD was conceived by three physicians of Armenian descent — Drs. Rafi Avitsian, Ara Babloyan, and Gevorg Yaghjian — who saw a critical need to expand the reach of quality medical educational programs in Armenia. The trio was later joined by Dr. Ara Nazarian to form the ICPD board of directors.

“We were all impressed by the many Armenian medical professionals across the globe who are distinguished in their respective fields, and who give lectures in foreign countries,” recalled Avitsian, lead anesthesiologist at Cleveland Clinic in the U.S., and founding president of the ICPD. “It was already an existing reality, and our thought was to focus that reality for the benefit of Armenia.”

Accordingly, ICPD was established as a non-profit organization providing world-class medical education conferences. That mission was warmly

see HEALTH, page 7



COMMUNITY NEWS

TCA Pasadena-Glendale Chapter Hosts Roupen Avsharian Lecturing on Lebanese Elections

ALTADENA, Calif. — The Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) Pasadena-Glendale Chapter, after a hiatus in activities of nearly two years due to the coronavirus pandemic, recommenced its event series with a lecture by lawyer Roupen Avsharian on August 12 at the TCA Beshgeturian Center. The topic was Lebanese political life from 1920 to 2020, with a focus on the Armenian vote in the 2018 Lebanese parliamentary elections and the upcoming Lebanese 2022 elections.

TCA West Coast Executive Secretary Mayda Kuredji-



From left, Siran Oknayan, Roupen Avsharian, Mayda Kuredjian

an welcomed the approximately 100 guests and chapter chair Siran Oknayan introduced the speaker.

Among the points Avsharian made was that a low 27.3-percent turnout of the electorate already has decreased the number of Armenian deputies more than necessary, and the results of the 2022 elections may be even worse for the Armenians as a result of the emigration of their majority, yet Armenian organizations do not appear very concerned about this.



Roupen Avsharian

Virtual Medical Conference Will Connect Armenia's Health Professionals to the Leading Experts in Digestive Disease

HEALTH, from page 6

welcomed by Armenia's Ministry of Health, its medical specialty societies, and its National Institute of Health.

In addition to their educational functions, ICPD's gatherings are pathways for credentialing Armenia's healthcare professionals.

"Physicians in Armenia are mandated by the state to receive continuous training by international authorities," Avitsian explained. "As you can imagine, this can be expensive and time-consuming for our colleagues in the homeland, who would ordinarily have to take time off from work, travel abroad, and pay for lodging to fulfill the mandate to receive state-of-the-art education beyond the borders of Armenia. But through ICPD's programs, a healthcare worker in Armenia can log onto the Internet, participate in one of our workshops, learn from top international authorities, and receive qualifying credits — all without leaving their homeland."

The September 2021 online conference will offer two full days of such lectures, by some of the world's leading experts on digestive diseases. While some of the experts have Armenian backgrounds, the roster of lecturers is diverse and inclusive. "Our objective is to build professional connections, create an international network of doctors — all with an interest in, and focus on, Armenia and Artsakh," said Avitsian.

Past conference themes revolved around neurology, pain management, the COVID pandemic, and treating post-conflict trauma. All of these were held as live events with an online broadcast where participants could "virtually" interact with lecturers and ask questions. Dr. Avitsian said the theme of the upcoming online conference, digestive diseases, was chosen in part as a tribute to the late Dr. Raffy Hovanessian (whose specialty was gastroenterology), but also as a response to the great need for advances in this specialty in Armenia and

Artsakh.

Contributing to a Healthier Future

That need is an urgent concern for Dr. Asadur Jorge Tchekmedyan.

"At present, Armenia is facing many barriers in the prevention and early detection of digestive diseases," Tchekmedyan said. "We hope that we can contribute to bringing down these barriers, and help build a network aimed at building a stronger system in the field of gastroenterology."

Realizing those goals, he said, will require improvements in education, training, and equipment for medical workers, and better access for the general population.

Tchekmedyan added that when he explains these realities to his colleagues in the field of gastroenterology, they immediately want to know how they can help.

"When the topic of international medical outreach comes up, people naturally think of Africa, Asia, or South America. But almost no one thinks of Armenia! Part of our aim with this conference is to bring exposure to our homeland on an international stage; to bring together the world's leading physicians — of all national backgrounds — and direct their attention to the need in Armenia and Artsakh, and the opportunity to do good there."

Echoing the feeling of many Armenians in various fields of endeavor, Dr. Tchekmedyan feels a responsibility to advocate for his homeland in his professional circles. "I am always proud to talk about our roots with my colleagues, and I feel enthusiastic when they become familiar with our ancestry and culture."

"Through such familiarity, people become eager to contribute to a better, healthier future for Armenia's people," he said.

It's a responsibility shared by his ICPD colleagues. "Everyone involved in the conference, and in the ICPD, seeks to contribute to Armenia's and Artsakh's welfare,"

said Avitsian. "They see a need, and want to help by sharing the special expertise they have. That same generous feeling unites these doctors from across the world, and across all backgrounds."

He adds: "In Dr. Tchekmedyan, we have one of the world's foremost specialists in the field of gastroenterology, who has attracted the participation of fellow experts practicing at the highest level. Considering the great need in Armenia for advancement in this field, and especially in light of last year's conflict, the September conference could hardly be more timely."

A Personal Dimension

The ICPD is organizing the conference in concert with the Fund for Armenian Relief: the humanitarian outreach and development arm of the New York-Based Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America. FAR has taken on the major sponsorship role, through its "Dr. Raffy Hovanessian Education Fund" and "Dr. Edgar Housepien Medical Education Fund." Several other groups are helping to sponsor the event.

FAR has a long history of working to develop Armenia's medical establishment. "The Fund for Armenian Relief began as a response to another crisis in Armenia: the earthquake of 1988, more than 30 years ago. Since Day One of that effort, continuing medical education has been an urgent priority for FAR," explained Garnik Nanagoulou, FAR's Executive Director. "The late Dr. Edgar Housepien, one of FAR's founders, was a pioneer in bringing medical expertise from the West into Armenia — and creating international exchanges for Armenia's medical professionals."

"The Internet Age has greatly enlarged the opportunities for high-level medical training and development," he said. "The upcoming ICPD conference is one of the most cost-effective ways to bring together a large number of Armenia's doctors, and expose them to up-to-the-minute learning

about digestive diseases."

Nanagoulou added: "Dr. Avitsian and Dr. Tchekmedyan are like magnets, attracting the most talented people in the field to the conference, purely out of respect for their reputations."

FAR's joint sponsorship of the conference has a "personal" dimension, as well, through its connection to a longtime hero of the Fund for Armenian Relief.

"Dr. Raffy Hovanessian was a great figure in FAR's history," Nanagoulou said. "With his wife, Shoghag, he supported FAR at every level — not only in our medical programs but also in the arts and education. The memorial his family set up with FAR, the 'Dr. Raffy Hovanessian Educational Fund,' is yet another part of his legacy to advance Armenia and Artsakh."

Honoring a personal friendship with a departed colleague is a strong motivation for all involved, reflected Dr. Avitsian. "The conference is a good cause in and of itself," he said. "But it's also a fitting way to remember our dear colleague Raffy: his career, his humanitarian spirit, and his passion for our homeland. Raffy Hovanessian's whole life was devoted to one good cause after another, and we will never forget him."

Readers can learn more about the ICPD's mission — which includes organizing medical educational events, promoting continuous professional development among Armenia's and Artsakh's medical professionals, and curating an online medical education library — by accessing the official website of the International Center for Professional Development (ICPD.am) and its Facebook page (@ICPDarm).

The first "Dr. Raffy Hovanessian International Virtual Conference on Digestive Disease" will convene on Saturday and Sunday, September 11-12, beginning at 16:00 hours (Yerevan time), 8:00 (New York), and 13:00 (London). Prospective participants can find conference details, a full list of speakers and topics, and links to register at ICPD.am.



COMMUNITY NEWS / OBITUARY

Dr. Suren Manukyan to Discuss ‘Architects of the Armenian Genocide: The Top-Level Perpetrators’

FRESNO — Dr. Suren Manukyan will speak on “Architects of the Armenian Genocide: The Top-Level Perpetrators” at 7 p.m. (Pacific time)/10 p.m. (Eastern time) on Friday, September 17, as part of the Fall 2021 Lecture Series of the Armenian Studies Program.

Dr. Manukyan is the Kazan Visiting Professor in Armenian Studies at Fresno State for the Fall 2021 semester and is teaching a course on “Introduction to Armenian Studies.”

In the upper circle of perpetrators of the Armenian Genocide were decision-makers. They were responsible

for the formulation of the ideology of the Genocide (Ziya Gökalp, Yusuf Akçura), making the decisions on carrying out the genocide (Mehmet Talaat, Ismail Enver), and supervising the course of the massacres (Mehmed Nazım, Behaeddin Şakir). Decision-makers sent hundreds of thousands of people to death, often without participating in their killings personally.

The perpetrators of this level were high-ranking state officials, party elites, and a few influential individuals, who had a decisive role in masterminding the Armenian Genocide. Dr. Manukyan will discuss these various perpetrators

in his lecture.

Manukyan is the head of the UNESCO Chair on Prevention of Genocide and Other Atrocity Crimes at Yerevan State University and Head of the Department of Comparative Genocide Studies at the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute (Yerevan). He is also a Visiting lecturer at the American University of Armenia and has been a Fulbright Scholar at the Center for the Study of Genocide and Human Rights at the Rutgers University of New Jersey.

Zoom Registration Link is: <https://bit.ly/armenian-studiesmanukyan1>

OBITUARY

Beverly E. Najarian
First Woman to Head the RI Dept. of Administration

PROVIDENCE, R.I. — Beverly E. Najarian, 86, died on Monday, August 23, 2021, surrounded by family and friends. Born in Providence, she was the loving daughter of the late Benjamin and Mabel



(Avakian) Najarian.

While Beverly never married, she lived a full and vibrant life with more friends than you could count. Her nieces and nephews meant more to her than words can describe.

She began her career as a bank teller and rose through the ranks becoming an executive vice president at Old Stone Bank. She later served In Governor Donald Carcieri’s administration as the first woman to head the Department of Administration for the State of Rhode Island.

She loved to travel to Europe, as well as in the United States and served on several boards including Access Point, House of Hope, and Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Apostolic Church.

Beverly is survived by her sister Sandra (Kenneth) Bogosian; her niece Kendra (Joseph) Marasco and their two children Matthew and Jessica. She is also survived by her nephew David (Diane) Bogosian and their two cherished children Michael and Eliana. Beverly also leaves her dearest companion, Patricia Angell with whom she shared over 40 happy years.

Her Funeral Service was held on Saturday, August 28th in Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Apostolic Church, Providence.

Inurnment at Swan Point Cemetery will take place at a later date.

Arrangements were by the Nardolillo Funeral Home.

George Bournoutian
(1943-2021)

Prolific and Dedicated Scholar

BOURNOUTIAN, from page 1

He taught Iranian history at UCLA, and Armenian history at Columbia University, Tufts University, New York University, Rutgers University, the University of Connecticut, Ramapo College, and Glendale Community College and Russian and Soviet history at Iona College. Bournoutian was one of the 40 editors of the *Encyclopaedia Iranica*.

Bournoutian was born in Isfahan, Iran into an Armenian family. He grew up in Iran, and he received his high school diploma from the Andisheh (Don Bosco) institution in Tehran. He immigrated to the United States in 1964. He received his MA in 1971 and his PhD in history (Armenian and Iranian studies) in 1976 at UCLA.

He was a member of the Middle Eastern Studies Association, Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, Iranian Studies Association, Society for Armenian Studies, and Association Internationale des Etudes Armeniennes.

Bournoutian was also an avid world traveler. He was fluent in Armenian, Persian, Russian, and Polish, and had a reading command of French. He accompanied his senior and graduate students on annual trips to Armenia and Transcaucasia, the Middle East, Africa, Southeast Asia, Australia, South and Central America and Antarctica.

Among his publications are *The Khanate of Erevan Under Qajar Rule; A Concise History of the Armenian People; The History of Vardapet Arakel of Tabriz; Two Chronicles on the History of Karabagh; The Travel Accounts of Simeon of Poland; Jambr; The 1823 Russian Survey of the Karabagh Province: A Primary Source on the Demography and Economy of Karabagh in the Early 19th Century; A Brief History of the Aghuank Region; The 1829-1832 Russian Surveys of the Khanate of Nakhichevan and Armenia and Imperial Decline: The Yerevan Province, 1900-1914*.

In addition to his writings, Bournoutian was a prolific lecturer, giving innumerable talks including many for the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) over the years. He was also a world traveler and led NAASR’s first Armenian Heritage Tour in decades in 2006 to the Republic of Armenia and Historic Armenia.

In 2008, he enriched NAASR’s library immeasurably when he transferred his huge scholarly library, the Ani and George Bournoutian Collection, which has become a cornerstone of the Mardigian Library. NAASR, in turn, was proud to support his work through grants for several of his publications.

Former NAASR Chairman Nancy Kolligian recalled that George “was an outstanding scholar who electrified the room when he entered it. I will remember going to Armenia and Historic Armenia with him on our 2006 NAASR trip—we had such a great time.” Current Chairman Yervant Chekijian remembered Bournoutian as “totally committed to the honest exploration of Armenia’s history.”

NAASR Academic Director Marc Mamigonian remarked that “George was warm, opinionated, unfiltered, brilliant, hilarious, and utterly indefatigable. He was always in the middle of a book project and excited about the next one. While it is difficult to accept that there will be no next book, no one can say that George Bournoutian didn’t get the most out of life, and he leaves an incredible legacy.”

In May 14, 2021, the Society for Armenian Studies awarded Bournoutian with the SAS Lifetime Achievement Award for his Outstanding Service and Contribution to the field of Armenian Studies.



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ADVERTISE IN THE MIRROR



COMMUNITY NEWS

Annual Golf Outing Supports Michigan's AGBU School

GOLF, from page 6

In addition to the Backgammon Tournament led yearly by Dr. Vigen Darian, the golf outing this year offered a silent auction and a wine pull. The golf tournament was followed by a banquet at the club's outdoor dining area overlooking Pine Lake. Despite heavy rain that interrupted otherwise pleasant weather, the golfers persisted and finished out their round to return to the clubhouse for dinner.

When it was time for dinner, Fr. Aren Jebejian of St. John's Armenian Church gave the blessing. Brian Thomas thanked

as. Norman Messelian was in charge of tee times. Paul and Tom Krikorian were in charge of sponsors. Peter Sarkesian was Club Chairman. Gary Reizian was in charge of gifts. Andrew and Marty Shoushanian were in charge of printing. Richard Kurjian headed up the silent auction. Paul Jingo-zian and Richard Simonian were in charge of "hole sponsors." Robert Simonian was the treasurer. Chris Korkoian and Dr. Harry Kezelian were in charge of the dining room.

The official Special Projects group members are Bernie Akkashian, Rick Ak-



Detroit's AGBU Special Projects Group



Tavloo players at the 49th Annual Detroit AGBU Golf Day

the committee members and Dicran Kurjian spoke on behalf of the School Board, introducing 2021 Co-Valedictorian Yuliya Velhan. Velhan, who came to the school from Ukraine in 6th grade knowing no English, is the first graduate of the Manoogian school to receive a full-ride scholarship to an Ivy League university and will attend Brown in the fall. Velhan gave an inspirational speech thanking the attendees and telling how the school has helped her to succeed in America.

This year's co-chairmen of the Golf Day were Matthew Najarian and Brian Thom-

kashian, Mark Anusbigian, Richard Apkarian, Jr., Mark Artinian, Mike Arzoumanian, Dr. Gary Assarian, Ara Atesian, Howard Atesian, Dr. Edward Bayleran, Greg Boyajian, Dr. Vigen Darian, David Dolik, Michael Ducato, Gene Gargaro, Dicran Haidostian, Bob Harrison, Greg Jamian, Paul Jingo-zian, David Karagosian, Edward Karamanian, Dr. Harry Kezelian, Chris Korkoian, Adam Krikorian, Paul Krikorian, Tom Krikorian, Richard Kurjian, Greg Mamassian, Doug Manoogian, Richard Manoogian, Edward Mardigian, Matthew Mardigian, Norman Messelian, Matthew Najarian, Dr. Neshan Ohanian, Gary Reizian, John Reizian, Peter Sarkesian, Andrew Shoushanian, Martin Shoushanian, Richard Simonian, Robert Simonian, James Stambouljian, Robert Stepanian, and Brian Thomas.

The AGBU Alex and Marie Manoogian School, founded in Southfield in 1969 by Alex and Marie Manoogian, began with the goal of providing educational opportunities for area youth.

Students continually display their academic abilities on a statewide, regional and local level. As the aptitude of students rises, enrollment has been steadily increasing to follow suit. At its inception only 10 individuals were enrolled in this unique educational institution. The number of students has flourished since Central Michigan University chartered the Manoogian School in 1995. There were 189 students when the charter was granted and enrollment grew to nearly double that in 10 years.



Welcome table at the 49th Annual Detroit AGBU Golf Day



Tekeyan Cultural Association, Inc.

Dr. Nubar Berberian 2021 Annual Awards



Dr. Nubar Berberian, intellectual, journalist, activist and editor of many ADL daily newspapers for more than 50 years passed away at the age of 94 in November 23, 2016. In his will, Dr. Berberian directed his Trust Fund managers to appropriate awards every year to college students of Armenian

descent worldwide who major in either International Law or Political Science.

ELIGIBILITY AND REQUIREMENTS

- 1) Eligible recipients are college students of Armenian descent who major in either International Law or Political Science.
- 2) Applicant must be enrolled in a full-time graduate program in a fully accredited college or university in the world.
- 3) Applicant must provide all of the information requested on the application form.
- 4) Applicant must submit a copy of his or her most recent college transcript.
- 5) Applicant is to include a small head and shoulders self-portrait.
- 6) Application could be received by requesting from tcadirector@aol.com.
- 7) Applicants should submit applications electronically (via email) to: tcadirector@aol.com.
- 8) The deadline of receiving the applications is **September 15, 2021**.
- 9) The administrators and managers of the fund will vote the qualified winners in **October, 2021** based on the merits of each applicant.
- 10) The winner or winners will receive their awards in **November, 2021**.
- 11) Winning applicants are not eligible to apply again.
- 12) This announcement is published in Armenian, English, French and Spanish.

Watertown, MA, July 15, 2021

COMMUNITY NEWS

Black Suede Studio Made The Bold Decision to Move Production Out of China — *and It’s Not Looking Back*

By Nikara Johns

MONTREAL (Yahoo) — The Black Suede Studio brand first launched in Canada in 2018 with shoes initially produced in China. Now, the label has made some major changes to its price points and production, and it’s reaping the benefits.

Just a year after its launch, founder and president Kris Avakian transitioned the company’s manufacturing to Brazil in order to increase the product quality and craftsmanship.

“I made the decision because of me as a consumer. I know that I don’t like seeing ‘made-in-China’ when I buy,” he said. “I wanted the brand to offer amazing quality shoes, 30-percent cheaper than the brands we’re competing against.”

Avakian originally launched with contemporary price points. He now sees luxury brands such as Wandler, Staud and Cult Gaia as competitors, with his shoes retailing from \$248 to \$568.



Black Suede Studio Founder Kris Avakian

According to Avakian, Black Suede Studio doubled its profits in 2020 compared to 2019. He credits the product quality, large assortment and an aggressive push — despite uncertainty during the pandemic — to the substantial growth. The brand’s main market also shifted from primarily Canada to the United States during this time. The Middle East and Europe are also points of growth.

“Where a lot of brands were stepping back, cutting down on seasons, we really pushed to keep creating amazing collections, perfecting our production, going after the customers and just making sure we were in everyone’s face,” he explained.

Part of the sales gain came from the brand’s wholesale strategy, which counts for 80% of the business, while 20% comes from its direct-to-consumer e-commerce site. Partners include Revolve, Neiman Marcus, Harvey Nichols and Bloomingdale’s.

As of this season, Nordstrom introduced the revamped Black Suede Studio online and in 10 stores.



A Black Suede Studio shoe



With COVID-19 still surging, Avakian said he’s not concerned with whether or not shoppers return to stores as most partners offer online platforms and share inventory with its stores. He also hasn’t faced shipping delays since moving to Brazil, however, there has been material shortages from suppliers, which has prolonged production in some cases last year.

As for product, Black Suede Studio is making its mark with a vast offering, which includes 180 SKUs, ranging from sandals to boots in a variety of heel heights. And although comfort has proved to be the No. 1 footwear category as of late, with fashion sales still lagging, Black Suede Studio’s bold and colorful dress styles

are what’s selling.

“From what I see, the consumer is buying less, but buying pieces that are going to stand out. We’re not going after basics — everything has a bit of a twist in the details, colors and materials,” he said.

In addition to the main line, Black Suede Studio launched a collaboration with influencer and reality star Caroline Stanbury in London this past June, with the capsule set to debut this month in North America.



From left, Ara Babayan, Avedis Markarian, Siran Oknayan, Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Mayda Kuredjian, Shahnour Hovsepian, Khatchig Nahabedian and Ara Simonian

Los Angeles TCA Leaders Visit Western Diocese

BURBANK, Calif. — On Friday, August 13, local members of the Central Board of the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada (TCA), representatives of the three Los Angeles area chapters, and TCA West Coast Executive Secretary Mayda Kuredjian visited the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of America and met with the Diocesan Primate.

Archbishop Hovnan Derderian welcomed his guests who paid their first courtesy visit to the Diocesan headquarters this year. TCA Metro Los Angeles programs and future events were communicated to the Primate who commended their zealous spirit in preserving the Armenian culture and heritage in the Diaspora. Collaborations between the Western Diocese and the TCA Western Coast chapters were discussed.



COMMUNITY NEWS

NEWLY RELEASED VIDEO:

President Reagan Meets Catholicos of Cilicia Karekin II, Catholicos of All Armenians Vasken I

By Haykaram Nahapetyan
Mirror-Spectator Video Correspondent

SIMI VALLEY, Calif. – The Ronald Reagan Library has digitized the archive materials of the Presidential Library and uploaded them to the YouTube channel of the institution. A search can locate President Reagan’s references to Armenia on quite a few occasions and his engagement with Armenian Church leaders and community members. As a governor of California between 1966 and 1975, Reagan was known for his close relations with the Armenian people of the state, and participated in Armenian Genocide commemoration events. His friendship and good working relations with George Deukmejian, who became the governor of California soon after Reagan (1983-1991) made this cooperation even stronger. It is known that Reagan was the first US President to call the events of 1915 genocide (in April of 1981). It took another 30 years before President Joe Biden would do the same.

The *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, with the permission of the Reagan Presidential

Library, which holds the copyrights of this historical archive, presents together two videos that showcase Reagan’s meetings

with the high-ranking Armenian clergymen from Antelias, Lebanon, the Catholicos of the Holy See of Cilicia awarded the insignia of the Grand Cross of Cilicia, a traditional award, to President Reagan. Archbishop Mesrop Ashjian

and Armenian-American community leaders were present.

“We are very happy that your government has provided our people all facilities of the United States to prosper and offer a contribution,” said Catholicos Karekin as he offered the award. “Cilicia is the ancient kingdom where my ancestors came from and where my predecessors lived.



with the leaders of the Armenian Church: the meeting with Catholicos of Cilicia Karekin II, later to be Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin I, and the reception of Catholicos of All Armenians Vasken I.

On June 16, 1983, during the meeting

ABOVE: President Ronald Reagan meeting with Catholicos of All Armenians Vasken I



President Reagan receiving the Grand Cross of Cilicia from Catholicos Karekin II of Cilicia

It was only after the First World War that our catholicosate moved out of Cilicia and came to be reestablished in Lebanon,” he said and passed on the Armenian historical award. President Reagan thanked the catholicos and added that he “was greatly honored.”

In 1987, when Reagan met Vasken I, his wife Nancy was recuperating from a sickness so the catholicos of all Armenians wished good health for the first lady. His speech was in Armenian although the catholicos used some English expressions like “God bless America the beautiful.” He referred to the history of the Armenian nation and the church and noted “During 1700 years, the history of our people has



President Ronald Reagan and Governor George Deukmejian of California

been a struggle for the Christian faith and liberty.”

The video shows Reagan was moved: it appears as if he wiped a tear from his eye a few times. The viewers can also notice him nodding when Vasken spoke about the 1915 persecution against the Armenian people.

In turn, referring to the Armenian-American community, Reagan said that as you proceed through the country you will see that the Armenian-Americans are fine, very fine citizens of the country.

This was the first meeting of Catholicos Vasken and President Reagan. Vasken gifted the president a souvenir plate with the picture of Echmiadzin. They had further interactions after the Spitak Earthquake of 1988 when America rendered help to Armenia.

See the video report at mirrorspectator.com.

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Arts & Culture

A CONVERSATION WITH...

Gev Manoukian

Our All-Around-Hip-Hopping Guy

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN/CENTERVILLE, UTAH — Gev (Gevorg) Manoukian (born September 15, 1986, Temirtau, Kazakh SSR, now Kazakhstan) is Armenian/Russian hip hop and break dancer. He learned to ice skate before turning his attention to dance as his passion when he was 16 years old in Salt Lake City, Utah, where he has lived since 2003.

Gev danced in “High School Musical 2” and got his first big break when he became a top ten finalist on the TV hit show “So You Think You Can Dance.” This appearance brought him national attention, leading to a role in the MTV musical “American Mall.”

In November 2010, he performed at the 2010 American Music Awards with the singer Pink to her hit song Raise Your Glass. He has credits in Nickelodeon’s “Fresh Beat Band” and “Big Time Rush,” as well as “Dancing with the Stars” and “America’s Got Talent.” He has worked with various artists, such as Whitney Houston, Chaka Khan, Pink, Ludacris, Ellen DeGeneres and LeAnn Rimes to name a few. Gev can also be seen in National commercials, music videos, Nickelodeon’s “Fresh Beat Band,” “Big Time Rush,” ABC’s “Dancing With The Stars,” NBC’s “America’s Got Talent,” etc.



Gev, your finest hour connected to your participation in “Think You Can Dance.” What was the biggest challenge and most significant moment in it?

The biggest challenge on being on “So You Think You Can Dance” is dealing with the pressure. It was the biggest thing I had done up to that point and at times it was overwhelming. A lot of pressure came from trying to not make mistakes. The most significant moment was the opening of the show. When you are on that stage and the cameras are on, the lights, the audience are all watching you, you really feel the gravitas of the moment. It was an unforgettable experience.

I remember while in the US ten years ago, I was delighted to see hip-hop dance classes with lots of participants at universities. Is hip-hop still so popular among American youth?

see GEV, page 13



Lena Dakessian Halteh

Hyebred Offers Creative Outlet for Poets, Artists Exploring Heritage

By Taleen Postian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

I first came across *Hyebred*, a bi-annual, not-for-profit, online literary magazine when I was in my freshman year of college. I was looking for magazines and journals to publish my poetry, many of which covered themes of being a part of the Armenian diaspora and my life as an Armenian-American woman. After accumulating a long list of online literary magazines, I found *Hyebred*, intended by founder, Rafaella Safarian, to serve as “a literary magazine that caters to the Armenian people.”

The name itself, a portmanteau of *Hye* meaning Armenian and *bred*, referring to upbringing, is immediately recognizable to the Armenian community. The sense of shared Armenian identity and sharing that identity is what drives the team behind this magazine, “being Armenian is something I think about every day; it influences who I am, my writing, and my decisions...*HyeBred* shows me that I’m not alone in that; being Armenian permeates through our contributors’ lives as well as their craft,” explained Safarian.

The online magazine is produced by a team of Armenian creatives. Operating *Hyebred* is a second job for many on the team, including a graphic designer, editors, an actor and a lawyer. But all 10 team members come together in the spirit of showcasing “the talent of our generation and the generations to come,” Safarian continued, “Armenian artists, writers, filmmakers, and musicians are out there. We need to give them a voice.”

But why work for an online magazine that is only beginning to grow its audience in an online format that many Armenian traditionalists in the art world don’t look to? John Danho, the poetry editor for the magazine explained, “The material published in *HyeBred* helped me along my own journey as an Armenian. It’s shown me I’m not alone, and so the work I do with *HyeBred* is first and foremost ‘How can I amplify these voices?’” Film/Music Editor Nour-Ani Sisserian continued, “I believe it is important to connect with artists with whom you share a similar culture, trauma [and] drive to make our voices heard.”

To describe the necessity of creative outlets like *Hyebred*, Sisserian outlined a scenario all Armenians are familiar with, “we all look for Armenian names in a film’s

see HYBRED, page 13

Tufenkian Fine Arts Helps Artists, Connects Artists And Art Lovers

By Ani Duzdabanyan-Manoukian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

GLENDAL — Back in 1998 when Caroline Lais-Tufenkian was working on her thesis, Neery Melkonian, an art historian and critic, encouraged her to curate and put together an exhibit whenever she has a chance. And so, she did. In 1998 Caroline organized an open exhibit featuring a local, Los Angeles-based artist Seta Manoukian. The event proved a success and set a certain future for Caroline.

One exhibit followed another, and when her children grew up, Caroline decided that it was time to fulfill her longtime dream-opening an art gallery.

In 2015 Caroline and Greg Tufenkian established the Tufenkian Fine Arts Gallery in Glendale, on San Fernando Road. That’s where I first visited and felt that this was just the right amount of a contemporary art one can consume in a diverse but still conservative city like Glendale.

Soon, in 2017 another location on Louise street became available, one



Caroline Lais-Tufenkian and Tufenkian Fine Arts

that was perfect for Tufenkian Fine Art. The two-story building with an artistic combination of wood glass and green plants a little hidden between buildings but nevertheless, with more centralized location allows it to be close to the downtown, central library and the soon to be built Armenian American Museum. Will the fact of a new museum fade the significance of Tufenkian? “I think it’s going to be great! There is going to be a lot of room to collaborate. Galleries and museums work hand in hand all the time.”

Caroline is in her office which is really another gallery room filled with art pieces where even her desk seems like a part of an exhibition. Greg Tufenkian works in the room next door and we can hear his voice through the empty gallery (it’s Monday and the gallery is closed). “I would never be able to this without Greg. He is the backbone of this business. He is behind everything, but he is more on the business side of the gallery,” said Lais-Tufenkian with a smile.

see ARTS, page 15





ARTS & CULTURE

Gev Manoukian: Our All-Around-Hip-Hopping Guy

GEV, from page 12

Hip-hop plays a big role in the young US community. I would say it is bigger now than it has ever been. Hip-hop was always a vehicle for youth to express themselves, and now with social media it is a lot more accessible and also a lot more popular. Plus, hip-hop as a culture, encompasses a lot of different genres: dancing (hip-hop, break-dancing, popping, locking, etc.), rapping, graffiti and DJ. So the youth have a lot of different avenues to express themselves in that culture.

You worked with show-business celebrities. Are there any special moments you would like to share?

One of my favorite artists to work with was Pink. She was very personable and professional. She learned the choreography so fast and she sang live in rehearsals, which I thought was really cool. Also meeting Whitney Houston was awesome. After the show, she introduced us to her whole family, really made us feel special. I also got to meet Anthony Hopkins and had a great conversation with him. He was so down to earth and smart!!! I met Anthony Hopkins filming his movie the “The World’s Fastest Indian.” I believe it was in 2004. I was an extra in the movie. It was filmed at the Bonneville Salt Flats in Nevada. One of the days we were having lunch, and Anthony Hopkins just walked up to us and started talking. He introduced himself as Tony, to which I said: “We know who you are” while smiling. We talked about where everyone was from and mostly how the food was. He did not know I was Armenian until after I told him. He knew a lot about Armenia.

Your name has appeared in dozens of TV films and series. Is there any peculiarities in dancing in front of the camera?

Dancing in front of the camera is definitely different than dancing on stage. You don’t have the instant gratification of people clapping and cheering for you when you are performing in front of the camera. But it is very gratifying to see the finished



project when the show is edited. You know how much time and hard work went in to it, and being a part of it feels rewarding. Also the camera catches a lot more details, so even the smallest movements can look big, and have a huge impact on the audience.

What funny moments can you share with us?

I was performing in Utah after “So You Think You Can Dance.” Chelsie Hightower and I did a duet. During the dance we had to do a kick forward and when I kicked my

shoe flew off and hit a guy in the audience on the head. Everyone in the audience and us on stage started laughing. I had to do the rest of the number with one shoe. After the number was done the guy threw my shoe back to me!

At what age does a hip-hop dancer retire?

That is a good question. I don’t really know. Because there are so many different dance styles in hip-hop culture, it’s hard to say. I know of some hip-hop dancers that

are still dancing in their 50s and 60s.

You were born into a family of professional figure skaters. Please tell us about your parents.

My father (Akop Manoukian) was a three-time Armenian champion, two-time Kazakhstan champion, and Professional World showcase second place winner. My mother (Larissa Batmanova) was a junior world champion and was supposed to represent the USSR in the Olympics, but ended up getting a major injury and could no longer complete.

Do you know from what part of Armenia your ancestors were from?

To be honest I am not sure. I know we lived in Yerevan, in Zeitun area. My mother lived in Kazakhstan and my father went to army there. He served in the sports regiment; that’s where a lot of professional athletes served. That’s how they met. So I was born in Kazakhstan and then moved to Armenia right after for a couple of years. I lived in Armenia when I was a baby, maybe for 3 years total. So I did not remember much until I went back in 2015.

You travel all over the world choreographing, teaching and performing. What about Kazakhstan or Armenia?

I have performed both in Kazakhstan and Armenia. When I was in Armenia I also taught some dance classes that I have offered for free. My goal was to give back to my people and see how they dance and move! They did great!!!

You were born in Kazakhstan with small Armenian community and now live in Utah, a state again with few Armenian inhabitants – however, how is the situation with Armenian traditions?

Even though I have not been around a lot of Armenian people, Armenian culture is still very deeply rooted in me. My family is very good at keeping up with Armenian traditions and culture, so I have learned a lot. Also going to Yerevan really helped me reconnect with my Armenian roots. I can’t wait to go back there again! We still have a lot of family there.

Hyebred Offers Creative Outlet for Poets, Artists Exploring Heritage

HYBRED, from page 12

credits and get excited when we see one (it’s usually only one).” In a quote explaining her view on how art is valued within the Armenian community, she delivers a solution to her earlier complaint about the lack of Armenian representation in artistic



Rafaella Safarian

fields, “I wish we realized that art belongs to the “here and now” and that we have talented Armenians who want their work to be visible. In Armenia, people love to go to the theatre because it is entertaining but the quality of work doesn’t allow them to be critical of their way of life, to think deeper, to debate. Censorship and lack of finances are mainly responsible for this. Alternative art scenes are almost non-existent and this is why we need the support of our community and also create work within ourselves to have more than one “ian” in the credits.”

Sisserian proposed *Hyebred* is one answer to the acknowledged lack of “ians” in movie credits, an issue representative of a larger lack of appreciation and platforms for modern and inventive Armenian art. And they are already making headway, Sisserian noted: “My 14 year old student, who studies writing at TUMO from a remote village in Armenia, was published in our last issue. I would love the magazine to be accessible to as many people as possible to make these kinds of voices heard.”

The *Hyebred* team sees a bright future ahead, with each issue receiving more submissions than the last. Sisserian divulged that she “would love for *Hyebred* to go beyond the young generation and team up with literary magazines that are read by the diaspora and where noted authors are published like *Pakin*, for example. It’s import-

ant that the generations before us know that we are carrying on the work.”

Danho added that he would “love to work with the *Hye-Phen Magazine* and also collaborate with the International Armenian Literary Alliance.”

When asked what role within the broad and storied sphere of Armenian art *Hyebred* occupied, Danho supplied more than a simple answer, he provided an address: “44 Bebutov Street, Tiflis, Vernatun. This was the literary/art group that Hovhannes Tumanyan started in his home, gathering artists and writers to meet and discuss and commiserate years before the Genocide. If *HyeBred* has to occupy a role in the storied history of Armenian art, it would be as one of the members of this group, coming and going as time and circumstances allow — one among so many, each with rich perspectives to ply and play with.”

The ambitions of the *Hyebred* team are evident, but being the voice of an ethnic group that is defined by their ambitiousness and tenacity to provide for their families, is difficult, with art not often being a field that Armenian youth are encouraged to enter.

Danho explained this conflict, saying, “I want *HyeBred* to be the space of interaction that makes art, writing, film, and Armenian Expression to be more palatable to the masses — a place where one can celebrate the having AND the doing of art within our

culture, without the prerequisite or predestination of profit in mind, and a place where those outside the Armenian community get a good look inside to see its merits, virtues, and beauty.”

Rafaella elaborated, saying that to achieve the celebration of art, we need to support the community producing it, “*HyeBred’s* community is a very supportive collective. The more we support each other’s work, the more value we as Armenians give to the art our people are creating.”

With their tenth issue forthcoming, *Hyebred* is ready to usher in the next generation of Armenian painters, writers, poets, filmmakers, musicians, and artists. They hope you join them in celebrating these new additions to the historic tapestry of Armenian art.

For those interested in reading an issue of the magazine but don’t know where to start, the team has some favorites. For poetry Danho suggested “What the Soil Knows” by Nvard Tadevosyan from their ninth issue, “Rebirth.” For those who are looking for visual art, there are Lena Halteh’s illustrations in “Isolation/Utopia” in the eighth. And for more of a wildcard, there is the sci-fi short story “Nor Akhuri” by Araxie Cass. To be a part of the magazine as a contributor, the team welcomes submissions on their website, <https://hyebredmag.com/submit>.



ARTS & CULTURE

Recipe Corner



by Christine Vartanian



Opa! A Healthy Greek Salad for Summer Green Beans and Potatoes

Here's a Mediterranean salad recipe perfect for hot summer weather, an updated version of the Greek green bean stew, fasolakia. It was recently featured by long-time food and wine writer (Los Angeles Times), blogger, and cookbook author, Barbara Hansen at her must-read food blog, tableconversation.com.



Barbara Hansen, longtime food, wine writer (Los Angeles Times), blogger and cookbook author, Squid Ink freelancer, author Korean Restaurant Guide Los Angeles

"Instead of a hearty hot dish, it's a light salad of green beans, potatoes and tomatoes, tossed with olive oil, lemon juice and fresh dill. It's spectacular to look at, but super simple to make," says Barbara.

The recipe is from *Opa! The Healthy Greek Cookbook* by Theo Stephan and Christina Xenos. (To order, go to: <https://www.amazon.com/Opa-Healthy-Greek-Cookbook-Mediterranean/dp/1939754127> or <https://www.amazon.com/Opa-Healthy-Greek-Cookbook-Mediterranean-ebook/dp/B076V6FSX8>.)

Author Theo Stephan is the owner of Global Gardens, an olive farm in the Santa Ynez Valley in California. Her previous cookbooks included *Olive Oil and Vinegar for Life: Delicious Recipes for Healthy Caliterranean Living* (To order, go to: <https://www.amazon.com/Olive-Oil-Vinegar-Life-Caliterranean/dp/1510706534>.)

Theodora lives in Los Olivos with her two daughters.

Christina Xenos is a personal chef, culinary and travel writer. Her writing has appeared in publications such as the Forbes Travel Guide and SocialPulse.com. She lives in Los Angeles.

Bring the healthy and mouthwatering flavors of Greece home with *Opa! The Healthy Greek Cookbook*. Filled with traditional dishes, this Greek cookbook combines great tastes with food that's good for you. From Kalamata Olive Spread and Vegetable Moussaka to Shrimp Santorini and Spinach and Feta Stuffed Chicken Breasts, these dishes will have you shouting "Opa!"

Opa! The Healthy Greek Cookbook includes:

- 90 healthy Greek recipes—Discover how easy it is to craft sumptuous Greek dishes in your kitchen using easy-to-find ingredients and simple instructions.
- Helpful tips and tricks—This cookbook is filled with handy suggestions for substituting ingredients, advice for better cooking, timesavers, and more.
- Live Greek—Get insight into why Greek food is so good for you—as well as healthy lifestyle tips drawn straight from Greece.

Xenos contributed the recipe, adding bright flavors and substituting crisp green beans for limp stewed beans. "Greek cooking has always been healthy," she said

during a recent book-signing at Melissa's Produce," (<https://www.melissas.com/pages/about-us>). And she has made it even healthier with modernized versions of classics such as this one. "This book represents how we eat today," she added.

This Greek cookbook brings you authentic dishes without needing to visit the Mediterranean to shop. Learn how to stock your pantry, explore Greek flavor profiles, and master cooking skills and techniques. Xenos' Greek roots are in Crete.

"Dining together is the cornerstone of Greek culture," she writes in the introduction to the book. "These recipes and way of living define the way I cook for my family, friends, and clients -- preparing healthy food for longevity."

"Opa's the word for this book so full of the smells of basil and lemon and fish on the grill, soothed by olive oil, salted by sea air, shaded by vines from blinding white against bluest blue, that I want to run to my kitchen and dance to bouzouki and syrtaki

and ask all my neighbors over to join the feast of eating and drinking and singing and dancing that Greek food conjures every single blessed day," said a book review by Betty Fussell, author of *My Kitchen Wars* and winner of the Julia Child Cookbook Award and the James Beard Foundation Journalism Award.



Christina Xenos

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 pound fresh baby potatoes
- 1 pound fresh green beans, ends trimmed, or haricots verts
- Juice of 2 lemons
- 1 shallot, minced
- 1 garlic clove, minced (more to taste)
- 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 10 ounces cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh dill

PREPARATION:

In a medium pot over high heat, boil the potatoes for 10 to 15 minutes, until they are easily pierced with a fork. Drain.

In another medium pot over high heat, blanch the green beans in boiling water for one minute. Drain.

In a medium bowl, combine the lemon juice, shallot and garlic. Whisk in the olive oil until emulsified.

In a large bowl, arrange green beans, potatoes and tomatoes. Add the dressing and toss to coat. Serve with crusty bread for soaking up the extra dressing, if desired.

Serves 4.

Note from Barbara Hansen: "When I made this recipe, I cooked the green beans a little longer, until crisp-tender. The book follows the Mediterranean diet in using fresh herbs and spices rather than salt to flavor foods; however, I chose to add salt to perk up the vegetables. As I made it, the salad could serve 6."

Go to: <https://www.tableconversation.com/recipes-greece/>

A staff member at the Los Angeles Times for many years, Barbara contributed to various publications, including Bon Appetit, Daily Dish, Saveur, LA Weekly and the Cook's Cook. She is a James Beard Award winner in the wine and spirits category for an article on mezcal in Oaxaca. Barbara's six best-selling books include: Mexican Cookery; Southeast Asian Cooking: Menus and Recipes From Thailand, Singapore, Vietnam, Brunei, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines; Cooking California Style; Good Bread, and a revised edition of the Southeast Asian cookbook with new format and new recipes. By request, she wrote Guidebook to Korean restaurants in Los Angeles. She is an avid world traveler and considered an authority on Indian and Mexican food. She has two blogs, www.tableconversation.com and www.eatmx.com, which are devoted to Mexican food.

Connect at:

www.tableconversation.com

www.eatmx.com

<https://twitter.com/foodandwinegal>

Instagram: Tableconversation





ARTS & CULTURE

Tufenkian Fine Arts Helps Artists Connects Artists And Art Lovers

ARTS, from page 12

Lais-Tufenkian was born in Switzerland. When she was 11 years old her family moved to Iran, since her mother was from there. But Caroline had an uncle in Glendale whom she visited every summer. During the revolution in Iran her family moved back to Switzerland and later to the US. She studied art history at California State University where her future was determined as an art historian, consultant and curator.

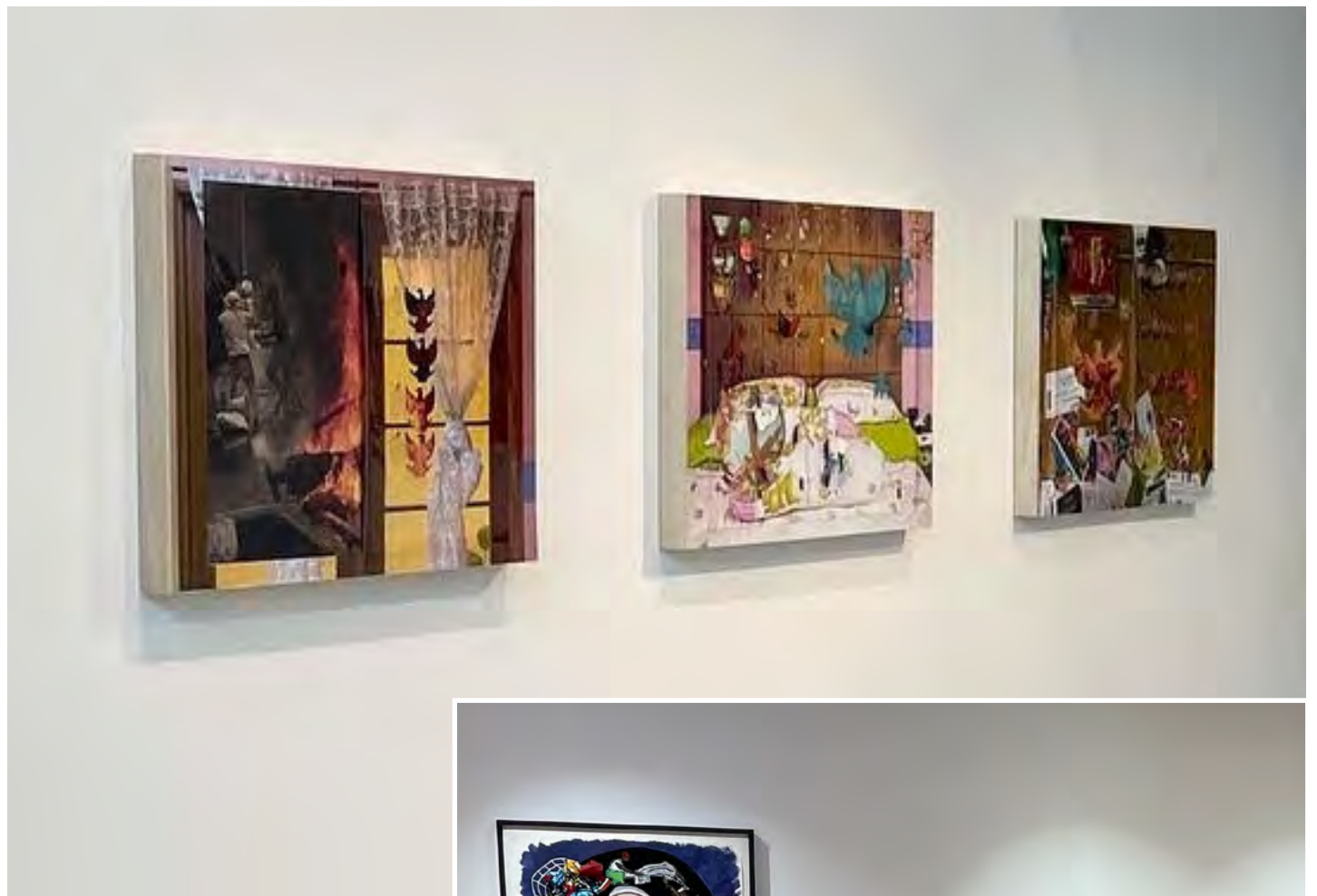
From the beginning Tufenkian Fine Arts made it its goal to represent Armenian and non-Armenian contemporary, classic and mainstream artists and build a bridge connecting these two worlds through the clients and art collectors. “It’s a pleasure to see that Armenians come in and admire other artists’ works or often buy their works. Or non-Armenians come and get introduced to let’s say, Arthur Sarkissian and purchase his work. I feel that the job is done,” noted Caroline.

Choosing the artists to showcase is very personal for Caroline. Whether the artist is introduced by another one, is found on Instagram or selected based on his or her biography or palette, the artwork must “speak” to Caroline first. “Is it something that I personally would like to have as a collector,” she said.

And she really means it since later in our conversation she reveals that in her home she has almost all the artists’ works that are shown at the gallery.

“I am very supportive of the artists I represent,” Caroline admits, “I believe in their work and I love their work.” Then the process evolves to determine the professional characteristics, educational and professional background and “esthetic sensibility” of the artist. Based on the theme of the exhibition gallery includes the artists from Armenian and non-Armenian backgrounds by “creating a bridge” between two art worlds. This is not Caroline’s initiative only. Tufenkian Fine Arts often has guest curators as well-known art critics and scholars Peter Frank, John O’Brien and others. The list goes on with the anticipation of high-level art which includes works of the Armenian artists as well. “That’s one of my proud moments,” she said.

Tufenkian Fine Art Gallery also publishes monographs and single artist’s catalogs representing artworks from an exhibition and written presentations by art scholars, critics and writers. I turn the pages of the catalog with Hagop Hagopian’s works.



Crossroads exhibition in Tufenkian Fine Arts Gallery

“Hagob Hagopian has a very unique look. I think, from the classics he has the most contemporary feel. Also, his work speaks to a really wider public, Armenian and non-Armenian,” Caroline takes the lead as a true curator.

For Lais-Tufenkian, owning a gallery is a passion.

“When you’re in the gallery world and you don’t have that passion, it shows. It’s not just a business. It’s really a business of passion, love and knowledge, educating people and sharing that beauty,” she explained.

But the business component cannot be overlooked. When asked if in this digital age people still purchase art, she said indeed, they do. It turns out that people do buy art. They did it even during the pandemic. “Last year was probably our best year. I think, a lot of people were home and they realized that they needed a change, something better to look at. So, they came and purchased art!”

Others wanted to buy something of val-



ue that could appreciate in time. Some just thought that they don’t travel and still have money to spend and the right place for that is buying art.

The gallery was operating by appointment. But the virtual concept allowed Caroline to discover and new and exciting ways to conduct the business. Tufenkian

shelves, not the artworks. And we sent that to his son. He got the artwork images from Yerevan and ‘placed’ them on the wall by creating a really nice video and sent it back to us. That’s how we did the virtual exhibition.”

Going forward Tufenkian Fine Arts is planning to implement newly learned and

‘Seismic Histories’: Conversation with Author Nadia Owusu Explores Family Histories

BOSTON — The National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR), the Bentley University Department of English and Media Studies and Department of Modern Languages, AGBU New England District, the Armenian Institute, International Armenian Literary Alliance, and Zoravik will present the webinar “Seismic Histories in Nadia Owusu’s *Aftershocks*,” a conversation with author Nadia Owusu conducted by Dr. Laure Astourian of Bentley University, on Wednesday, September 15, at noon (Eastern U.S.) / 9 a.m. (Pacific).

Owusu and Astourian will discuss Owusu’s choice to weave family histories — the multi-generational effects of the colonization of Ghana and the Armenian Genocide — into her personal narrative for the acclaimed memoir *Aftershocks* (2021). Participants can learn about Owusu’s research process, the importance of historical reckoning, and the parallels between seemingly disparate histories.

This program will be accessible on Zoom (register at <https://bit.ly/NAASROWusu>) or on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/c/ArmenianStudies>, where it will remain available after the event.

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



Tufenkian Fine Arts Gallery in Glendale

Gallery did on-line exhibitions, art talks, artists highlight and other events. One specific event used all the possibilities of a digital new era which she shares with excitement. She is talking about Arthur Sarkissian’s exhibition which was scheduled in May 2020. His son, who lives in Berlin, suggested doing it virtually instead of cancelling. “So, the artist and his works are in Yerevan. His son is in Berlin. And the gallery is here. What we did is a video of the panorama of the gallery — only the

original methods to achieve even much more in the post pandemic word.

Lais-Tufenkian is certain that in this digital age the future of the art is becoming even more important. “I don’t think it is going to replace the physical object. It is always going to have a value. When you are in front of an object of art it is a whole different experience,” she adds, by pointing at Farzad Kohan’s textured painting, as she is convinced, wouldn’t have the same look on the screen.



ARTS & CULTURE

Books

Caprine Wonder: Jim Najarian’s *The Goat Songs*

By Christopher Atamian
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

To you liberals, of course, goats are just sheep from broken homes.
—Malcolm Bradbury

BOSTON — Jim Najarian’s *The Goat Songs* is many things: an American pastoral to Berks County, Penn., where he grew up, an ode to the male body, as well a paean to all things caprine. It is also one of the most promising and cleanly written books of poetry to have been published of late. The author’s precise language and his rich vocabulary should surprise no one perhaps, coming from a Boston College English professor who specializes in Keats and was the winner of the 2017 Vassar Miller Prize in Poetry. The range of topics,

as well as the intimate portrait of a family history that stretches from ancient Armenia to modern-day Pennsylvania is told with psychological accuracy and verve: the result is a wonderfully idiosyncratic tome that is bound to surprise.

Najarian divides the book’s first section, “Armenia, PA” somewhat equally divided between old and new. Though a graduate of Lawrenceville and Yale, Najarian grew up on a farm and makes the reader privy to things both pedestrian and arcane about goats. On their nam-



Jim Najarian

ing: “There’s Bippy we cry out, “There’s Charmain.”/In general they had attractive names/that you would hesitate to give your daughters:/Candy, Ceffie/Bambi, Sere-nade — or sometimes a descriptive sobriquet:...Regina for a royal Roman nose; /Frisbee for one who leapt all fences...” In “First Kid-ding” the poet recounts in some detail how a kid is born. And finally in “The Goat Song” (again) we learn “But goats live only six or seven years./In our herd, they seemed to die unceasingly/like her-oiines from nineteenth century op-era—of mysterious, long-thought curable diseases.” The goats smell of “The shit-and-lemon cologne they carried on them” and we learn “How they hated/two things above all: being alone, and rain.”

In “Near Apex PA” Najarian cleverly mixes topography with human geography when describing the surrounding mountains: “The Kittatiny, the Running Mountain/ divides this country with its slack axe,/lop-ping the hemlock from the oak,/Slav from German, farm from quarry.”

Elsewhere in “Taking the Train from Kempton PA,” he addresses the viewer in the imperative mode, advising him to “... roam undegraded behind back yards./so skirt a black wall,/follow the shallow creek, and head for the woods —.” Later in the poem he again mixes what is natural and manmade with delicacy: I headed for my google to find out what the vegetation he describes actually looks like : “Mayapples crowd the edge/where you should be./In that dull rumble/only a tractor on the new highway?...Wet jewelweed sifts through the ladder of track,/and ahead, in light/a shed peeks out from its habit of burdock.”

From Pennsylvania the poet takes us to pre-Genocide Armenia in “Armenian lesson,” an ode to the Armenian alphabet where each quatrain ends with a refrain from Gulian’s celebrated *Armenian Grammar* of 1904. After cleverly describing the language’s gutturals and other peculiarities he ends the poem: “We are expecting too much from this tongue—/more than thirty-eight letters can give,/No living language could ever be strong/enough for those it could not save./*The Turkish soldiers are very brave.*” Indeed, perhaps we are...

At times, simply the beauty of the verse suffices. In “On His Blindness” he describes a murder of crows thus: “In a moment, the crows tangle and scatter/like a black pot shot in the air/They throw their scene against a stone-/then, in one instinctual motion/the crows contract to a single tree.” And in “To the Fields,” the delightful *in a realm of instinct and sepia*: “I am beyond cartography, in a realm/of instinct and sepia, and I know only/where the bare road goes, and how/it deltas among the ordinary trees.” In “Kempton, PA After my Death” the section ends with the poet wondering what these lands that he was born in will be like once he is gone: “Will the hills be greener, then? I promise you/nothing. When you drive up the old trails,/the mountains-Hawl and Pinnacle—/will stand like cast-iron cutouts against the sky.”

The remaining two sections of *The Goat Songs* are equally rich in detail and history .In the second section , “Kleptomania” the poet writes about men and their bodies — men he admired and could never be, men he longed for, ex-lovers, and men’s bodies themselves. In “The Frat Boys,” he describes two boys, Marty and Adam, *a snarl of pectoral and arm*: “Their shirtless bodies are frolicking again—/the lawn is a snarl of pectoral and arm/in a game I cannot play, or even grasp./However rough it seems, they



mean no harm, shoulder on shoulder in a perfect clasp.” But Marty soon dies in a car crash and Adam becomes bald and unhappy. The promise of youth is not always paid out. But surprisingly to some perhaps, it is their ease at being themselves that Najarian admires most. It is a ease that most gay men have envied at one point in their lives, an ability to be yourself, to not wonder if you are good enough or beautiful enough or to worry if others are judging you: “ It is not their bodies, but their carelessness/I marvel at, and these young men display./I will never be able to possess/Adam and Marty capering in the spray.” In the next poems we are then privy to some more one-line wonders such as a description of paperwhites: “Soon, periscoping over the green,/they burst in a coronet of asterisks.”

The title poem “Kleptomania” cleverly moves from made object to human heart: “Start simply. Thief small./And stay on the ball./Take nothing that matters—/lost crews, tickets stubs, French fries from platters....Why not go on? Be a Pro of a Con--/ filch a heart for a day/As soon as you’re done with it, throw it away—/...Who’s keeping tabs? Everything, everyone, is up for grabs.” As in his description of Marty and Adam, there is a dark side to Najarian’s poetry as well, in his recognition of life’s cruelties but also in a strong underlying sense of cynicism.

Of the third part of Najarian’s book, I retain “The Dark Ages,” a learned juxtaposition of Roman Britain’s dying days and his own mother as she succumbs to a fatal illness: “Half Buried in her sheets, she is a baby/lost in a little boat. She knows. My name,/but wails, and can’t say why. At times I can/ Make out a single word: no, no no.” The preceding chilling verse will be instantly recognizable to anyone with a parent who has suffered from say Parkinson’s or Alzheimer’s. And then the wonderful, if somewhat academic parallel to Roman Britain: ” Our women scrounge for bits of bead and bronze./They roast our gritty roots right in the fire/or cook in cauldrons dug from ancient graves/: sepulchri pots that once held human ashes.” It’s not a comparison that one would think of a priori, which makes it both difficult and satisfying to understand. Other poems in the section that are equally strong Include “Th Devout life” and “In the Armenian Quarter, Jerusalem.” From frolicking goats, to frolicsome boys, to the architecture of a land he grew up in, to personal memories of family and self, Najarian’s *The Goat Songs*, does something rare: it simply sings.

The Goat Songs can be found at: <https://untpress.unt.edu/catalog/james-goat-songs/>

CALENDAR

OF EVENTS & PROGRAMS

MASSACHUSETTS

SEPTEMBER 12 — Holy Trinity Armenian Church’s Annual Picnic with traditional Armenian food and music, 12 to 5 p.m., with the blessing of the Madagh at 3 p.m. Sunday. Holy Trinity Armenian Church 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge

SEPTEMBER 19 — SUNDAY AFTERNOON AT THE PARK. 2 p.m. Cindy Fitzgibbon, WCVB TV5, emcee Enjoy Hye Guys Ensemble – Ron Sahatjian, clarinet. Jack Giragosian, oud; Kevin Magarian, guitar and Arthur Chingris, dumbeg
RSVP hello@ArmenianHeirtagePark.org

SEPTEMBER 25 — Amaras will hold its annual Walkathon in support of the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry. Registration and Check In:10:30 am – 11:00 am. Walk: Starts at 11:00 am. Start Location: Armenian Cultural and Educational Center (ACEC) 47 Nichols Avenue, Watertown. End Location: Saltonstall Park at Watertown Square. Registration Fee: \$25 for Adults; \$10 for Students and Children (Children need to register to participate in the Walk). Online Registration is highly recommended. For more information: call 617-331-0426 or email ne@abmdr.com

OCTOBER 3 — International Food Festival: Sample authentic cuisine from nine different countries. Sunday, 12 pm to 3 pm, Holy Trinity Armenian Church 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge.

OCTOBER 6 — LET’S MEET AT THE PARK! Wednesday, 10.30 a.m. In collaboration with Age Friendly Boston Meet & Greet. Walk the Labyrinth. RSVP hello@ArmenianHeirtagePark.org

November 14 — GIVING THANKS: TOGETHER IN CELEBRATION, Sunday, 2 p.m. In collaboration with Boston Children’s Choir & The Greenway Conservancy Meet & Greet. Enjoy the Boston Children’s Chorus Walk the Labyrinth. Tie a Ribbon on the Wishing Tree RSVP hello@ArmenianHeirtagePark.org

December 19 — CANDLELIT VIRTUAL LABYRINTH WALK: IN PEACE & HARMONY, 4.30 p.m. Meet & Greet. Walk the Candlelit Labyrinth. Wish on The Wishing Tree. Hot Chocolate. Individually-wrapped cookies. RSVP hello@ArmenianHeirtagePark.org

NEW JERSEY

SEPTEMBER 25 — The TCA Mher Megerdchian Theatrical Group Presents an open air concert with Huyser Music Ensemble. Saturday. Save the date. Details to follow.

NOVEMBER 13 — Save the Date: Saturday. 12 Vocations, Fulfilling the Promise of St. Nersess Seminary. Celebrating the 60th Anniversary of St. Nersess Armenian Seminary and the vocations of the first 12 priests who graduated from St. Nersess and St. Vladimir’s Seminaries and were ordained. This is the first in a series of events to recognize the alumni of St. Nersess, both ordained and lay, who are in service to the Armenian Church, in any capacity. The celebratory dinner will be held at the Old Tappan Manor in Old Tappan, N.J. For more info, go to www.stnersess.edu.

THE ARMENIAN MIRROR SPECTATOR

SINCE 1932



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EDITOR

Alin K. Gregorian

MANAGING EDITOR

Aram Arkun

ART DIRECTOR

Mark (Mgrditchian) McKertich

SENIOR EDITORIAL COLUMNIST

Edmond Y. Azadian

STAFF WRITER

Harry Kezelian III

CONTRIBUTORS

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

REGIONAL

CORRESPONDENTS

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

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Jirair Hovsepian, Ken Martin

VIDEO CORRESPONDENT

Haykaram Nahapetyan

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

Telephone: 617-924-4420

FAX: 617-924-2887

www.mirrorspectator.com

E-Mail: editor@mirrorspectator.com

For advertising: mirrorads@aol.com

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COMMENTARY

Editorial

Afghanistan on Armenia's Political Agenda



By Edmond Y.
Azadian

The collapse of Afghanistan's government and takeover of the country by the Taliban, considered by many countries as a terrorist organization, has hit the headlines. Accompanying terrorist attacks and desperate evacuation movement have further exacerbated the situation. The world is watching with trepidation to see where all developments may lead. Armenians have more cause for concern because of Turkey's role in these developments, which may result in additional dividends to Turkey.

Following the World Trade Center attack on September 11, 2001, the US decided to wage a war against terror and dismantle Taliban rule in Afghanistan, where most of the terrorist acts were hatched and the perpetrators had taken refuge.

After the Taliban ouster from power and the assassination of 9/11 mastermind Osama Bin Laden, the US did not declare mission accomplished. Incidentally, Bin Laden had found a safe haven in Pakistan, the hub of terrorism. Although the US held Pakistan, also an ally, at arm's length, it was the Pakistani intelligence which financed, armed and directed Taliban activities against the government installed by the US in Afghanistan.

Washington was not satisfied taming the terrorists and dismantling their infrastructure; it began a nation-building process, guided by the same fallacy that the West habitually applies, trying to impose Western-style democracies in places like Afghanistan, where people live in a much different reality, with different sensibilities.

In an article published in Outlook, titled "Blood in Sand" on August 29, Jeffrey D. Sachs writes: "The magnitude of the United States' failure in Afghanistan is breathtaking. It is not Democrats or Republicans, but an abiding failure of American political culture, reflected in US policy makers' lack of interest in understanding different societies. And it is all too typical. Almost every US military intervention in the developing world has come to rot."

If the nature of democratic rule is derived from the will of people, those people have to be mature enough to understand and exercise democratic processes. There is no one-size-fits-all democratic system. That is why the artificial government in Kabul collapsed as soon as President Biden declared his intention of ending the perpetual war and pulled up stakes, even before the ragtag army of the Taliban moved in with truck-mounted machineguns. And hence the stampede to get out of the country. No one has yet been held accountable for \$1 trillion wasted US taxpayers' money.

Whether President Biden's decision was right or wrong will be determined by the results of the mid-term elections in the US.

There was no love lost in Russia and China when the Taliban marched into Kabul, because they have maintained a neutral position with regards to the war in Afghanistan, sometimes even offering the political limelight to the Taliban leadership. But they should not hurry to cheer the failure of US policy in that country, because the scenario emerging must give them more cause for concern, with the advent of Turkish expansionism in the region.

That advent will impact Armenia as well.

Even before we consider the consequence of the Turkish presence in Afghanistan, alarms were raised in Karabakh. Karabakh Foreign Minister David Babayan told news.am, "After the Taliban took power in Afghanistan, part of Al Qaeda militants are being hastily deployed to the territories of the Republic of Artsakh occupied now by Azerbaijan. By doing so, Turkey wants to save the backbone of militias which it uses in different regions, mainly in the Middle East. In the occupied parts of Nagorno Karabakh there are already a lot of international terrorist groups who are out of Azerbaijani con-

trol. This way, Turkey is strengthening its position in Azerbaijan."

It is apparent that Turkey, after helping secure a victory for Azerbaijan in the Karabakh war, has, in return, gained control of Azerbaijan. While President Ilham Aliyev continues to threaten Armenia, he does not realize that his country's sovereignty has now been compromised. A sign of that development appears in a recent statement by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey, made on his way home from a trip in the Balkans, defining peace terms with Armenia. This offer was made over Aliyev's head.

The concentration of Afghan terrorists in Azerbaijan is one hazard that Armenia has to be concerned about. However the major threat may still be in its incipient stage within Afghanistan.

In order to achieve his Ottomanist plans, President Erdogan employs a two-pronged policy, weaponizing Islamic or Turkic identity. Opening madrassas (fundamentalist Muslim institutions for the young) in Central Asian republics to proselytize and capture the imagination of the masses did not yield any



tangible results, as the populations of those countries were educated under Soviet atheist rule. Therefore, Turkey's president opted for their racial and linguistic common background, which is gaining traction in that region of the world.

Erdogan's "one-nation-two-states" formula will soon extend into Central Asia.

In Afghanistan, Turkey does not need to even establish madrassas to weaponize religion. The Taliban are on Erdogan's wavelength, since the latter has already confessed that "we have the same faith." Former Chief Imam of Hagia Sofia Mosque in Istanbul, Mehmet Boynukalin has praised the Taliban and said, "May Allah help them and enable them to rule with truth and justice."

And of course, that justice is exercised under Sharia law, where decapitations, amputations, enslavement of women, genital mutilation and stoning to death are legalized.

Turkey has been the first country to take the initiative to negotiate with the Taliban and President Erdogan has praised the "reformist approach" of the Taliban.

Before the collapse of the Afghan regime, Washington had assigned Turkey to take over the operation of the Kabul airport. But Turkey withdrew its forces with the NATO allies, and now is seeking a better deal with the Taliban, hoping to "share the burden" with NATO allies.

The spokesperson of the Taliban's political bureau in Qatar, Mohammad Naeem Wardak has stated: "Turkey is an important country. Turkish people are Muslims and brotherly people. We have historical and cultural relations with Turkey. ... There are two main concerns in our relations. The first is the principles of religion of Islam and the second is the high interest of the country and the people."

see EDITORIAL, page 18



COMMENTARY

Kabul Airport Attack Exposes ‘Good Boy and Bad Boy’ Plan Of Pakistani ISI

By Armenian Network State, Foreign Affairs Think Tank
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

Editor’s Note: As the Afghan crisis exploded suddenly and took the center stage of the international political scene, its reverberations on countries in neighboring regions, including Armenia, are important to watch carefully. The following article is a detailed scrutiny of the players involved in that complex saga, which particularly concerns Afghanistan’s two large neighbors, the countries of India and Pakistan

As soon as two blasts took place outside the Kabul airport, killing at least 110 people including 13 US servicemen, Islamic State-Khorasan Province (ISKP) came forward to claim the responsibility. A commander of the ISKP named Amaq issued a statement on its Telegram channel wherein he claimed that a suicide bomber, Abdul Rahman al-Logari, managed to reach near a group of US soldiers, translators, and collaborators and detonated his explosives.

Strikingly, the statement also claimed that members of the Taliban were also amongst its casualties. Experts believe that the special mention of Taliban in the video was a part of the rhetoric that is being tried to be created in a post-US withdrawal Afghanistan.

Global watchdogs have previously highlighted that ISKP, which is active in Afghanistan and claims to be a unit of the ISIS [the Islamic State], has nothing to do with the original ISIS operating elsewhere in the world. In fact, ISKP is a clever ISI [Inter-Services Intelligence, of Pakistan] creation to help in ensuring deniability to the Pakistani intelligence agency as Pakistan was being blamed for whatever was being done by the Taliban.

Experts believe that Pakistan created ISKP by planting Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) operatives in leadership position in the outfit. The projection of ISKP as an independent player in Afghanistan against the Taliban also helped Pakistan to successfully push a narrative that Taliban can be a reliable partner to the US and the West in fighting international terrorist groups in Afghanistan. On the other hand, ISKP has a specific purpose to Pakistan’s ISI. It could be used to eliminate any Taliban commander who wasn’t falling in line.

The Pakistani project in Afghanistan has nearly succeeded with one Pakistani proxy Taliban becoming a ‘good boy’ and another Pakistan proxy ISKP becoming a ‘bad boy’. The latest attack on Kabul airport is indicative of the fact that ISI’s operation has been launched in full swing.

Counter terrorism experts believe that currently, Pakistan’s ISI is coordinating the joint efforts of Taliban, ISKP, and LeT to provide support to the Taliban through the game of good and bad boys, with LeT being the major player.

A closer look at the strongholds of the ISKP suggests that it is being strengthened and grown in the nursery of Pakistan along the Durand Line. It is believed that similar to Taliban’s sub-set Haqqani Network, the ISI is using the Afghan provinces sharing borders with Pakistan to breed ISKP terrorists.

According to global watchdogs like RAND, Stimson Centre, and Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), the strongholds of the outfit are in Nangarhar and Kunar provinces bordering Pakistan. According to CSIS, these two provinces on the border with Pakistan have “served as bases of operation for ISK-P since its founding.” Currently, Pakistani intelligence agency ISI has managed to expand the organization elsewhere in Afghanistan including northern provinces of Faryab and Jawzjan.

Having established the epicenter in the bordering areas, Pakistan conveniently ensured the movement of other Pakistan based terrorists in the ISKP in Afghanistan

and provided them safe shelters when Afghan security forces attacked them.

It is important to note that ‘Emir’ or the chief of ISKP, Mawlawi Abdullah @ Aslam Farooqui is a Pakistani citizen and had confessed about his connections with Lashkar-e-Taiba when the Afghan NDS arrested him for attacking a Gurdwara in Kabul and butchering 27 members from the Sikh minority community.

After being detained, Aslam Farooqui was replaced by Maulvi Mohammed as the new chief of the outfit. Similar to Farooqui, Maulvi Mohammad was also trained by the ISI and was associated with the LeT.

The links between the LeT and the ISKP re-emerged last year on April 14th when Afghan intelligence agency National Directorate of Security (NDS) arrested a top commander of ISKP, Munib Mohammad, who happened to be a Pakistani national had accepted about his connections with the Pakistani intelligence agency during interrogation. Interestingly, the ISI made him occupy one of the top seats of IS-KP by making him a member of the Central Council of the outfit. Moreover, he was utilized by the ISI for liasoning with other terrorist outfits as a statement by the NDS on his arrest stated that he was “coordinating with terrorist groups and intelligence agencies of the region” and was working with “intelligence agencies of the region”, indicating ISI’s role in propping the outfit. The statement further highlighted that he was also working with the LeT, Haqqani Network, Taliban Peshawar Shura, and several other Pakistan sponsored outfits.

In the mid of last year, the name of ISI officer Bilal @ Zarqawi emerged, who led a batch of LeT cadres to make them join the ISKP in Dangam district of Kunar province. Later on, he began commanding ISKP operations in Jalalabad. Bilal is an old handler of LeT operations and had previously served as in charge of terror camp of LeT in Muzaffarabad in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. Similarly, two important pointsperson between the ISI and the ISKP were Ahmadullah and Qari Ziaur Rehman, who were respectively appointed as ISKP’s governor and deputy governor in Kunar province.

According to a report of Long War Journal, an independent watchdog on Afghanistan, “a number of Pakistani groups are known to operate inside Afghanistan and fight alongside the Taliban, and top leaders of Pakistani terror groups have been killed inside Afghanistan. Additionally, a number of Pakistanis are known to fight in the ranks of the Islamic State’s Khorasan Province (ISKP).”

The argument was reiterated in the United Nation’s

“11th Report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team,” released in May 2020, which had stressed, “One Member State reported that the total number of Pakistani nationals fighting with terrorist groups in Afghanistan may be as high as 6,000 to 6,500.” It further added that the largest number of Pakistani terrorist operating in Afghanistan belonged primarily from three outfits – Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM).

Similar to LeT, cadres of JeM have also infiltrated ISKP and have occupied top ranks of the organisation. A report of the Middle East Institute had highlighted that ISKP has a ‘sizeable number’ of terrorists from other Islamist militant groups and stressed, “the current emir of ISKP, Mawlawi Aslam Farooqi, is an ex-militant commander of Lashkar-e-Taiba, while previous emirs were recruited from TTP and other Afghan Taliban groups.”

The desperate attempts to ISI to infiltrate the cadres of Pakistan sponsored outfits in the ISKP began emerging last year after arrest of top commanders of ISKP who previously served in Pakistan based outfits. The involvement of Pakistani terrorists in attacks conducted by the ISKP in Afghanistan kept surfacing throughout last year.

On these developments, Afghan intelligence officials had stated to the press that ISI accelerated pushing LeT and JeM cadres after the Doha peace agreement in February 2020 between Taliban and the US Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad.

After signing of the peace deal in February 2020, several LeT cadres were appointed as the governors and front commanders of the ISKP to ensure that the group remains being commanded by the ISI. It was also revealed that besides infiltration of Pakistan based cadres to the top ranks of ISKP, the ISI also created the financial and logistic support network to speed up outfit’s operations.

The full fledged launch of ISI’s new game plan on Taliban and ISKP has already begun jeopardizing the security interests of the US-led coalition. Earlier, developments like recruitment of Indian nationals by the ISI for ISKP and Kabul Gurdwara attacks have proved it detrimental for security interests of India as well. Following the attacks, President Joe Biden, who is facing an intense backlash in the US over Kabul airport attack, vowed to retaliate and “not forgive” the perpetrators. It would be interesting to see whether he holds the source of the attack, the ISI, accountable or just gives it the cold shoulder.

Afghanistan on Armenia’s Political Agenda

EDITORIAL, from page 17

Thus President Erdogan finds fertile ground for Islamic fundamentalism and does not need further efforts to foment religious fanaticism.

“We have held our first talks with the Taliban which lasted three-and-a-half hours, and if necessary, we have the opportunity to hold such talks again,” he said.

But it is apparent that a deal has already emerged whereby Turkey will help Afghanistan develop its resources and economy, on condition that it recognizes the Taliban as the legitimate government of Afghanistan, while that organization is listed as a terrorist group by the United Nations and most major countries.

The Taliban leadership has agreed with Ankara for Turkey to operate the Kabul airport but the latter maintains that they have to provide security, as Ankara is looking for an excuse to reintroduce its forces into Afghanistan. The recent suicide attacks have played into Turkish hands as Ragip Soylu writes in the Middle East Eye: “Turkey believes the deadly suicide bombing outside the Kabul airport has only emboldened its argument to the Taliban that sizable Turkish forces are needed to protect the area in order that the airport can operate smoothly.”

Once Turkey introduces its military forces in Afghanistan, those forces will be no different than Turkish occupation forces in Cyprus and Azerbaijan. But the geostrategic consequences will be more alarming to the countries in the region as Turkey will be encircling Armenia and Iran, militarily, while politically moving closer to Central Asia to reach out to the Turkic nations there and threatening the interests and security of China and Russia.

Afghanistan had already caused some instability in Central Asia when terrorism spilled over into the neighboring Tajikistan, Armenia’s ally through

the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). Now, with Turkey consolidating its military might in Afghanistan, that threat will be further amplified.

Incidentally, Armenia will soon be assuming leadership of the CSTO, which is by rotation, and will be the first one to absorb the brunt of the Turkish assault in Central Asia.

While Turkey comes to accommodations in certain hot spots with Russia, it has not made a secret of its plans to blow up Russia from within by stirring up the latter’s 25 million Muslim population. It has also been arming Ukraine with Bayraktar drones and has vowed to conquer back Crimea in cooperation with Ukrainian forces. To further ingratiate itself to the West — and prove its importance — Ankara will not shy away from fomenting some instability on Russia’s southern borders. And as those problems develop, Russia may move its strategic assets to that region, leaving the Caucasus defenseless, where Armenia is already in a precarious situation.

Turkey’s expansionism first built bridges with Pakistan and Malaysia. That is why the Pakistani air force joined Turkey and freelance jihadists in the 44-day Karabakh war, which cemented Turkey’s relations with Azerbaijan and expanded its footprint in the Caucasus. The next extension will be Afghanistan, Malaysia and Azerbaijan under Ankara’s aegis, thus, many faraway countries which do not have any issues with Armenia will become the latter’s enemies by association. Ankara eventually will lead an Islamic alliance comprising Pakistan, Qatar, Afghanistan, Malaysia and Azerbaijan to challenge NATO and CSTO at the same time, and squeeze Armenian in between.

Those of us who believed that Afghanistan is a far-away country and events there do not concern us will soon realize just how close Afghanistan is to Armenia.



COMMENTARY

MY TURN



by Harut Sassounian

Armenian Parliamentarians Brawl While the Barbarians Are at the Gates

Another appropriate title would have been, “Parliamentarians fiddle while Armenia burns,” which is my version of the well-known historic phrase, “Nero fiddles while Rome burns,” referring to Emperor Nero’s inaction during a massive fire in Rome.

This is the tragic situation in Armenia. After losing a major portion of Artsakh and the lives of thousands of young Armenians in last September’s war, one would think that Armenians both in and out of Armenia would rally together to lick their wounds, strengthen the military and repulse the enemy’s further advances. Unfortunately, the exact opposite is happening. The culprit is not Azerbaijan, Turkey, Russia or anyone else, but us. We are unwilling to unify even in the aftermath of a massive disaster. Before we blame anyone else, we need to hold the mirror to our faces.

Ever since Armenia’s independence, we have been boasting that Armenia has the most powerful military in the region, Azerbaijan would not dare to attack us, and if it did, we would march into Baku. Before last year’s war, Armenia’s Defense Minister David Tonoyan arrogantly proclaimed: “New War, New Territories,” meaning that if Azerbaijan attacked Artsakh, Armenia would conquer even more Azeri territories.

The former and current leaders of Armenia and Artsakh refused to make any concessions regarding the territories surrounding Artsakh, unless Azerbaijan first agreed to recognize Artsakh’s independence. Even though the rest of the world was urging Armenia’s leaders to make compromises and return at least some of the territories around Artsakh, we dismissed all such suggestions. That is the reason why no other country was willing to recognize the Republic of Artsakh. Even Armenia itself refused to do so, expecting that others would defend Artsakh’s interests ahead of us.

As a result, we squandered our unique chance to force Azerbaijan to recognize Artsakh’s independence in the 1990’s, while the enemy was defeated and weak.

Without getting into the meaningless debate of whether the former leaders or the current one was responsible for our defeat in 2020, I would say, we are all responsible for that disaster.

Since the end of the last war, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan rejected repeated suggestions that he resign and allow a new leader to take the helm of the devastated state. He insisted that he is the only one who can remedy the country’s massive problems. How could the one who was in charge when the country suffered such a defeat be able to fix anything? But, he stubbornly held on to his seat. Using the state resources at his disposal, he managed to convince slightly over half of those who participated in the election to support him and his political party. In reality, most of those who voted for Pashinyan actually voted against the former leaders. As expected, almost a year after the war, not only Armenia’s problems have not been resolved, but in many respects, they have become much worse.

While the former leaders were not well-liked during their reign, the degree of antagonism and hatred that we see today in Armenia is unprecedented. Regrettably, the current Prime Minister made matters worse by constantly issuing

threats and warnings against anyone who disagreed with him. He started his rule by preaching democracy and tolerance, but quickly became a dictator, dividing the public into “blacks” and “whites, and shockingly, held up a hammer while on stage during his recent electoral campaign threatening to smash the heads of his opponents!

In such a toxic atmosphere, uniting the nation against the common enemy is impossible. It is much easier to fight against your political opponents. Neither the government nor the opposition is willing to make any compromises to solve the country’s problems and defend the homeland against further hostile incursions.

Not surprisingly, when Pashinyan came to the Parliament last week to present his government’s five-year plan, several fistfights erupted as a result of which the Chairman of the Parliament Alen Simonyan ordered the security guards to enter the chamber and forcefully drag some of the opposition members out. The Parliament looked more like a military garrison than a legislative assembly hall. Simonyan frequently violated the free speech rights of opposition members if they dared to refer to the Prime Minister in a derogatory manner. He ordered that the speakers’ microphones be turned off and the cameras broadcasting the meetings shut off. These draconian measures are unbecoming of a country’s legislature. The ugly scenes of the fistfights were aired by TV stations around the world, embarrassing all Armenians.

As a result, the government’s proposed five-year plan was hardly discussed. Instead, there were repeated attacks by the Parliamentarians both physical and verbal.

In the meantime, Azerbaijan and Turkey, emboldened by their recent victory, and seeing the deep divisions within Armenia, are encroaching on Armenia’s borders and demanding more and more concessions. Armenia’s weakened leader is unable to resist the overbearing demands of Azerbaijan, while Armenia’s military ally, Russia, is pursuing its own interests in coordination with Turkey and Azerbaijan.

In conclusion, I would like to make two points that are often debated on social media.

1) At the slightest criticism of Prime Minister Pashinyan, his supporters are quick to admonish the critics by saying that the Diaspora has no right to criticize the Armenian government. I reject such objections because Armenia is the homeland of all Armenians regardless of where they live. Criticism or praise is a sign that the individual cares deeply about his or her homeland rather than take the posture of a disinterested spectator. Why is it that we have the right to express an opinion about developments about any other country in the world, for example Afghanistan, but when it comes to Armenia, our homeland, we have no such right? It is also interesting to note that those who object to criticisms of the Armenian government by Diasporans have no objection when the latter praise Armenia. Therefore, the issue is not having the right to criticize Armenia, but not wanting to hear criticism about the Prime Minister.

2) In my opinion, constructive criticism is much more valuable than the blind support of a leader. Which is more patriotic — seeing something going wrong and keeping our mouths shut or speaking up and trying to correct it? In my opinion, taking corrective action is much more patriotic than remaining silent and allowing the error to continue.

I hope we stop “fiddling,” or in our case, feuding, and joining hands to create a strong Armenia that can withstand the incessant assaults of the barbarians at our gates.

Primate of Eastern Diocese Asks Faithful to Pray for Christ’s Healing and Hope for Global Ails

The following statement was released by the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern) Primate, Bishop Daniel Findikyan.

Dear Faithful People,

The horrors unfolding before our eyes in Afghanistan and Haiti in recent days should shake us all to the core of our beings—as American Armenians and as human beings. Whether the result of premeditated human evil, political failures, moral indifference or natural disaster, these catastrophes tragically remind us of the undeniable frailty of this world, and of our utter need for a heavenly Savior to whom we can turn for hope, healing and true justice.

We Americans, situated far from the epicenter of the most recent disasters, and largely isolated from them (but hardly free of entanglement in them), must not stand by helplessly. Nor should we surrender to the easy temptation to reduce the human agony to a mere political issue, pointing our blame-seeking fingers here or there, as we go about our daily routines.

As children of the Armenian Church, we know all too well from our own history—as recently as last year—that such reductions serve no good end. Thank God that in our history and

spiritual DNA we know personally that heavenly Savior who promises hope, healing and peace. Furthermore, that Savior has called us to be the active agents of His good will for a world God created in love and with high expectations.

Next week I shall have more to say about these recent events, and about the continued suffering in Armenia, Artsakh and Lebanon. As a Diocese we will do what we can to bring some measure of relief to those we can reach. For now, I am calling on every child of the Armenian Church in our Diocese to pray daily for “the peace of God, which passes all understanding,” and for relief to those who are suffering. That peace is not a state of being, much less an emotion, but the personal power of God in Jesus Christ. As we sing every Sunday in our Holy Badarak, “Christ has come here into our midst ... the voice of peace has resounded.”

May the Lord have mercy on the souls of his beloved creatures that have been taken from this life; and may He have mercy on us all.

With my prayers,
Bishop DANIEL
Primate



Belmont University to Invest \$60 Million Over Five Years in New Data Initiative

By April Hefner

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — With a vision to become “a globally recognized source of morally-grounded data fluency,” Belmont University announced in August the launch of the new Belmont Data Collaborative (BDC). The BDC will serve Belmont students and working professionals by delivering curricula and programming to help fill the ever-evolving need for data skills in nearly every workforce environment. The BDC will also partner with companies and nonprofits across a variety of fields to consult and collaborate on data-related needs and to offer exploratory analysis and internships. Dr. Charlie Apigian, formerly the founding director of the Data Science Institute at Middle Tennessee State University, will serve as the executive director of the BDC as well as a professor of business system and analytics.

Belmont President Dr. Greg Jones said, “Belmont is the perfect home for a future-shaping effort that unites academia and industry in approaching data because our mission involves seeking solutions for complex problems in order to help people and communities flourish. As the ‘data-tization’ of our world becomes ever more

pervasive, we have an opportunity to harness data for good, allowing it to drive the kind of decision-making that can produce positive impacts on society’s ‘wicked problems’ and inform change. Furthermore, Belmont’s Christ-centered mission distinctively equips us to examine questions around the ethical uses of data and incorporate those conversations into educating and forming individuals, businesses and communities.”

A collaboration across programs and colleges on Belmont’s campus as well as with a host of Middle Tennessee companies, the BDC is intent on integrating data fluency with moral, ethical and social responsibility. Belmont intends to invest more than \$60 million in establishing the BDC over the next five years as a hub for collaboration and education to:

- Develop a diverse community of leaders who will bring an ethical compass to data use;
- Meet the cultural and corporate demand for data fluency;

- Create an evolving portfolio of degree and continuing education programs to provide broad-based data literacy for students and working professionals across all fields;
- Serve as a resource for Nashville through academic-community partnerships



Dr. Charles Apigian

and specialize in key industries, including health services, music/entertainment and entrepreneurship.

The BDC was developed by a committee of Belmont deans, faculty and technology officers along with Nashville industry representatives Tod Fetherling (founder/chief data scientist, Perception Health) and John Liu (CEO/founder, Intelluron Corporation). Input was also solicited from Belmont’s Business Systems and Analytics Advisory Board, which includes represen-

tatives from Amazon, HCA Healthcare, Tractor Supply, AllianceBernstein, The Mechanical Licensing Collective, Cat Financial, HealthTrust, Schneider Electric, Nissan North America and more.


New BDC Executive Director Dr. Charlie Apigian added, “The Belmont Data Collaborative is an opportunity to infuse data skills into the fabric of all majors and disciplines at Belmont. The greatest need isn’t just for the next cohort of data scientists; it’s for data-driven problem solvers in every field. We can help individuals and companies ‘think differently about data’ so that it can be actionable and instrumental in solving problems and be used in a responsible and ethical way.”

In his previous role at MTSU’s Data Science Institute, Apigian was charged with building partnerships with industry, communities, government and other entities on big data projects while engaging faculty and students for projects and programs that spanned the campus. His work included funded projects and research with the U.S. Geological Survey, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Transportation and the National Science Foundation along with partnerships with Hytch Rewards, Second Harvest Food Bank, Tennessee Department of Human Services, Project Maslow and Special Kids, Inc. A 20-year faculty member, frequent author and respected presenter/speaker, Apigian received the 2020 Data Scientist of the Year Award and the 2018 Community Leader of the Year Award from the Nashville Technology Council.

Brian Moyer, president and CEO of the Greater Nashville Technology Council said, “Business reliance on technology to remain competitive is accelerating demand for data science as the technology of the future. Data fluency is one of the most sought after skills today, and that trend is only going to increase. The timing could not be better for the launch of BDC, and I can’t think of anyone better qualified to lead that effort than Charlie Apigian. This initiative aligns perfectly with NTC’s mission to ‘lead Nashville into the world that is becoming,’ and we look forward to working with Belmont and Charlie as we continue to grow our tech workforce.”

In addition to coordinating co-curricular activities and working with faculty across Belmont’s colleges and adult education programs, Apigian will continue to build relationships with corporations and nonprofits throughout the Nashville region. His initial efforts will also include a focus on diversity as the BDC aims to encourage more women and minorities to explore data and technology fields.

In the future, Belmont plans to develop an intentional, collaborative physical space for the BDC to serve as an accessible, centralized resource for companies, working professionals, nonprofits and the community in addition to the University’s undergraduate and graduate students.






The Tekeyan Cultural Association Is Rolling Up Its Sleeves Again

Before the 44-day war, we supported the development of the strategic Berdzor corridor and made large investments in the region. Berdzor and its neighboring regions (Kashatagh) have now fallen into enemy hands. All of a sudden, its residents, students and teachers were forced to become refugees and are now helplessly scattered all around Artsakh and Armenia. They have lost everything and their living conditions are less than desirable.

The good news is that once more Tekeyan is engaged to make their lives better, so that they remain in Armenia and become part of the nation-building process.

This time though the help will be achieved through investments and not through donations. The creation of a sustainable economy is the aim of this appeal.

Through small contributions / mass funding we will create income-generating opportunities for the displaced families. Tekeyan of Armenia in association with a local reputable Syunik NGO will make investments in agriculture to create income for their beneficiaries. The recipient gets assistance conditional that within 2 years they give back on an annual basis the equivalent of 10% of their produced goods to other needy families.



THIS IS A MODEL OF SUSTAINABLE ASSISTANCE, YEAR AFTER YEAR

Participations are tax deductible. Checks to be made to

Tekeyan Cultural Association, memo Berdzor refugee assistance				
\$100	\$250	\$500	\$1000	other \$ _____
Send donation to		Tekeyan Cultural Association, 755 Mount Auburn Street, Watertown, MA 02472 USA		
Name:		Address:		

Or Donate online

[CLICK HERE](#)

For Additional Information

Call TCA Headquarters at 617 924-4455

