

Armenian Foreign Minister Mirzoyan To Visit Turkey

ANKARA (Reuters) — Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan is to visit Turkey in March, his Turkish counterpart said on Thursday, January 27, as the neighbors work to mend ties after decades of animosity.

Earlier this month, Turkey and Armenia said a first round of talks in more than ten years between envoys on normalising ties was “positive and constructive”, raising the prospect that ties could be restored and borders reopened.

Speaking in Ankara, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan had responded positively to Turkey’s invitation to the Antalya Diplomacy Forum (ADF), set for March 11-13, and that the normalization process was proceeding with confidence-building measures.

“The Armenian Foreign Minister and the Special Envoy Ruben Rubinyan were invited, and Pashinyan lastly said they could participate in ADF,” Cavusoglu said.

“We would welcome this, because Azerbaijan is coming too. So let Azerbaijan state its views and Armenia state its opinions too, and this can be part of the confidence-building measures,” he added.

This month’s talks were the first attempt to restore links since a 2009 peace accord. That deal was never ratified and relations have remained tense.

In December, Ankara and Yerevan appointed special envoys to lead normalization talks. Cavusoglu said the envoys would decide when the next round of talks would be and where they would be held.

Ankara has said it wants the talks to be held in Turkey or Armenia, after the first round was held in Moscow.



Tessa Hofmann and Taner Akcam (on screen) (Photo by AGA member Parthena Iordanidou)

Genocide Researchers Explore Denialism

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BERLIN — On January 29, historians, human rights activists and students gathered in Berlin and via Zoom internationally for a lively debate on denial, an aspect of genocide studies that has become increasingly prominent in political developments. Organized by the Working Group for Recognition: Against Genocide, for Understanding among Peoples (AGA), the conference dealt with both the Holocaust and the Genocide against the Armenians and other Christian minorities in the Ottoman Empire.

Tessa Hofmann, AGA chairwoman, opened the conference with introductory considerations on what genocide and

denial actually mean. “Genocide,” she stated, “occurs when a victim group, defined as such collectively, is robbed of its right to life. This can be reversed if this crime is explicitly condemned as such. In the event the crime is denied, on the contrary, the repudiation of the right to life is continued. Suffering and guilt will thereby be continued. Denial of genocide causes continuing pain for the victims and for their descendants, since it not only denies the crime committed against them, but also accuses the victims and their descendants of deliberate lying or slander.”

She made the point that guilt for genocide is not collective, but personal and individual; subsequent generations of Turks do not bear guilt, but they do see DENIALISM, page 5

In Virtual Press Conference Pashinyan Says ‘Peace on Agenda’

YEREVAN (JAM News) — Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan on January 24 answered a wide-ranging series of questions from journalists and representatives of civil society, on the air, and spoke about the issues that the country is currently facing. He outlined the priorities of the current government, including the demarcation of the Armenian-Azerbaijani border, signing a peace treaty with Azerbaijan, normalization of relations with Turkey and overcoming the internal political crisis.

The main message of the press conference was the confirmation of its course towards establishing peace and stability in the



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan answering questions

region, which is also enshrined in the government’s program for the coming years.

The prime minister’s press conference began with the question of the resignation of the country’s president, as he announced his decision unexpectedly for the

whole country, including, as it turned out, for Pashinyan. The Prime Minister learned about Armen Sarkissian’s intentions 3.5 hours before the publication of his statement.

The prime minister did not comment on possible reasons for the hasty resignation of the president, and talked about the future instead.

see AGENDA, page 2

David Mugar, Philanthropist Who Added Fireworks to Boston’s July Fourth Celebration, Dies at 82



By Joseph P. Kahn

BOSTON (Boston Globe) — David Mugar, a prominent businessman and deep-pocketed philanthropist who injected fireworks and cannon fire into Boston’s annual Fourth of July celebration, one of many contributions to civic life that left a lasting imprint on the city and region, died Tuesday night. He was 82.

As chairman and CEO of Mugar Enterprises Inc., Mugar oversaw a sprawling, privately held empire comprising real estate holdings, retail businesses, performance venues, and other investment- and arts-oriented enterprises.

Beginning in 1982, he served as principal owner of WNEV-TV (Channel 7, now WHDH-TV), then the local CBS network affiliate, for more than a decade. As executive producer of the July Fourth Esplanade show, he almost single-handedly transformed the event from a parochial celebration into a star-spangled extravaganza seen by millions on national television.

see MUGAR, page 9



David Mugar, left, with Pops Conductor John Williams at the Esplanade (Boston Globe)

YEREVAN
Minister Set to Become Armenia’s New President



Page 3

WASHINGTON
Ambassador Nina Hachigian appointed To US Department of Defense Policy Board



Page 7

MOSCOW
Armenian Heritage Presented at Moscow Musical Folklore Exhibition



Page 12



ARMENIA

NEWS from ARMENIA

Export from Armenia Exceed \$3 Billion in 2021

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Export from Armenia exceeded \$3 billion in 2021 growing by 19.1 percent year-on-year, the National Statistical Committee reported on February 1.

In the reporting period, the volume of foreign trade turnover in the country amounted to \$8.38 billion, up by 17.7 percent against 2020.

Imports for the period totaled \$5.35 billion, registering a year to year increase of 16.9 percent.

Tsarukyan-Funded Plaza Dedicated to Jesus in the Works

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) — Ideas for a statue of Jesus Christ are pouring in from specialists in Armenia and abroad less than a month after Prosperous Armenia Party leader, former member of parliament and businessman Gagik Tsarukyan revealed plans to install a statue in Armenia.

Tsarukyan expects it to become “the new visiting card of the first Christian nation.” Gagik Tsarukyan wants the statue itself to be 33 meters high, but the whole complex can be higher depending on solutions proposed by sculptors.

A project designed by sculptor Armen Samvelyan proposes a monument 68-meters high, with a separate area for candle lighting and a museum.

Tsarukyan said in an interview with Kentron TV he wants to discuss the proposals openly with the public, noting that “it’s a competition of mind and ideas.”

All projects will be presented by February 20, and the one “most acceptable to the public” will be selected.

Pashinyan Stresses Importance of Relations With China in New Year Message to Counterpart

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan sent congratulatory messages to the President of the People’s Republic of China Xi Jinping and the Premier of the State Council Li Keqiang on the occasion of the Chinese New Year on February 1, Pashinyan’s Office said.

He wrote to Xi, “I convey warm congratulations and best wishes to you and the friendly people of China on the occasion of the Chinese New Year, Spring Festival. Spring Festival is a holiday that has historical roots and at the same time is the most popular family holiday in China. May it bring health, new achievements and joy to all families.

“Armenia attaches great importance to the continuous strengthening and deepening of traditional friendly relations with China for the benefit of our peoples.”

The message addressed to the prime minister of China was written in a similar vein, adding, “I wish you good health and success, and peace and new achievements to friendly China.”

Post-Election Vardenis Political Divisions Continue

By Gevorg Gyulumyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

VARDENIS — In the enlarged community of Vardenis (35 villages plus the town of Vardenis), post-election passions are not calming down, despite the fact that the community is in a border area and has more problems than domestic stability and unity.

In the Vardenis elections, the Civil Contract party received 6,163 votes, the Aharon Khachatryan bloc 4,989 and the United Vardenis bloc 2,205. The last two groups united to nominate Aharon Khachatryan as a candidate for community head, having 14 seats, compared to 13 in the municipal council.

Unfortunately, all attempts to hold a meeting of the municipal council after the elections failed for various reasons. Even the inauguration ceremony of Aharon Khachatryan, the candidate who won as a result of the coalition, was held in the courtyard of the city hall because the police did not allow him to enter the building. There are varying interpretations of the situation. According to Davit Shahnazaryan, a member of the municipal council of the United Vardenis faction, the police do everything to prevent the session from taking place. “We have not been provided with any justification. There are no facts as to why this is happening. I do not understand it,” he said.

Civil Contract candidate Aram Melkonyan blames his rivals for the situation.



The central square and St. Astvatsatsin Church in Vardenis, November 2020 (Photo AndyHM, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=95721587>)

“There were incidents due to their improper conduct, and they took me to the police, after which no one was taken to the police.”

Shahnazaryan, a member of the United Vardenis alliance, claims that from the beginning when the Civil Contract did not get a majority in the municipal council, it took concrete actions. The number one of its bloc, Harutyunyan, was arrested, then imprisoned, and a recount reduced one of their representatives on the council. After all these difficulties, Khachatryan was elected, and this was legally, David Shahnazaryan is confident. He said, “We do not have a vulnerable legal side. What we have done, we have done within the boundaries of the law. It is legal and it conforms to the framework of the constitution of the Republic of Armenia. Illegal actions have been taken against us.”

Shahnazaryan, now a member of the municipal council, in an interview to Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, also declared: “I do not see any legal obstacle at the moment, because the session of the municipal council was valid, the quorum was assured, the community leader was elected, and we have exhausted all the issues on the agenda.”

An unusual situation was created when the elections ended on December 5, but the people still cannot understand who their community leader is, because Melkonyan did not give the winning candidate the seal of the municipality and the office key, no handover was held, and Khachatryan already celebrated his victory.

“We have not seen such a thing in our whole life. We lived here during the Soviet years, but we do not remember this kind of thing. This is a disgrace. The Turks are at the entrances to Vardenis but inside, a battle for seats takes place. Shame on those responsible for this situation!” said one resident of Vardenis.

Hakob Avetyan, the head of the Geghamasar community, which is included in the Vardenis district, claims that the ruling party is carrying out political persecutions against the opposition.

“This is an order. This is a shame. This is a disgrace. They have 13 mandates [elected council candidates], we have 14. How can they not understand that 14 is greater than 13,” he said. Resorting to wordplay, he exclaimed, “The Civil Contract has started a civil struggle in Vardenis.”

In Virtual Press Conference Pashinyan Says ‘Peace on Agenda’

AGENDA, from page 1

The president justified his decision to resign by the limitations of the constitution, which does not provide president with tools for making decisions.

However, Pashinyan said no changes are anticipated to be considered regarding the constitution.

A more delicate topic was the package of proposals regarding the demarcation of the Armenian-Azerbaijani border, which he said includes not only the point of view of Armenia, but that of Russia and the Azerbaijani side.

The Armenian prime minister believes that it is necessary to begin the demarcation process as soon as possible. At the same time, he refused to disclose details, since the document is still under discussion.

According to Pashinyan, back in 1992, both countries mutually recognized each other’s territorial integrity — in accordance with the borders outlined by the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

Now the process depends not only on Armenia, but the prime minister claims that he will continue to work to establish peace and an era of stability in the region. As for the settlement of the Karabakh conflict, Pashinyan said that it is on the agenda. A peace treaty should be signed, but before signing, all issues will still be discussed, including the boundaries within which the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan will be recognized.

Speaking about the restoration of the Yeraskh-Julfa-Meghri-Horadiz railway, which is already on the government’s agenda, Pashinyan said that the construction of the Armenian part of the road would cost Armenia \$200 million. The figure is one that the country should afford especially in light

of the railway making Armenia a transit hub connecting Armenia with Iran and Russia. And, according to the prime minister, both for Armenia and Azerbaijan, this is an opportunity for making big profits.

The Armenian government has created a special working group for the restoration of the Yeraskh-Julfa-Meghri-Horadiz railway. Azerbaijan plans to complete its section of the railway by early 2023.

Pashinyan could not answer whether it will be possible to establish diplomatic relations with Turkey this year since this is a non-unilateral process. But, he says that it could happen. He believes that if these negotiations do not have a result for a long time, both the parties themselves and international partners will lose interest in this dialogue.

But the prime minister himself confirmed the “sincerity of the Armenian government” in this process. Moreover, he argued that all previous leaders of Armenia went to this dialogue with the same sincerity.

Pashinyan said ex-president Robert Kocharyan had stated that Armenia had no territorial claims against Turkey, and this approach was preserved during the years of ex-president Serzh Sargsyan’s rule, and the current government adhered to it.

As for the process of normalizing relations, which the special representatives of the two countries discussed on January 24, according to Pashinyan, if this dynamics continues, serious progress is possible.

Regarding the concern that after the opening of the borders, Turkish goods will damage local production, the prime minister said that the current government is pursuing a policy of developing exports.

In some segments, local goods may lose competition after the opening of borders

and the influx of Turkish goods, Pashinyan says. But in contrast, roads will open for the export of local products, which will bring more to the local producer. The government plans to open factories, including copper smelters, for which the export of products is important, and this can be very profitable for Armenia.

Pashinyan stated that Nagorno-Karabakh will also benefit from the opening of communications — both in security and its share of prosperity.

The prime minister recalled the long protests demanding the resignation of the government, which began in Armenia after November 9, 2020, that is, the announcement of defeat in the war in Karabakh. To resolve the political crisis, the ruling party went to early parliamentary elections.

According to Pashinyan, Armenia participated in the mission of the Collective Security Treaty Organization in Kazakhstan, since “it is beneficial for Armenia to have a CSTO,” and for “response mechanisms” to effectively operate in the organization. He stressed that the Armenian peacekeepers only ensured the protection of strategic facilities, in particular, the bread factory.

The prime minister said that he would not repeat his mistake and would not say anything about the army, which is classified information. He only said that the reform of the Armenian Armed Forces is going in two directions.

Firstly, “work is going on every day”, which is aimed at creating an efficient army. And the second goal of the country’s Armed Forces is to protect the security of its own territories, and not aggression and the seizure of foreign territories. And, of course, according to Pashinyan, the army should be equipped with the latest military equipment.



ARMENIA

Minister Set to Become Armenia's New President



Economist and opposition politician Vahagn Khachatryan speaks at a seminar in Yerevan, April 30, 2013

By Naira Nalbandian

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — High-Tech Industry Minister Vahagn Khachatryan on January 31 effectively confirmed reports that Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has offered him to become Armenia's next president.

The largely ceremonial post became vacant after President Armen Sarkissian unexpectedly announced his resignation on January 22, citing a lack of constitutional powers. Sarkissian's successor is to be elected for a seven-year term by the Armenian parliament controlled by Pashinyan's Civil Contract party.

Pashinyan indicated on January 23 that he will replace Sarkissian by a figure loyal to him but did not name any candidates. Armenian media outlets reported over the weekend that the prime minister and his political team have decided to nominate Khachatryan.

Khachatryan did not deny the reports when he spoke with journalists. He said he meets the qualifications of the job spelled out by the Armenian constitution.

"In these circumstances I could presumably be on the list [of presidential candidates] given that I'm a member of the current government and the [ruling] political team," he said.

Under the constitution, Sarkissian will be formally relieved of his duties unless he withdraws by Monday night his resignation letter submitted to the National Assembly. In that case, parliament speaker Alen Simonian will serve as interim president of the republic pending the election of a new head of state, which should happen by the beginning of March.

Khachatryan, 62, is an economist who had served as mayor of Yerevan from 1992-1996 during former President Levon Ter-Petrosian's rule. He was a political ally of Ter-Petrosian until agreeing to join the government last August.

Ter-Petrosian has been highly critical of Pashinyan since Armenia's defeat in the 2020 war with Azerbaijan, branding the premier as a "nation-destroying scourge." The ex-president has also slammed several members of his entourage who took up senior state positions over the past year.

Army Day Marked With Low-Key Ceremonies

By Astghik Bedevian

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Citing a coronavirus outbreak within its ranks, Armenia's political and military leadership on Friday avoided holding festive events to mark the 30th anniversary of the official creation of the national armed forces on January 28.

Senior officials instead issued written statements on the occasion and laid flowers at the Yerablur military pantheon in Yerevan where hundreds of Armenian soldiers killed during the 2020 war in Nagorno-Karabakh were buried.

Deputy Prime Minister Mher Grigoryan, who led a government delegation visiting Yerablur, said that an official reception dedicated to the army jubilee was "postponed" due to a spate of COVID-19 infections.

The government announced on January 26 that Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has tested positive for the coronavirus for the second time in 20 months and gone into self-isolation. The Armenian Defense Ministry said the following day that a group of high-ranking military officers have also been infected. It did not name them.

Pashinyan and many other officials were among several hundred guests who attended on January 22 Defense Ministry Suren Papikyan's lavish wedding celebrated at



Nagorno-Karabakh - Armenian soldiers at a frontline position, October 18, 2020.

a restaurant amid a surge in coronavirus cases in the country. Grigoryan dismissed suggestions that many of them may have caught the virus there.

The Defense Ministry said on January 27 that Papikyan is not showing any symptoms but will take a coronavirus test. Its press office could not be reached for further comment on Friday.

Papikyan,

who is a leading member of the ruling Civil Contract party, refused to answer questions from journalists when he visited Yerablur together with other senior government officials.

Only the Armenian Apostolic Church held an awards ceremony on the occasion. Its supreme head, Catholicos Garegin II, handed Orders of St. Nerses the Gracious, a major church award, to a dozen army officers.

In a written statement, Pashinyan reiterated that his administration is doing its best to rebuild and reform the Armenian army after its defeat in the 2020 war.

"Improving the army's combat readiness, weaponry and conditions of service is our priority," he said amid continuing claims to the contrary made by his political opponents.

Former Presidents Robert Kocharyan

and Serzh Sargsyan, who now lead the country's main opposition groups, also issued statements paying tribute to the military and congratulating it on the anniversary. They both used the opportunity to take a swipe at the current government.

"The army that used to be the guarantor of security in Artsakh (Karabakh) and the whole region today itself needs protection," Kocharyan said. He expressed hope that it will "straighten its back" in the near future.

For his part, Sargsyan, who had served as defense minister for over a decade, charged that the army fought the war "under treasonous command."

Meanwhile, several opposition lawmakers visited army posts on Armenia's border with Azerbaijan and posted on social media their photographs with soldiers serving there.



Deputy Prime Minister Mher Grigoryan lays a wreath at the Yerablur Military Pantheon, Yerevan, January 28, 2022.



ARMENIA

New Book Takes On Armenian Geopolitics

By **Éric Denécé**

Journalist and essayist Tigran Yegavian has just published in French a new book, *Géopolitique de l'Arménie* [Geopolitics of Armenia], published by Bibliomonde (2022), which is a reference book presenting a critical look at the geostrategic challenges of Armenia and its diaspora (<https://www.bibliomonde.fr/gopolitique-de-larmenie>).

What did you want to demonstrate in your book?

The 44-day war that was lost by the Armenians in the autumn of 2020 revealed the extent of the discrepancy between the representation of reality and the evolution of power relations, as well as the regional and global geopolitical situation. For Armenians, such a shock, replete with human, territorial and moral consequences, required a critical examination. This “critical” geopolitics is a kind of response to this defeat in the face of realism, a current in international relations to which I am close.

My purpose was to demonstrate that Armenia is a country that can claim a unique historical and civilizational depth, but that in the absence of a state, culture also bears a heavy responsibility for its misfortune.

Where does this obsession of the Turks and Azerbaijanis against an Armenia that represents no danger for them come from?

Turks and Azerbaijanis, united by a linguistic community, or even a community of destiny, consider the small, mutilated and bloodless Armenia as a kind of incongruity. For them, the danger is not so much physical — since in no case has Armenia officially questioned the borders inherited from the Treaty of Kars of 1921 — as psychological, even existential. The fact that an Armenia, however small, still exists 107 years



Tigran Yegavian

after the genocide, is a kind of time bomb for Turkey, which has built itself as a nation-state on the corpse of the Christians of Anatolia.

The international recognition of the genocide supported by Armenia is a pebble in Ankara's shoe.

When Armenian, Greek and Assyro-Chaldean historians repeatedly remind us that their civilizational melting pot is located in Anatolia and Upper Mesopotamia, this feeds the hateful and bellicose discourse of a Turkey still haunted by the Sevres syndrome — that is to say, the fear of its dismemberment enacted by the Sèvres Treaty of 1920 to which the Armenians are sentimentally attached since it drew the contours of a chimerical “free and reunified Armenia.”

As for the Azerbaijanis, the Russian historian Alexander Bennigsen, a specialist in Soviet Islam, noted that the hostility of the Azerbaijanis is the basis of their nationalism, while the Russians occupy only second place in the ranks of hated foreigners. This hatred is perhaps commensurate with the discomfort that the Azerbaijanis feel in forging their identity, which is split between several antagonistic reference systems: Islam, but Shiite, changes of alphabet three times in a century (Arabic-Persian, Cyrillic, then Latin), Turkish language, but cut off from the Ottoman space and a recent history integrated into the Russian-Soviet world.

All this contrasts with the Armenian civilizational referent deeply rooted in its language, its faith and its original alphabet. Given that the Azerbaijani national consciousness remains

confused, the only unifying Azerbaijani narrative is based on hatred of Armenians, a hatred nourished by the trauma caused by the loss of nearly 15 per cent of the country's surface area in the space of two years (1992-94).

How are the current Armenian political elites responsible for the defeat against Azerbaijan? Have they learned the lessons from it?

They bear a very heavy political responsibility for having “frozen” a conflict with an untenable status quo. Armenia missed the historic opportunity to make concessions when Azerbaijan was on its knees in the aftermath of the 1994 ceasefire and a peace treaty was possible. The elite that took power in 1998 had pushed Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosian to resign because he favored an Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)-brokered solution based on mutual concessions, but insufficient guarantee for the security of the Artsakh Armenians.

Over the past 30 years, the balance of power has shifted considerably in favor of Azerbaijan. In addition to the economic differential between this hydrocarbon-rich rentier country and Armenia, there is also a demographic imbalance that weighs heavily on Karabakh. In 30 years the Armenian leadership has not repopulated Artsakh, while Armenia has literally emptied itself of its population (1.5 million people have left since independence). The staggering contempt of the Armenian leaders for the general interest, the notion of state and citizenship, the weak participation of the diaspora in the life of the city, have considerably weakened this bloodless country, which cannot allow itself the luxury of being divided.

Why has the international community been so passive in the face of the war unleashed by Baku and the abuses observed? And why does it persist in not reacting despite Azerbaijan's continued provocations and aggressions?

Because in international law the defense of territorial integrity has taken precedence over the right to self-determination of peoples. The Kosovo precedent has passed by. Above all, Armenia was very isolated diplomatically, unlike Azerbaijan, which had cleverly advanced its pawns in several multilateral bodies (UN, NATO, Council of Europe, etc.). The West saw in this war an opportunity to weaken Russia in its own backyard and therefore refrained from supporting the Armenians.

The European Union thought that by financing economic recovery programs in Armenia it would be able to turn a blind eye to its complacency towards the racist and expansionist policy of Azerbaijan, which has made Armenophobia a state doctrine. As for the violation of Armenian territory, Brussels and NATO already pay little attention to the violations of Greek air and sea space by Turkish forces, so how can they be moved by the attack on Armenia by its neighbor, especially since it is not part of any Western collective security organization.

Has France's attitude been up to the standard of our country's diplomatic tradition and ties of friendship with Armenia and its traditional role of protecting the Christians of the East? How is it perceived locally?

We have been treated to a repetition of the Macronian “at the same time” during the war. The clear and courageous declarations of the [French] head of state on the presence of jihadist mercenaries on the side of the Turco-Azerbaijanis and the designation of the aggressor were counterbalanced by the Turcophile and inaudible policy of the Quai d'Orsay, which offered its humanitarian services to both sides.

Armenians do not understand how a dear and friendly country like France, which never misses an opportunity to exalt this friendship, does not assist them when they are in danger. It is forgotten that friendship, feelings and culture have no bearing on international relations. France has the duty to think of its interests, but not at the expense of its principles. However, it has to be said that it has trampled on them in Armenia and Karabakh, without gaining much in return.

In your opinion, is the recent conflict and the current situation part of a war of civilization, Eastern Christians against conquering Islam?

This is at least the reading that the candidate Eric Zemmour proposes! The question of Karabakh remains above all that of the right to self-determination of a population in danger that cannot live in security under the Azerbaijani flag. The civilizational dimension tends to play a more prominent role as the Azerbaijanis have demonstrated their ability to annihilate any trace of the multi-millennial presence of Armenian culture. The razing of the medieval cemetery of Jugha in Nakhichevan in the late 1990s and early 2000s was a signal that UNESCO, sensitive to caviar diplomacy, failed to understand.

While Azerbaijan is fighting political Islam on its territory, it is not shy about exploiting the religious dimension to stir up hatred of Armenians.

Other actors have been more or less directly involved in the conflict or its resolution: Iran, Israel, India, Pakistan. How do you analyze their game?

The military and strategic alliance between Pakistan, Turkey and Azerbaijan is much more effective and real than the Armenian-Indian partnership, although the latter is becoming stronger. Pakistan does not even recognize Armenia's sovereignty within its internationally recognized borders!

Israel, for its part, has bet on Azerbaijan for pragmatic reasons: geostrategic convergences, oil supply in exchange for the sale of drones and new generation military equipment, espionage against Iran, cultural diplomacy with the presence of a large Jewish community in Baku and the north...this cements this partnership which continues to grow stronger.

Why did Yerevan never recognize Artsakh? Is this the reason why Armenia did not intervene militarily in support of the Karabakh Armenians?

A recognition by Yerevan of Artsakh would have no international impact. It would contribute to undermining the process set up by the OSCE Minsk Group. Yerevan has so far been content to recognize Artsakh de facto, if not de jure.

About the Armenian army not engaging its forces against the Turco-Azerbaijanis and its troops remaining in their barracks (in Armenia) throughout the 44-day war: According to Russian defense analyst Ruslan Pukhov, this “decision of Yerevan not to enter the war” was the main reason for the defeat. The Armenian forces along the entire Karabakh defense line (minus the south) and Armenia proper did not take any counteroffensive measures to distract the Azerbaijani army from their main direction (south).

There were systematic large-scale attempts to undermine the combat readiness of the Armenian army before and during the war. The most blatant example of this was the purchase in May 2020 (four months before the war began) of four SU-30M fighter jets from Russia, which were delivered without missiles and never took off during the war. Shortly after the devastating “Four Day War” in April 2016, the Armenian government rejected an Israeli offer to purchase drones and establish a factory to produce drones and associated munitions.

Not a single ammunition depot, road or bridge was destroyed during the war by the retreating Armenian forces. And in what may seem like the result of military incompetence, about two-thirds of Artsakh's air defense systems (including mobile stations) were destroyed within hours of the invasion. More embarrassingly, a Russian-made S-300 surface-to-air missile system was destroyed on the fourth day of the war in Armenia itself (another was destroyed in mid-October). The remaining Artsakh-Armenian air defense system, under joint Russian-Armenian command since 2016, has allowed Azerbaijani warplanes and drones to control the airspace over Nagorno-Karabakh, and even to launch attacks into Armenia.

One thing is certain, the non-intervention of the Armenian army (apart from conscripts doing their military service in Karabakh) during the war and the non-deployment of Iskander missiles remains one of the best-kept mysteries of this conflict, as do the circumstances of the fall of Shushi. The other is the game of the Armenian elites, who obviously lied to the population about the imminence of a lost war.

What game is Russia, which finally intervened only after the Armenian defeat had occurred, playing? Why did the CSTO member countries refuse to support Armenia despite its appeals?

It is difficult to know how much Russia was aware of the preparations for this conflict, but it knew it was inevitable.

The ceasefire of November 9, 2020 is similar to an implementation of the Lavrov plan (only worse), since the latter did not include the cessation of the strategic city of Shushi and other territories of the former autonomous region of Karabakh. The Russians intervened in extremis to save Armenian Karabakh so that they could keep a lever of pressure on Azerbaijan. This is why Armenia's Karabakh is once again a Russian protectorate, at least as long as Russian peacekeepers are stationed there. It remains to be seen what the red line is for Moscow, which has to deal with Turkish entry into a region it considers to be its backyard.

The CSTO is above all a political organization and is subservient to Moscow, even if most of its members make no secret of their pro-Baku sympathies, as do Belarus and Kazakhstan. It is surprising to see that if the CSTO did not move to intervene on the side of Armenia, it was not long before it came to the aid of Kazakhstan to “restore order” there.

A graduate of Sciences Po Paris and Institut national des langues et civilisations orientales (INALCO), Tigran Yégavian is a researcher at the Centre Français de Recherche sur le Renseignement (CF2R) in Paris. He is a member of the editorial board of the geopolitical journal *Conflits*. He is a contributor to several media and journals. Tigran Yégavian has notably published: *Arménie à l'ombre de la montagne sacrée* (Névicata, 2015) and *Minorities of the East, the Forgotten of History* (Le Rocher, 2019)

This article was originally published in French at enderi.fr.



ARMENIA

Genocide Researchers Explore Denialism

DENIALISM, from page 1

have the responsibility to deal with their history, acknowledge the genocide, lest it become a part of national history. According to genocide researcher Gregory Stanton's 2013 ten-phase model, she said, denial constitutes the last phase. The case in question here is the most stubborn, since it has been incorporated into Turkey's national history, its law and state doctrine.

The zoom conference examined the issue through the examples of the two genocides committed during the two world wars in the last century, which served as empirical examples for Raphael Lemkin to develop his definition of genocide.

Hofmann explained the need for addressing the issue scientifically, pointing to growing antisemitism in Germany, even though the country recognized the genocide against 6 million European Jews, assumed responsibility and worked through its past. According to a recent poll by the World Jewish Congress, one out of three young Germans and one of five adults harbor anti-Semitic views.

Hofmann described various forms of denial, from disputing facts like the deportations, to accepting those facts, but denying there was political intentionality behind them; or dismissing attacks by Kurds, for example, as "collateral damage." A further tactic is to claim that historians haven't treated the matter adequately and no conclusions can be drawn; or, to twist facts,

the attempt to preserve a positive national identity, for example, the glorification of the Turkish "liberation wars" which overshadow massacres of Ottoman Christians,



Prof. Tessa Hofmann

or present them as necessary self-defense.

A further mechanism Hofmann identified is the deniers' attempt to victimize themselves, with the line, "My ancestors suffered more than yours," a phenomenon present in both genocides in question.

Coming to the issue of penalization, Hofmann noted that although genocide denial has been declared punishable by law in the European Union and several individual countries, opponents have complained that this infringes on freedom of research and expression. Here she cited the case of Turkish political figure Doğu Perinçek, whose conviction in Switzerland for genocide denial was overturned by the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights in 2015 on grounds it was not incitement to hate, violence or intolerance. Yet, Hofmann noted, the same court would recognize such as a call to racial hatred in the case of the Holocaust.

Hofmann welcomed the two guest speakers, Prof. Wolfgang Benz, director of the Center for Anti-Semitism Research at the Technical University in Berlin, and Prof. Taner Akçam, well-known genocide researcher and professor at Clark University

Anti-Semitism and Instrumentalization of the Holocaust

Genocide denial does not characterize the situation in Germany society today, Benz began; rather there is a problem with instrumentalization of the Holocaust. Denial was never a state policy aim in Germany, he noted, and there was no German state when Nazism was defeated; it was the victorious Allies who saw to accountability. In Germany today, genocide denial is actually punishable by law. But there are also those who instrumentalize the Holocaust. He pointed to ongoing street demonstrations organized against Covid vaccination campaigns, in which protesters have worn

the star of David, comparing themselves with persecuted Jews under Nazism. Other examples include a slogan used by animal rights activists, "Holocaust on your dinner

plate," and one spread by anti-abortionists, "Babycaust." Benz, who has researched anti-Semitism for 20 years, considered such blatant examples of relativizing and minimizing the Holocaust as problematic in German political culture.

"It is not a matter of freedom of opinion," Benz stated, "no historian is a denier," even if some denier may have studied a bit of history. Deniers are usually paid propagandists, he said, and named names: David Irving, or Horst Mahler, who moved from being a lawyer for leftist extremists to a Holocaust denier. "This has nothing to do with the freedom of opinion," he said.

Exploring the question of how it is possible for people to lend credibility to denialists, Benz reviewed German postwar developments. The de-Nazification process, which involved individuals, as well as the war crimes tribunals, and German reparations were all the result of Allied interventions. Their approach to Germany was to say, you have to learn democracy, then be welcomed among civilized peoples and nations. It was, he said, not voluntary. In 1952, when the first compensation agreement was sealed, Germany knew this was a precondition for international recognition. As communist East Germany was unable to pay, the Federal Republic of Germany gained advantages; the point is, it was not voluntary.

Actual denial and relativizing began, he went on, after the fall of the Hitler regime; people claimed they "didn't know" what was happening. Or, one claimed it was not 6 million Jews who were killed but "only" 300,000 or so, the notion being, that it was "not that bad." Such victims were considered "collateral damage." Benz reported on some post-war press reports that cited the Red Cross as the source for these figures, despite Red Cross protests to the contrary; the neo-Nazi NPD party claimed the figures were official statistics of the United Nation, though the German ambassador to the UN, on inquiring, learned this too was a fabrication.

A further claim presented by denialists was that such a large-scale genocide would be "technically impossible." German nationalists as well as ordinary citizens didn't want to hear about the atrocities, also for personal reasons; they would insist that "Grandpa was not a Nazi," etc. Such denialism, Benz went on, is important for right-wing extremists' propaganda, again citing Mahler. As for one leading figure of the right-wing Alternative for Germany party

continued on next page

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Levon Afeyan Appointed Honorary Consul of Armenia in Quebec

MONTREAL — Levon Afeyan has been appointed by the Republic of Armenia as its honorary consul in Quebec.

He is an active member of the Montreal Armenian community who over the years has been involved with all major organizations, including the St. Gregory the Illuminator parish, where he was chairman of the parish council at one period, the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) and the AGBU Alex Manoogian School and the Tekeyan Cultural Association.

He is the president of Seatply Products Inc.

Afeyan is the brother of Dr. Nubar Afeyan, the Boston-based entrepreneur and philanthropist lately much in the news because of the biotech company Moderna which he cofounded.

Azerbaijani Forces Vandalize Another Church

STEPANAKERT (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Azerbaijan is continuing its policy of destruction of cultural values and the erasure of Armenian traces in the occupied territories of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh).

A video disseminated this week on social media reveals that the Azerbaijanis have removed the cross from the Spitak Khach (White Cross) Church in the village of Vank, Hadrut province. As well, the roof of the church has been destroyed.

The oldest inscription, dating back to the 14th century, preserved under the north arch, says, "I, Sira, erected this *khachkar* for my father, Khutlap, in the year of 1333."

Another inscription states, "It was built in 1735. This was the year of Tahmasp Qoli Khan. The bell tower was built in memory of Bishop Avanes, the son of Surap."

Fountain Memorial to Gorky Damaged in Turkey

ISTANBUL (PanARMENIAN.Net) — A fountain built in the memory of painter Arshile Gorky in his birthplace, in Van, has been damaged, Ahval news said citing a report from Duvar, on January 29.

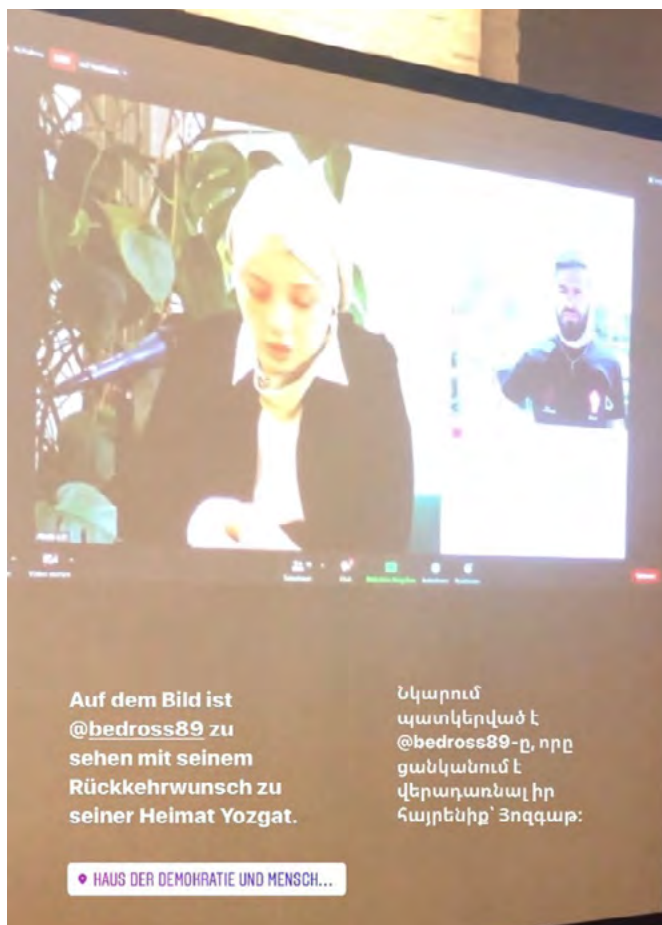
Van's Edremit district municipality had built the fountain in 2015, continuing a tradition of commemorating the departed by providing water for residents and passers-by.

Four sides of the fountain were embellished with details about Gorky's life in Turkish, Armenian, Kurdish and English, with water pouring from each of them.

The monument had suffered several attacks in the past.

Over time, all the spouts were damaged, while Gorky's name was scratched out. In the most recent incident, the signs depicting Gorky's life story were scratched out.

Gorky, born in 1904, barely survived the Armenian Genocide and later became an American master of modern painting.



Gulsen Aytan in workshop (Photo by AGA member Parthena Iordanidou)

claiming that in 1915/1916 civil war conditions prevailed and that attempts by Christian victims at self-defense were illegal uprisings. Minimizing facts and figures is another approach, whereby in the Ottoman case, deniers ignore deaths of deportees during the marches and reckon only those killed in massacres. Or, perversely, the victim/perpetrator roles are reversed; here Hofmann cited the way Ottoman Greeks before the war were designated as "tumors to be excised."

To explain the reasons behind denial, Hofmann distinguished between situations and generations involved: if those directly involved lied about their deeds in an attempt to escape prosecution, their descendants might have emotional difficulties in accepting that "Grandpa was a Nazi SS member."

Another motive behind denial lies in



INTERNATIONAL

from previous page

(AFD) Björn Höcke, Benz remarked that the man was too intelligent to deny the Holocaust outright, and instead argued, it was “so long ago, one should just forget it.” But trauma, Benz stressed, can never be forgotten, not by the survivors, nor their children nor grandchildren.

Behind Denial in Turkey

Prof. Taner Akçam tackled the issue head on, asking the question, “Why? Why do Turks deny the Armenian genocide?” This is a question he has been studying since 1990, and his response has evolved over time, as he detailed in his remarks.

Drawing on these decades of research, Akçam said he initially tried to explain it with the concept of “continuity,” referring to “governmental continuity from the Ottoman Empire through the Turkish Republic;” if the Republic was founded, as it was, by members of the Union and Progress Party which was responsible for the genocide, and if many of them were perpetrators, or profited materially from the genocide, then how can they be revered as heroes? This is the dilemma. He went on to describe how this identification with the founding fathers that is taught in the classrooms, has characterized successive generations of Turks, including those in the progressive, democratic student movement in 1968, as well as later groups, whether leftwing or Islamist, or nationalist.

“In other words, in order to accept the genocide, in our present state,” he said, “we would have to deny our own national identity, as it exists today.” Instead of facing this very difficult task, it is easier to deny reality.

But his quest did not end there. In further developing his response, Akçam said he considered the question of reparations. Even if one denied the genocide per se, and fantasized about having relocated the Armenians to some comfortable place “like sunny Florida,” still one would have to acknowledge that their possessions had been confiscated, and that “the country of Turkey today was formed on the seizure of Armenian assets, and now sits on top of that wealth. As a result, if you accept and acknowledge that something unjust happened in 1915 in Turkey, you have to pay back compensation.” Again, denial is simpler.

Then there is the psychological phenomenon, that once a lie is told and repeated, it is difficult to reverse it, even for a state. Here he drew an important distinction “between state policy and the attitude of the people of Turkey towards genocide,” and suggested that society’s attitude should be described as “one of ignorance, apathy, fatalism, reticence, and silence, rather than denial.” Furthermore, Turkish society is not monolithic, but comprises different sub-cultural ethnicities, and they have different views. Akçam noted numerous “Kurds, Dersimians, and Alewites have accepted the reality of what happened in 1915,” but have not been able to express it, thus his use of expressions like “silence” and “avoidance” to depict the lack of an open position taken against the official state narrative. But even these distinctions, albeit necessary, do not fully explain the dominance of denial.

As he continued studying the problem, Akçam said he began to suspect there was something more profound — actually existential — involved, both with regard to the state and to society. “The answer to the question seems to lie in a duality between existence and non-existence — or, as Hamlet would say, ‘to be or not to be.’ I believe our existence as a state and a society translates into their — Christians in Anatolia — non-existence, or not-being. To accept what happened in 1915 means you have to accept the existence of them — Christians — on Turkish territory, which is practical-



Prof. Wolfgang Benz follows Taner Akçam on the screen (Photo by AGA member Parthena Iordanidou)

ly like announcing our non-existence, because we owe our being to their non-existence.”

Here he drew on considerations by German philosopher Jürgen Habermas regarding a “secret violence” within social institutions, through which a structure of communication is created. As society identifies with this structure, a “collective communication” comes into being, whereby certain topics are no longer addressed, and their exclusion becomes institutionalized. What is relevant, he stressed, “is that this structure is not imposed on the society by the rulers, but is accepted and internalized by those who are ruled. There is a silent consensus in the society.” Author Elias Siberski coined the term “communicative reality” in reference to secret societies, that is, an exclusive form of communication known only to insiders, which creates an internal reality separate from the real world. This, Akçam said, is one way to describe the situation in contemporary Turkey, where a “communicative reality” has prevailed since 1923, shaping emotions and beliefs, the way people think of themselves. “What is important to note,” he said, “is the gap between this ‘communicative reality’ and actual reality.”

As a result, this “communicative reality” has defined what can be uttered and what not, and has created what he called “a collective secret” or “one big gigantic black hole,” and a “coalition of silence.” In sum: “We simply eradicated everything Christian from this reality. This is how we teach Ottoman history in schools, this is how we produce intellectual-cultural works about our society.”

In Akçam’s view, this is the “secret behind the denial of the Armenian Genocide.... What happened in 1915 is Turkish society’s collective secret, and genocide has been relegated to the ‘black hole’ of our societal memory.” This has been the case since 1923, and all sectors of societies, including different ethnic groups and political factions share the “coalition of silence;” like a warm protective blanket, it is something they want to keep. Without it, one would be forced to put everything into question, “our social institutions, mentalities, belief systems, culture, and even the language we use,” as well as society’s self-image.

When reminded of the genocide and confronted with it, he said, the Turkish

response is something like: “If you think we are going to destroy the social-cultural reality we created with such great care over 100 years, with one swipe of a pen, think again!” Akçam concluded with a clear definition of the existential issue and the real challenge posed: “The Armenian Genocide is a part of a more general framework that is directly related to our existence. The republic and the society of Turkey today have been constructed upon the removal of Christians — the destruction of an existence on a territory that we call our homeland. Since we have established our existence upon the non-existence of another, every mention of that existence imparts fear and anxiety in us. The difficulty we have in our country with speaking about the Armenian issue lies within this existence-non-existence duality.”

“So, I think we have to reverse the question: The central question is not why Turkey denies the genocide, but whether we the people of Turkey are ready, as a state and as a society, to deny our present state of existence. It seems that the only way we can do that is by repudiating how we came to be and by creating a new history of how we came to exist. Are we capable of doing that? That’s the true question.”

Time for Animated Discussion

Lively debates followed each presentation and would have continued at length, had there not been a workshop scheduled to follow. Prof. Benz, when asked about the polls indicating alarming levels of antisemitism in Germany today, thought poll results do not necessarily reflect reality, and pointed to the need to examine the thinking behind individuals’ responses. As for the purpose of memory culture, he stressed the importance of knowing the facts as facts, and anchoring facts in the general knowledge of the population, to counter the notions, “I never knew,” or “it wasn’t that bad” or “it doesn’t matter any longer.” Most important, he said, the aim is not to produce guilt feelings. He gave the hypothetical example of a teenager who goes on holiday to Greece and meets a girl. “If the girl says, ‘I’m Jewish,’ what do you do? You shouldn’t feel guilt or be ashamed. But you have the right to know what happened in order to be able to deal with this.”

To a question about the BDS movement, which has been called anti-Semitic for its criticism of certain Israeli policies, for ex-

ample, against Palestinians, and denounced by the German Bundestag, Benz was clear. He said the BDS was not anti-Semitic and that the Bundestag’s condemnation was a “bogus claim.”

When one participant brought up the question of whether or not the Turkish population were not more disposed than the government to face the issue, Akçam examined how Turkish society might be able to distance itself from the founding fathers. “The lack of democracy is the problem,” he said, “and a democratic identity is required for distancing oneself.” He spoke of an “expansion of identity.” As for who the founding fathers were, he said 60-70 percent of Turkey’s political elite, from Mustafa Kemal, to the presidents, prime ministers, political leaders — all of them were involved in the genocide. He used the following simile, “Suppose the government of post-war Germany were established by former Nazis, and you asked about the Holocaust.”

How, then, can one raise the issue among the younger generation in Turkey? Akçam’s approach is to establish a link between current events and the past. “Denialism is a structure,” he said, “and cannot be relegated to past atrocities.” This structure continues to foster policies in today’s Turkey, now regarding the Kurds. He suggested comparing Turkey’s denialism to South Africa’s apartheid. The genocide was based on discrimination, and the discrimination of Kurds today is rationalized by the claim that democratic demands by Kurds constitute a “security threat.” This is something he said they and the opposition should realize, because if they see the connection they will be in a better situation.

Akçam said the combination of external pressure and internal democratization was crucial in South Africa. To make the point, he reported on the campaign started by the *New York Times* in 2019, known as the “1619 Project,” which demands a reassessment of America’s founding, from the standpoint of the arrival of the first ship with slaves in that year. Participants may or may not have been familiar with this campaign, but the point was evident: if it possible in the United States today to take up this challenge, it is because of a democratic tradition. “There is a national conversation in America about the founding fathers,” he said, “and we need such a national conversation in Turkey.”



Community News

SAS Recognizes 'Best Conference Paper Award' Recipients for (2019-2021)

FRESNO — The Society for Armenian Studies (SAS) recently announced the recipients of its 2019-2021 "Best Conference Paper Award." The two recipients were Natalie Kamajian, for her paper, "Performing Paradox: Balleticized Bodies and Soviet Cultural Hegemony in Armenia Stage Dance," and Jennifer Manoukian, for her paper, "The 'Discovery' of the Rural Ottoman Armenian: Ethnography, Linguistic Legitimacy and the Making of a Modern Literary Language." Each of the winning recipients will receive a \$500 prize awarded by the Society.

Kamajian's paper studied the legacy of *bemakan par* or "stage dance," arguing that the ballet-centric genre, which belongs to a Western European hegemonic mode of artistic production, marginalizes Armenian vernacular aesthetics. Armenian vernacular dances are "removed from their cultural contexts and relegated to a representative 'essence' of an untouched Armenian past that can simply be choreographed over



Natalie Kamajian

for the proscenium stage." By using an interdisciplinary methodology, Kamajian looks at how *bemakan par* depicts in the body the phenomenon of Western/Soviet Russian dominance over Armenian indigenous heritage.

Kamajian is a current PhD candidate in the Department of World Arts & Cultures/Dance at the University of California, Los Angeles. After presenting in her first conference, the UCLA Armenian Studies Graduate Colloquium, 2021, Kamajian looks forward to continuing to share her work in the coming years. She commented on receiving the award by adding, "Exploring Armenian identity formation through the lens of dance has been such a rich point of study for me and I hope my research and findings will help to fill the lacuna on Armenian dance scholarship in both Armenian studies and dance studies."

Manoukian delivered her paper at the 42nd Annual Conference of the Nineteenth-Century Studies Association (March 13, 2021). Her paper explores the shifting understandings of linguistic authenticity and legitimacy in the final half-century of Ottoman Armenian intellectual life.

Additionally, it examines how intellectuals across the Empire took advantage of the new scholarly valorization of spoken language to challenge the supremacy of Classical Armenian. By utilizing dictionaries between see SAS, page 11



Ambassador Nina Hachigian

Ambassador Nina Hachigian Appointed to US Department of Defense Policy Board

WASHINGTON — Ambassador Nina Hachigian, who serves as the City of Los Angeles' Deputy Mayor for International Affairs, has been appointed to the U.S. Department of Defense Policy Board, reported the Armenian Assembly of America.

Other members of the board include Madeleine Albright and Henry Kissinger.

A diplomat and politician who is the first Deputy Mayor of International Affairs in the City of Los Angeles, Hachigian has led a prolific career that includes a post as U.S. Ambassador to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, where her strategic partnerships and initiatives resulted in her being awarded the U.S. Department of State's Superior Honor Award for her service.

"The Assembly congratulates Ambassador Hachigian on this prestigious appointment. Given the Ambassador's decades of experience and expertise, we have no doubt that she will serve with distinction," said Assembly Co-Chairs Anthony Barsamian and Van Krikorian.

Hachigian has also served as a Senior Fellow and Senior Vice President at the Center for American Progress, and was co-director of Asia policy for the Obama campaign in 2012. She was also the director of the RAND Center for Asia Pacific Policy, and served on the staff of the National Security Council in the Clinton White House from 1998-1999. She has written numerous books, reports and articles.

She is the founder of WASA, Women Ambassadors Serving America, which consists of more than 200 current and former Ambassadors, a co-founder of the Leadership Coalition for Women in National Security (LCWINS), a founding Board Member of the State Department's International Security Advisory Board, a member of the California 100 Commission, a Board Member of the Pacific Council on International Policy, and a member of the Council on Foreign Relations.

International Lawyer Kerkonian to Discuss Case of Armenia v. Azerbaijan in Intl. Court of Justice

FRESNO — International lawyer Karnig Kerkonian will share his experiences with a presentation on "Armenia v. Azerbaijan in the International Court of Justice: The Recent Case Brought Under the International Convention Against All Forms of Racial Discrimination" at 7 p.m. (Pacific time)/10 p.m. (Eastern time) on Thursday, February 17. The presentation is part of the Spring 2022 Lecture Series of the Armenian Studies Program and is co-sponsored by the Society for Armenian Studies (SAS).

Kerkonian is a member of the Armenian delegation to the ICJ in the case against Azerbaijan. He is a seasoned international lawyer and experienced litigator. He currently leads the international and federal practice groups at Kerkonian Dajani LLP, focusing on complex litigation matters, Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act litigation, the Alien Tort Claims Act and commercial sanctions regime matters.

Kerkonian holds an A.B. magna cum laude in government from Harvard University and two law degrees — a JD from the University of Chicago where he served on the Law Review as well as a post-doctoral Diploma in Public International Law from Cambridge University, England where he studied under James R. Crawford, later a Judge of the International Court of Justice. Kerkonian presents regularly on matters of public international law, the International Court of Justice, the European Court of Human Rights and the application of international law in U.S. courts. He is an adjunct professor of public international law at Artsakh State University.

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

For information about upcoming Armenian Studies Program presentations, visit <https://fresnostate.edu/armenianstudies>.

UCI Professor, Wife Fund \$100,000 Endowment for Armenian Studies Graduate Students

IRVINE, Calif. — Diran Apelian, University of California, Irvine (UCI) Distinguished Professor of materials science and engineering, and his wife, Seta, a retired orthodontist, recently funded a \$100,000 endowment to support graduate students in UCI's Armenian Studies Program. The couple is committed to keeping Armenian history and the Western Armenian language alive.

"The program itself, and what it stands for, is critical for the survival of the Western Armenian language," said Diran Apelian. "We want to make sure that the Western Armenian language is sustained, and that, more importantly, young people who are in need will have the resources enabling them to study."

see APELIAN, page 10



Diran and Seta Apelian (Photo: Steve Zylus/UCI)

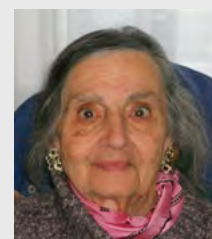
Adele Manuelian Estate Bequests \$100,000 to St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School

WATERTOWN — St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School, New England's only Armenian elementary school, has received a \$100,000 bequest from the Adele F. Manuelian 2013 Revocable Trust.

Matthew Der Manuelian, her son, said: "Our mother was very grateful for the role the school plays in the Armenian Community and the lives of its students, and that gratitude extends to the head of the school, the school board, the teachers, the students, their parents, as well as to the school's supporters in the Community."

"We greatly appreciate Adele Manuelian's desire to perpetuate Armenian education through her bequest," said Houry Boyamian, principal of St. Stephen's. "Her incredibly generous gift to our school is an investment in our mission of providing an excellent bilingual, bicultural education for all our students."

see MANUELIAN, page 9



Adele F. Manuelian



OBITUARY

Paul Armand Murad

NASA Engineer Worked on Apollo

VIENNA, Va. — Paul Armand Murad, age 78, died peacefully in his home here on January 23, 2022, surrounded by his wife and children.

He was the son of an Armenian immigrant father who was a talented machinist and commercial artist and an Armenian-American mother who was a high school valedictorian and skilled storyteller.

Paul was fortunate to have found his passion for airplanes, rockets, space, and technology early in life. He flew gliders as a teen and was a member of the Civil Air Patrol. For fun, he designed, built, and



launched metal rockets that he made in his father's machine shop.

He graduated as salutatorian from Aviation High School in Queens, New York, in 1960 where he split time between studying traditional high school subjects and working on airplanes in the school's metal shop and hangar. He went on to earn a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from the Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn in 1964.

Upon graduating, Paul traveled from New York City to Houston by bus to his first job as an engineer at the NASA Manned Spacecraft Center. He was responsible for performing reentry ablation analysis on the Apollo. Essentially, he calculated the thickness of the material on the command module's heat shield.

Paul went on to serve his country and spent two years in the U.S. Army as a first lieutenant and member of the 82nd Airborne Division. He was stationed in the Dominican Republic and Fort Bragg where he jumped out of perfectly good planes. He loved this short period of his life, and that's when he found another passion: serving his country.

After he was honorably discharged, he moved back to Houston to work at NASA for a few years and then returned home to New York City to earn his master's in aeronautical engineering and astrodynamics at New York University in 1968.

While Paul had asked her many times before over the years, that's when Lucy Ohanian finally accepted his invitation for

a date. After five dates, he proposed, she said, "Yes," and in 1968, the two were one of the first couples married at St. Vartan Armenian Apostolic Cathedral. The young couple honeymooned in Mexico and then moved to Houston so that Paul could resume his work at NASA.

During the next 15 years, Paul pursued his career focusing on advanced propulsion systems. The couple moved around the country and made homes in Sacramento, California; Orlando, Florida; New Orleans, Louisiana; Berwyn, Pennsylvania; Alexandria, Virginia; and Hillsdale, New Jersey. They expanded their family with a son Gregory and daughter Andrea.

In 1984, the family settled in Vienna. Paul joined the Defense Intelligence Agency and spent the rest of his career supporting the U.S. armed forces.

Even though he retired in 2010, he continued his work trying to solve the hardest problems in physics that exist, and he relished every minute of it. He was a standout in his professional community – better technically than most and more imaginative and excellent at putting disparate information together. Paul had the courage to discuss the strange and unknown mysteries of the universe. Along the way, he published more than 140 technical papers. He helped move the world forward while most of us simply maintained it. Few have the opportunity to live such a rewarding life.

Paul enjoyed the countryside, painting, the Sunday comics, taking courses, Van Gogh's paintings, teaching Sunday School, a good barbeque, reading, writing equations, writing emails, an afternoon floating in the pool, Sudoku, Star Trek, homemade Armenian Manti, and spending time with his family and his friends who became his family. He published nine books covering a range of topics, to include science fiction, genocide, and pulsars.

He was a mentor and role model to his children and countless others whom he met along the way. Paul encouraged everyone to do their best and be their best. He was never content with the status quo. He made many lifelong friends. He had great intellect, charm, wit, and a robust laugh.

He was a proud Armenian and longstanding member of the Knights of Vartan. He was a loving family man. Paul's greatest love though was his wife, Lucy.

He is survived by his wife of 53 years, Lucy; his son, Gregory (Razi); his daughter, Andrea; his grandchildren, Arminé and Austin; his brother, John (Victoria); his sister, Linda; and numerous nieces, nephews, and cousins.

Funeral services will be held Saturday, February 5, at noon, at St. Mary Armenian Apostolic Church in Washington. Interment will follow at Arlington National Cemetery at a later date.

Arpi Barsam

Wife, Mother and Grandmother

LOS ANGELES — Arpi Barsam, wife of Robert Barsam, mother of three, and grandmother to seven passed away unexpectedly in her home on Monday, January 17, at 8:40 pm. She was 74.

She is survived by her husband Robert Barsam, daughter and son-in-law, Tina and William Fuentes, son and daughter-in-law Raffi and Hasmig Barsam, daughter and son-in-law Helena and John Tokatlian, grandchildren, Jake and Anthony Tokatlian, Ariana, Alina, and Amelie Barsam, and Sarine and Sevana Fuentes. She is one of six

children. Her siblings are Elise Jevardian and husband Greg (deceased), Rev. Father Jiyar Tashjian, Kevork Tashjian (deceased) and his wife Shoghig, Khachig Tashjian and his wife Hilda, and Lena Beylerian and her husband Nurel. Her sister-in-laws Silva (deceased) and Gizelle. As well as a host of nieces and nephews and their children.

Funeral services will be held on Wednesday, February 23, 2022 at 2:30 pm at Forest Lawn Hollywood Hills, Church of the Hills (White Church), 6300 Forest Lawn Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90068.

Vachik Mangassarian

Veteran Character Actor

BURBANK, Calif. (*Hollywood Reporter/Daily Beast*) — Vachik Mangassarian, an actor known for his TV roles on "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation," "NCIS," "Curb Your Enthusiasm" and "Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.," has died. He was 78.

Mangassarian died in Burbank from COVID-19-related complications, his manager, Valerie McCaffrey of McCaffrey Talent Management, told the *Hollywood Reporter*.

Born in Iran of Armenian descent, he emigrated to the US at age 23 and worked as a waiter in Los Angeles as he set his eyes on a career in Hollywood.

Besides doing theater work, he had early roles in Iranian movies before landing his first American film role in "The South's Shark" in 1978. Mangassarian played the role of a father in "The Stoning of Soraya M," which starred Jim Caviezel and portrayed the stoning of an Iranian woman.

He also appeared in the movie "Lost and Found in Armenia," which starred Angela Sarafyan and Jamie Kennedy in an landmark collaboration between Armenian and American actors.

Mangassarian most recently completed a supporting role in Paul Weitz's new film "Moving On," starring Lily Tomlin and Jane Fonda.

As a supporter of the Armenian community, he anchored his own radio and a TV show, "The Armenian National Network," for 10 years as he and guests discussed politics, film and art.

Survivors include his sisters, Linda Lalaian and Elda Hacopian.

In the months before his death, Mangassarian had frequently expressed his opposition to COVID-19 vaccines and veered into truther territory, posting memes to Facebook that suggested the pandemic was part of a grand conspiracy.

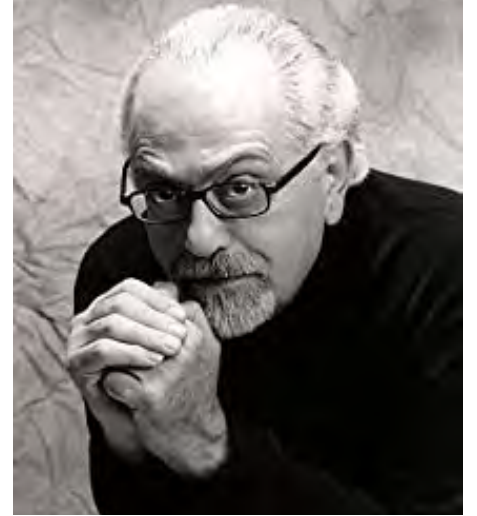
In one post from September 2021, the actor posted a photo of a parody news report saying that "millions test positive for Sheeple 19."

In another post a month later, he posted a photo of a billboard stating that "I am more afraid of a Democrat in the White House than I am of COVID-19." In early November, he made his stance on vaccines clear with an image of President Joe Biden altered to show a syringe poking into his behind, along with the caption, "Here's what you can do with my dose Joe Let's Go Brandon."

A representative for Mangassarian said the actor had initially been opposed to getting the coronavirus vaccine but ultimately did get vaccinated after it was required for film projects.

"I know about his original stance, but after I had a talk with him, his desire to work became more important to him," Valerie McCaffrey of McCaffrey Talent Management told the Daily Beast.

(Photo courtesy of Robert Kazandjian)



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OBITUARY

David Mugar, Philanthropist Who Added Fireworks to Boston's July Fourth Celebration, Dies at 82

MUGAR, from page 1

A scion of an Armenian-American family that built the Star Market grocery chain, Mr. Mugar belonged to an elite group of donors whose wealth and influence reached into virtually all aspects of public life, from college libraries and concert halls to hospitals and shopping malls.

In Greater Boston alone, the Mugar family name is affixed to the Museum of Science's Omni Mugar Theater, Boston University's Mugar Memorial Library, Northeastern University's Mugar Life Sciences Building and Mugar Hall at Tufts University's Fletcher School of Diplomacy.

Other institutions substantially benefiting from Mugar's largesse include the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Cape Cod Hospital. In 2012, he created a separate foundation dedicated to helping individuals through what he called "random acts of kindness."

"He was a Bostonian through and through, continually finding ways to give back to the community he loved," Mugar's family said in a statement. "He was humble and generous. Quietly doing good for others and always leading with his heart. The many gifts he gave to civic and cultural organizations across the city and the state were most often given in recognition and honor of his parents, our grandparents."

Beyond the holiday Pops concert, Mugar helped fund the city's Family Fireworks show on First Night on New Year's Eve and was a major investor in its live music scene, partnering with Live Nation's Don Law to own and operate the Boston Opera House, Paradise Rock Club, and the House of Blues.

For years, Mugar ranked among Massachusetts's richest citizens, with a net worth pegged at \$600 million or more.

"I want to do things that will affect the people in New England especially," he once observed, "and I like to do things that are non-exclusionary, so that they're available to everyone."

Exhibit A was his long association with the Independence Day concert.

For many years, the Mugar family had helped underwrite the event, first organized in 1929 by Boston Pops conductor Arthur Fiedler. As a teenager, David Mugar befriended Fiedler, the two sharing a passion for racing to active fire scenes: fellow hobbyists known as "sparks."

In 1973, with the July Fourth concerts attracting sparse crowds, Mugar proposed adding fireworks and cannon fire to Tchaikovsky's majestic 1812 Overture, a favorite piece of music. Fiedler agreed.

The next year, Mugar began serving as executive director. His first production drew a record 75,000 attendees. Two years later, 400,000 showed up for America's Bicentennial celebration, thus seating Boston near the head of the nation's party table.

No one was more delighted by all those dazzling bombs bursting in the air than

He attended the Cambridge School of Weston and Babson College but flunked out of the latter, having devoted much of his time to running his first business venture, a check cashing agency. He later took courses in Cornell University's food administration program.

It was Sarkis Mugar, Stephen's father,

exercising a \$25 million buyout option, Kraft put Mugar in a financial bind, triggering a bitter public feud between the two men.

In 1993, mounting debt service and slumping ratings persuaded Mugar to sell the enterprise to Ed Ansin of Miami-based Sunbeam Co. for a reported \$215 million. Channel 7 later affiliated with NBC and is now an independent station.

After the sale, Mugar admitted to the Globe that competing against the likes of Westinghouse and Hearst had been challenging: a "cut-throat business," he called it.

Yet his most stinging criticism was reserved for the lawyers, bankers, and insurance companies that he felt profited unduly from his ownership struggles. Their actions along with staff cuts and layoffs he had been obliged to make bothered him deeply.

"That hurt me personally because I knew so many of the people," he said.

Mugar was married twice, to Martha Silen and Rosemary Love. Both marriages ended in divorce. He leaves three children from his first marriage: Jonathan, a Hollywood writer, producer and actor, Peter, a basketball coach at Caltech in Pasadena, and Jennifer Mugar Flaherty, a philanthropist; his sister Carolyn Mugar, executive director of Farm Aid, and five grandchildren, and his longtime companion, Carolyn Cartelli.

"Our Dad used the opportunity he was given to think imaginatively, act honestly, and make a difference to those most in need," his family said in a statement. "That is a legacy we will work hard to preserve. We love you Dad, and we will miss you."

In 1998, Boston's Embankment Road, near Beacon Hill, was renamed David G. Mugar Way in honor of his long association, personal and financial, with the July 4th show.

A member of the Massachusetts Broadcasters Hall of Fame, he also served as a trustee of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Museum of Science, and WGBH Educational Foundation.

Notwithstanding his lofty profile as a businessman-philanthropist, Mugar remained an intensely private man, according to friends, largely avoiding public functions and turning down offers of honorary degrees and such.

Mugar himself often said his closest friends and personal heroes were not fellow A-listers but firefighters and other working-class people.

According to Steve MacDonald, a retired Boston Fire Department spokesman and longtime friend, people often expressed surprise about his own connection to someone of Mugar's stature.

"But that's just who David was," MacDonald said. "He was friends with regular people. He drove a Ford or a Kia. And he was more comfortable around people who didn't want something from him."

By the same token, MacDonald said, Mugar was not shy about soliciting fellow VIPs to support such pet causes as the Vendome Hotel Fire Memorial, which honors nine Boston firefighters who perished in the 1972 blaze. It was dedicated at a 2016 ceremony from which Mugar made a point of having his own name omitted, despite having played an outsized role in the memorial's construction.

"When all is said and done, David would try to help people any way he could," MacDonald said. "He was an unassuming and very generous man."



David Mugar and Pops Conductor Arthur Fiedler in 1976 (Boston Globe)

Mugar, a former licensed pyrotechnician and accomplished amateur photographer.

Although he never had a direct role in launching the fiery spectacle, Mugar helped test new fireworks from time to time — back when they were ignited by railroad flares, not computerized firing programs. He also worked on safety regulations that are still being followed.

"In the best possible way, I think of David as a big kid whose absolute favorite holiday in the entire world is the Fourth of July," incumbent Pops maestro Keith Lockhart told the Globe in 2013. "He lives and breathes for this particular day."

For decades, Mugar personally funded the event, spending \$1 million or more.

Mugar produced his last July Fourth show in 2016. The event is now produced by Boston 4 Productions under management by the Boston Pops.

David Graves Mugar was born on April 27, 1939, and grew up in Belmont, one of two children of Stephen P. Mugar and Marian Graves. His father's roots were Armenian, his mother's of Yankee stock.

who purchased and ran the family's original Star Market, located in Watertown, in 1916, a year after it opened. A second store opened in Newton in 1932.

The chain began adding roughly one store per year until the postwar building boom and advent of the suburban shopping mall accelerated its growth. By the mid-60s, the chain, under Stephen Mugar's management, comprised 35 stores plus the Brigham's ice cream plant and retail shops.

Mugar apprenticed in the business as a meat cutter and store manager. In 1964, his father sold the family's interest to a Chicago company and founded Mugar Enterprises, focused mainly on developing shopping malls and hotels David Mugar began running focused mainly on developing shopping malls and hotels David Mugar began running the company in 1982 following his father's death.

That same year, after waging a protracted legal battle with WNAC-TV owner RKO General, he became majority owner and CEO of New England Television, fulfilling his dream of running a local network affiliate. (A separate dream, to own a stake in the Boston Red Sox, failed to materialize when a proposed deal with a group of minority owners fell through in early 1983)

The 1980s and 90s overlapped with Boston's Golden Age of TV news as the city's three network affiliates — including WBZ (Channel 4, owned by Westinghouse) and WCVB (Channel 5, a Hearst property) — competed fiercely for ratings, ad dollars, and bragging rights. Local news anchors commanded hefty salaries and celebrity status.

Not every owner turned a comfortable profit, though. Despite Mugar and his partners investing heavily in the newsroom arms race, their station stayed mired in third place in the ratings. As financial pressures mounted, shareholder fights erupted. A particularly ugly one broke out in 1991 involving minority owner Robert Kraft. In

Adele Manuelian Estate Bequests \$100,000 to St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School

MANUELIAN, from page 7

"On behalf of our school board and entire community, we would like to express our immense appreciation to the Der Manuelian Family regarding this bequest," said Michel Guzelian, chair of the school board.

A plaque acknowledging the generosity of Adele Manuelian will be installed at the school.

Established in 1984, St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School is dedicated to educational excellence in an environment rich in Armenian culture. Serving students from pre-kindergarten through fifth grade, it is the only Armenian day school in New England, and is accredited by the Association of Independent Schools in New England. Accreditation by AISNE provides quality assurance that a school is meeting rigorous standards in all aspects of its operations and that it is operating in alignment with its mission.

For more information on the school, visit www.ssaes.org.



COMMUNITY NEWS

John and Greg Jamian Open New Medical Supply Store with CHAP Accreditation

BIRMINGHAM, Mich. — Community Health Accreditation Partner, Inc. (CHAP) announced recently that Sun Medical Equipment and Supply Company has been awarded CHAP Accreditation under the CHAP Medical Equipment Supplier Standards of Excellence.

CHAP Accreditation demonstrates that Sun Medical Equipment and Supply Company meets the industry's highest nationally recognized standards. The rigorous evaluation by CHAP focuses on quality of services and products and long-term viability. Simply stated, adherence to CHAP's standards leads to better quality care.

"By achieving CHAP Accreditation, Sun Medical Equipment and Supply Company of Birmingham, MI has shown a commitment to excellence in care," said Nathan DeGodt, CHAP President and CEO. "We are excited to begin our partnership with Sun Medical by offering support in its commitment to providing quality care and continuous improvement."

Sun Medical Equipment and Supply Company's new showroom provides a variety of home medical equipment products and services to patients and their families in the Birmingham and Bloomfield surrounding areas. Sun Medical Equipment and Supply is part of the AmeriCare Medical Inc. family of home medical related services in southeastern Michigan. John Jamian, Chief Operating Officer for Sun Medical Inc., said our dedicated team worked tirelessly to make our new store in Birmingham a great success. While Sun Medical has always been accredited, we felt it very important that our new store receive the same accreditation.

CHAP is an independent, not-for-profit, accrediting body for community-based health care organizations. Through "deeming authority" granted by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), CHAP has the regulatory authority to survey organizations providing home medical equipment services, to determine if they meet the highest standards of community-based care.

For more information about Sun Medical Equipment and Supply, visit their website at www.sunmedical-store.com.



Sun Medical Equipment and Supply Company inauguration



Storefront of new Sun Medical Equipment and Supply Company

UCI Professor, Wife Fund \$100,000 Endowment for Armenian Studies Graduate Students

APELIAN, from page 7

Between 1915 and 1923, the Ottoman Empire systematically killed over a million Armenians in what is known as the Armenian Genocide. Survivors, including the Apelians' ancestors, fled to safety and created new communities in the Middle East, Europe and the Americas. Compounding that diaspora, another byproduct of the Armenian Genocide is that the survival of the Western Armenian language is in jeopardy — UNESCO declared it an endangered language in 2010.

Western Armenian is rarely taught intergenerationally, with fewer descendants of genocide survivors who live outside of Armenia learning the language.

UCI's Armenian Studies program offers two years of instruction in Western Armenian. UCI's School of Humanities has both undergraduate and graduate programs in Armenian history and a minor in Armenian Studies.

UCI's Center for Armenian Studies hosts a variety of events to the community and public, including film screenings and book talks. It is led by Hourri Berberian, professor of history and Meghrouni Family Presidential Chair in Armenian Studies. "The Apelians' generous support will be a tremendous help to our graduate students as they pursue their research," said Berberian. "Because of the far-reaching nature of academic publishing and dissemination of knowledge, the

scholarship they produce will have a wide impact beyond the here and now."

Publicly launched on October 4, 2019, the Brilliant Future campaign aims to raise awareness and support for UCI. By engaging 75,000 alumni and garnering \$2 billion in philanthropic investment, UCI seeks to reach new heights of excellence in student success, health and wellness, research and more. The School of Humanities plays a vital role in the success of the campaign.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Camp Armen to Be Rebuilt in Turkey

PARAMUS, NJ — The Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) welcomes the news of the rebuilding of Camp Armen in Tuzla and is committed to support the Camp's reconstruction.

In 1962, land located in Tuzla, Istanbul was purchased by the Armenian Evangelical Church of Gedik Paşa Foundation and Camp Armen was built on it. In 1974, properties belonging to Christian Foundations were seized due to the country's political atmosphere which was affected by political activities outside the country. The camp land was one of the properties that was seized by the authorities.

In 2015, with the consent of the President and in line with instructions from the Prime Minister at the time, a 4,715 square meters portion of the original 8,600 square meter property was returned to the foundation by the mayor of Tuzla. Following the return of the 4,715 square meters portion

of land, work began quickly. A new architectural plan has been completed, a license obtained, and construction will be started soon. The new Camp Armen project will maintain its orphanage character, will serve as a "Youth and Information Center," and will continue to operate throughout the year. Contact is also currently being made with relevant authorities for the return of a remaining part of the property owned by the Tuzla municipality.

"Camp Armen will be the first and only Camp in Turkey to function as a development center by serving our community every month throughout the year with social, cultural and religious development activities with the help of trained volunteers," said Rev. Krikor Ağabaloğlu, Pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Gedik Paşa, Istanbul, Turkey. "Camp Armen was established in 1962 by children whose small hands carried water, sand, cement

and bricks. They literally wrote a story of existence. They built the camp like a monument and called it Camp Armen. They left a lasting heritage that has never been forgotten. Let us, as the elders of today, bring Camp Armen back to life with the same spirit. By saying, 'we have been broken down but not destroyed and we will last forever,' let's build a renewed and renovated Camp Armen for this era. Let's make Camp Armen come alive together through our voluntary contributions and keep Camp Armen alive with the stories that have been lived in the past."

"Under the leadership of Hrant Guzelian, Camp Armen was indeed a blessing to a multitude of Armenian youngsters from the plains of Anatolia, including Hrant Dink and his wife Rakel. We hope and pray that the new Camp will continue to be a blessing to a new wave of Armenian Youth from all corners, including Anatolia," said

Zaven Khanjian, AMAA Executive Director/CEO.

Just recently the AMAA helped the Armenian Evangelical Church of Gedik Paşa make renovations to the Church structure and give a facelift with a new coat of paint throughout the building. Besides Church activities, the Gedik Paşa Church operates the Hrant Dink School. Founded in 2003, the main goal of the School is to create a small Homeland for children from Armenia living in Istanbul and give them an Armenian upbringing and education until the day comes for them to return to Armenia and continue their education in the Homeland.

SAS Recognizes 'Best Conference Paper Award' Recipients

SAS, from page 7

1890 and 1915 as prescriptive tools, Manoukian looks to understand the "extent to which the valorization of spoken Armenian had an actual impact on the codification of the written standard known today as Western Armenian."



Jennifer Manoukian

Manoukian is a current PhD candidate in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures (Armenian Studies) at the University of California, Los Angeles and second time awardee of the Best Conference Paper Award. Prior to her studies at UCLA, Manoukian attended Columbia University where she received her MA (2014) in Middle Eastern, South Asian and African Studies. In continuing to further her research, Manoukian added, "As I begin to expand this paper into a dissertation chapter, it is encouraging to know that the topic and preliminary findings were of interest to the prize committee. This thought will certainly be energizing in the long months of writing ahead."

SAS President Bedross Der Matossian congratulated both recipients. "This year we have received the highest number of submissions in the history of SAS. More than 15 papers were submitted by graduate students from a variety of disciplines. All of them were highly qualified papers demonstrating the path taken by the young generation in raising sophisticated questions in their respective disciplines. I would like to thank members of the Executive Council of SAS who spent numerous hours from their time evaluating the excellent papers," said Der Matossian.

The Society of Armenian Studies is an international body, composed of scholars and students, whose aims are to promote the study of Armenian culture and society, including history, language, literature, and social, political, and economic questions; to facilitate the exchange of scholarly information pertaining to Armenian studies around the world; and to sponsor panels and conferences on Armenian studies.

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Gesaria (Kayseri) circa 1912. Tina Demijian collection.

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Arts & Culture

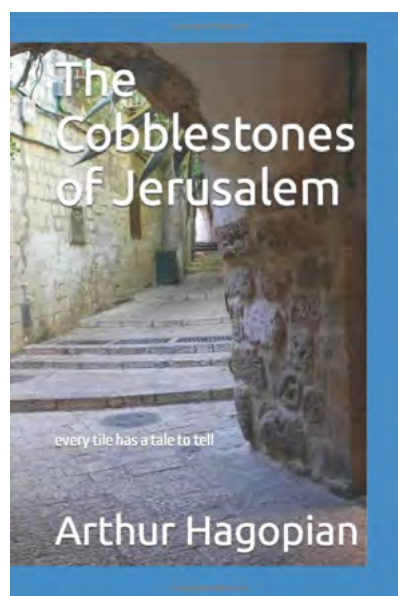
Books

A New Window on Jerusalem

It has been said that of the ten measures of beauty God bestowed upon the world, the city of Jerusalem received nine. And of the ten measures of sorrow the world is afflicted with, Jerusalem's portion is nine.

The fascinating enclave of Jerusalem, the city of gold, the city of light, is considered to be the center of the world by the three Abrahamic religions: Christianity, Islam and Judaism.

But Jerusalem does not belong only to the adherents of Christianity,



Islam and Judaism: it belongs to the world.

Thousands of books have been written about Jerusalem. And now Jerusalem-born veteran journalist Arthur Hagopian, presents a new window on this hallowed spot on earth, in a new book entitled *The Cobblestones of Jerusalem*.

The book delves into the labyrinthine fabric and tells the reader stories of wonder and mystery, of glory and disaster, of triumph and despair of all three protagonists.

Every tile of the cobblestoned alleys of this fascinating city of prophets has a tale to tell, intertwining the annals of its fascinating people: the Christians (Armenians, Copts, Ethiopians, Greeks, Syrians), Moslems and Jews.

In the homes of the myriad of people knitting the fabric of the Old City, one can still hear the language first spoken by Jesus two thousand years ago, as well as languages long considered dead.

And in the bosom of the quaint Quarter of the Armenians, lives a community who has helped put Jerusalem more squarely on the map: it was this ancient people, whose home occupies the site of the encampment of the Xth Legion of Rome that conquered the Zealot stronghold of Masada, who gave the city its first see JERUSALEM, page 15



Display from the Moscow musical folklore exhibition

Armenian Heritage Presented at Moscow's 'Musical Folklore of the Peoples of the Commonwealth of Independent States' Exhibition

MOSCOW — The exhibition Musical Folklore of the Peoples of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) Countries has opened in the Russian State Library (RSL) as part of the programming for the Year of Folk Art and Cultural Heritage of the Commonwealth of Independent States. The exhibition introduces Armenia and its musical heritage through music well as decorative and applied art objects and the national musical instrument duduk provided by the Armenian Museum of Moscow.

The exhibition, which opened on January 25 within the walls of the Russian State Library, presents the most striking examples of musical folklore of the peoples of the CIS countries. The exposition is presented in the chamber hall of the Music Publications and Sound Recordings Department of the Pashkov House.

The importance of the event in strengthening cultural ties between the CIS member countries, among other things, is indicated by the number and rank of the guests who attended the opening of the exhibition. These are representatives of the diplomatic missions of the CIS countries in Moscow, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, the CIS Executive Committee, the Interparliamentary Assembly of the CIS Member States, the Moscow House of Nationalities, the Union of Armenians of Russia, the Armenian Museum of Moscow and other national associations.

The traditional heritage of the Armenian people is represented at the exhibition by songs of Komitas, who laid the foundations of Armenian national music, songs of gusans ["minstrels"], and pieces for the traditional instruments saz, tar, kemanchi and duduk.

"The great Armenian composer Komitas (Soghomon Soghomonian, 1869-1935) said that the people are the only creators to whom one should go and from whom one should learn. The Armenian people have created an original and diverse musical culture. The treasures of folk art — labor, household, ritual, love, lyrical, comic and other songs and dances — are remembered for their bright melodies, rhythms and profound content. At the exhibition, you can see collections of folk songs and dances arranged see FOLKLORE, page 13



Display from the Moscow musical folklore exhibition

Boston Symphony Orchestra Announces Appointment of Two New Executive Leaders

BOSTON— Gail Samuel, Eunice and Julian Cohen President and CEO of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, in January announced the appointment of two new executive leaders Maureen Flores, as chief development officer, and Asadour Santourian, as vice president, Tanglewood Music Center & Learning. Both appointments are effective January 2022.

Flores is arriving at the BSO from Bentley University, where she most recently served as vice president for advancement. Flores will lead the BSO's philanthropic efforts, fostering an ethos of partnership among board and staff on all development initiatives. Through collaboration across the organization, Flores will conceptualize, organize, and implement a comprehensive and strategic fundraising program in support of the BSO's mission and vision for the future.

Santourian is joining the BSO from the acclaimed Aspen Music Festival and School, where he served for 18 years as vice president for artistic administration and artistic advisor. At



Asadour Santourian

the BSO, Santourian will leverage his deep experience mentoring artists to the BSO's programs in support of the next generation of musicians. Leading all of the BSO's training, education, and community programs, Santourian will focus on expanding broader representation through wide-ranging partnerships and collaborations.

"I am thrilled to welcome Maureen and Asadour to the BSO executive team. They each bring a wealth of experience to the organization as we seek to expand the orchestra's relevance and impact in our community and beyond," said Samuel. "Maureen and Asadour are proven leaders with demonstrated talent and deep expertise in their respective fields, and they join the passionate BSO staff, dedicated to the orchestra's future."

At the Aspen Music Festival and School, Santourian developed the season themes and other artistic initiatives, including the Overtures series and the thematic minifestivals. In his time, the AMFS garnered seven ASCAP Awards for Adventurous Programming of Contemporary Music. Previously artistic director of the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra and the Gergiev Festival in Rotterdam, he is a member of the recommendation board of the Avery Fisher Career Grants among others and has served on numerous competition jury panels. He is a regular lecturer for the Los Angeles Philharmonic and was a featured lecturer for its 2012 Mahler Project. From 1991 to 2000 he was the Minnesota Orchestra's director of artistic planning.



ARTS & CULTURE

Press Collection of the Vienna Mekhitarist Library Now Online

LISBON — The Vienna Mekhitarist Congregation's journal collection and its portal website are now live, featuring digitized Armenian press published between 1794 and 1920, in a free and

accessible format.

To date, the online library of the Mekhitarist press and its corresponding databases have been endowed with more than 400,000 pages of digitized Arme-

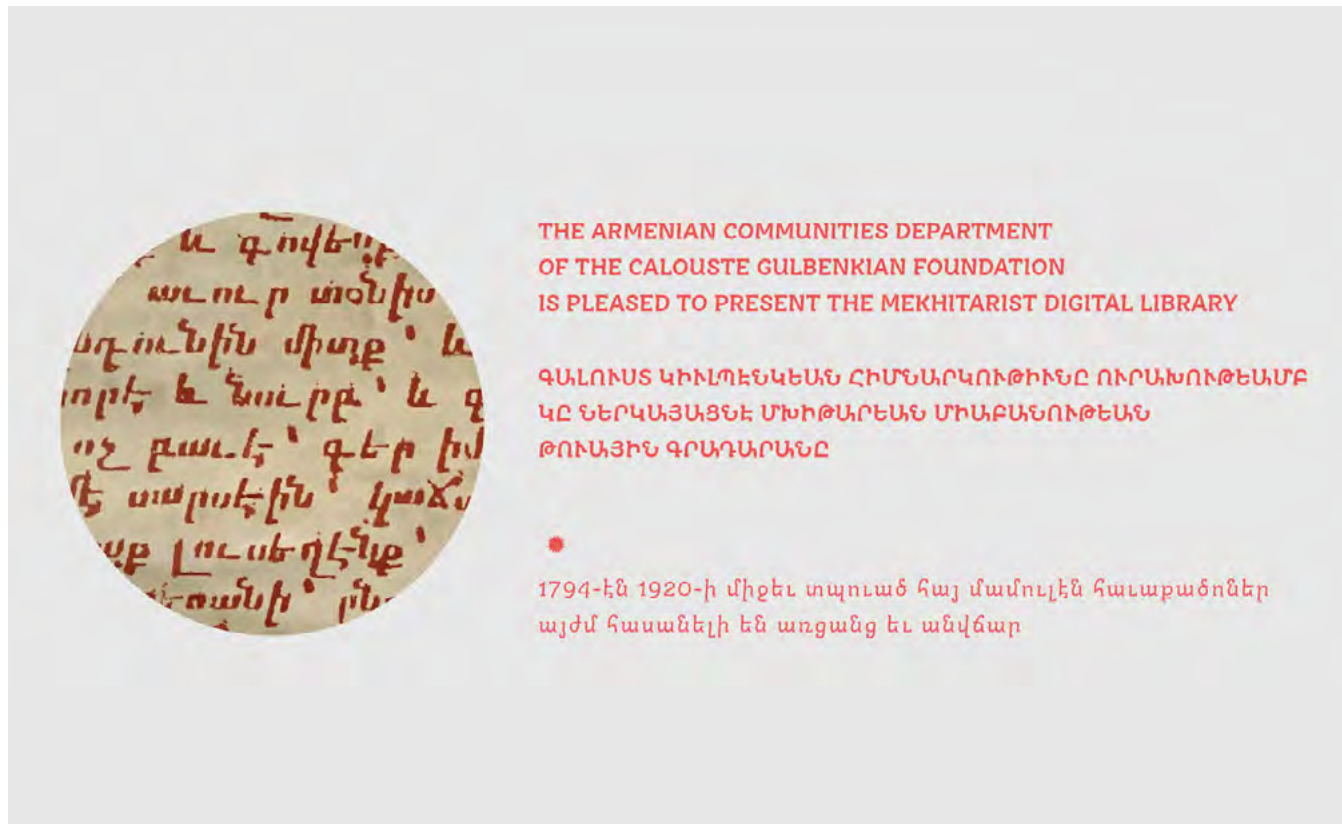
nian newspapers and periodicals from the rich collection of the Mekhitarist Monastery of Vienna. The digitization of these materials and making them available to the public is made possible

through the collaboration between the Mekhitarist Congregation, the Armenian Communities Department of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and the Fundamental Scientific Library of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia.

The portal website gives the reader and researcher access to the Mekhitarist Congregation digital library content via one address: an address that directs the visitor to all the digitized and indexed materials stored in the databases of the RA Fundamental Scientific Library. Digitization is continuous, and new materials will be added periodically as additional journals are digitized.

Addressing the great and immediate need for accessibility, the goal of the collaboration is to make this great pan-Armenian wealth of knowledge and collective heritage available to all free of charge, ensuring its wide and easy accessibility.

To read more about the project's objectives and to access the digitized materials, please visit the portal website and the respective databases here: <http://www.mekhitaristlibrary.org/>, <https://arar.sci.am/dlibra/collectiondescription/11?language=en>, <http://vmc.sci.am/>



Armenian Heritage Presented at Moscow Musical Folklore Exhibit

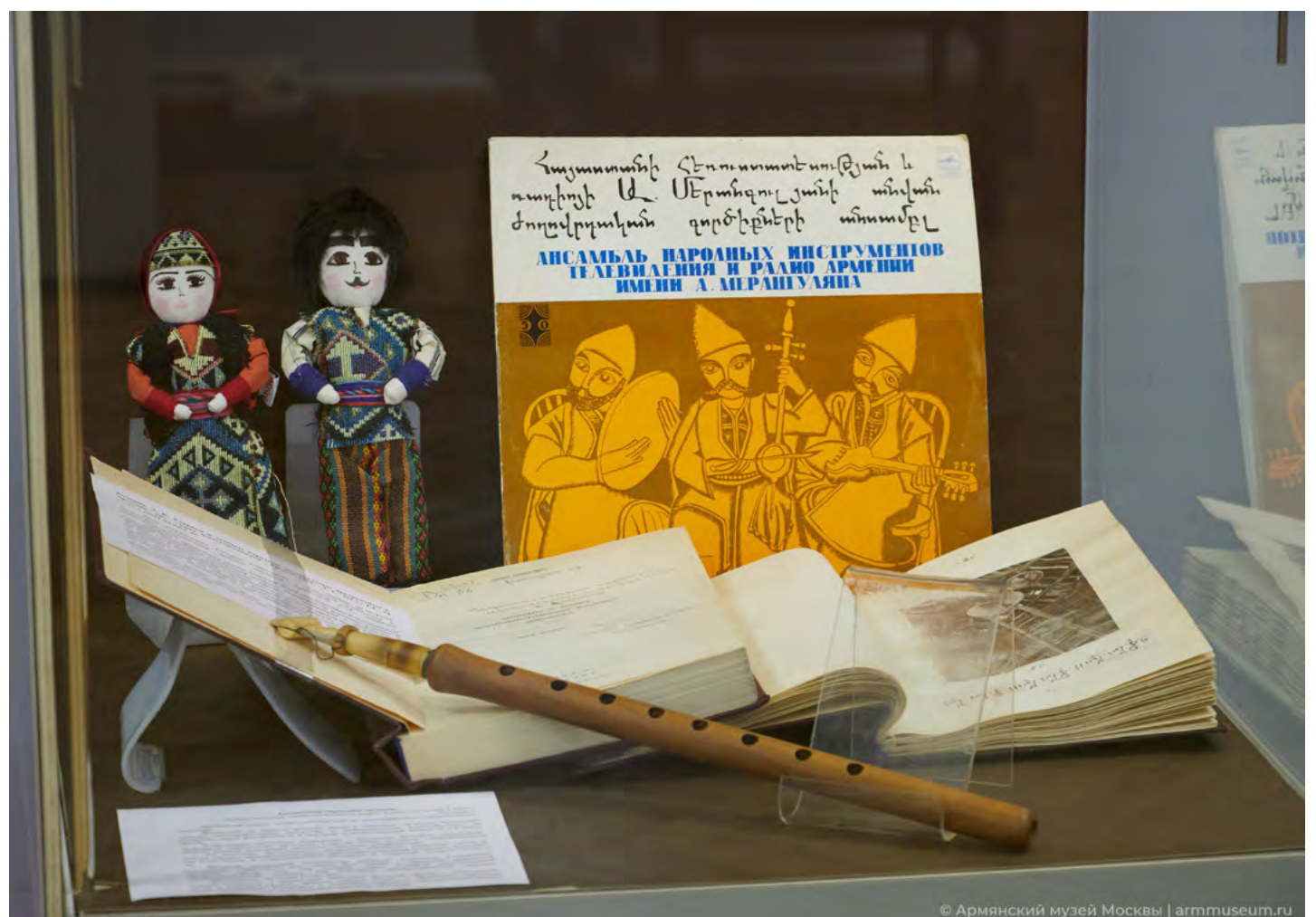
FOLKLORE, from page 12

by such outstanding representatives of the song culture of Armenia as Christopher Kara-Murza, Alexander Spendiarov, Tatul Altunyan and others,” writes the website of the Russian State Library.

The exhibition opened with a concert, which clearly demonstrated the folklore traditions and modern culture of the participating countries of the event. So, on the stage of one of the halls of the Russian State Library, the singer and composer Marina Manasyan performed her own composition, the song Karmir Erg. Marina is called “the most sensual voice of new Armenian music.” In her work, she skillfully combines the Armenian language and Armenian and Eastern motifs with electronic music.

“The desire for good neighborliness is an important factor in the development of relations between the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States. The common history and the memory of the path traversed by our ancestors act as a rallying basis for us. The functions of preserving and transferring memory and knowledge are assumed by organizations that carry out educational work. These are schools, educational institutions, libraries, museums, cultural centers — they are links of the same chain connecting generations. The Russian State Library and the Armenian Museum of Moscow and the Culture of Nations are among such links.

Armenian-Russian friendship is indivisible. It has deep and strong roots, being a story of a spiritually close connection, full of pages of heroism and service to a com-



Display from the Moscow musical folklore exhibition

mon goal. All this determines the relations of our peoples to this day. And this is unchanging,” said Ruben Tsovakovich Grigoryan, founder of the Armenian Museum of Moscow and Culture of Nations, in his

greeting sent for the opening of the exhibition.

In the CIS, 2022 has been declared the Year of Folk Art and Cultural Heritage, in connection with which numerous events

dedicated to folk art and folklore will be held in CIS countries. One of them is the abovementioned exhibition, which can be seen until February 22, with a reader's ticket to the RSL.



ARTS & CULTURE

Akis Dagazian

Bridging Armenia And Greece

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN / THESSALONIKI — Greek Armenian businessman and researcher Akis (Sarkis) Dagazian is active in Armenian-Greek cooperation. Born in 1975 in Komotini in northeastern Greece, he studied at Panteion University and University of Macedonia. Currently he is a partner at Maron Energy Group, export and marketing director at Dagazian Fine Jewelry as well as chairman of the Hellenic-Armenian Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Greece.

Akis, in an interview you said that Dagazian Fine Jewelry has been manufacturing and wholesaling jewelry since 1957, keeping alive a tradition of almost half a century.

It all started back in 1955 when my late father Takvor Dagazian moved to Thessaloniki from our native Komotini to obtain the centuries old Armenian art of jewelry mastering next to Onnik Hatcherian, the legendary diamond setter of the time. At Mr. Hatcherian's workshop my father got acquainted with the art of diamond setting and jewelry creation. Armenians living in Northern Greece claim their origin mostly from the Asia Minor region where Armenians, Greeks, Turks and Jews coexisted for centuries. It is this geographical area from where they have brought their techniques and craftsmanship in Greece. They had been working using the style and artistic features of Constantinople and the wider west Asia Minor region.

What makes your family business in the Greek jewelry market unique?

Bearing a name is a heavy responsibility in all fields of society and especially in business. In our case the name "Dagazian" is not just an Armenian surname. It is also a brand name. Being loyal to the legacy of our ancestors we keep a tradition alive by providing high-end jewelry to our customers throughout the country. We have witnessed cases that grandparents, parents and their children, three consequent generations, have bought their wedding jewelry from our stores. Since 1957 this legacy has been continued with the expanding of our company from manufacturing to wholesale, retail as well as exports. We are currently one of the main jewelry suppliers in Greece and we export to 14 countries. Quality, hard work, consistency, transparency, honesty and customer care are the key factors of success in our company. Add the good reputation Armenian jewelers enjoy in Greece for more than a century already in the country and you have the recipe for what makes our business special.

Armenian jewelers were famous in Ottoman Empire. Their traditions are still alive among their heirs in Istanbul and Middle East. What about Greece?

There are a lot of Armenian jewelers in Greece as well. If we exclude the newcomers that settled in Greece the last 40-50 years coming from Turkey and Middle East in search for better living conditions, I can name several Armenian jewelers that are very successful in Greece i.e., the Kasprians in Thessaloniki, Janikians and Danelians in Athens or the Knouni family who are considered world-famous diamond dealers. Among the manufacturers I can distinguish the Kolanians in Athens who are up to date with the latest technological developments. We should keep in mind that apart from some families — mainly in Northern Greece and Crete — the current

Armenian community in Greece is relatively new, dating only 100 years and is consisted of refugees that settled here after the Minor Asia Catastrophe. Almost 80,000 Armenian refugees had found refuge in Greece that time, including some jewelry artisans who brought with them the art and the techniques of centuries old Armenian craftsmanship as foresaid. Thus, most of their traditions come from Constantinople and west Minor Asia.

In 2009 you visited Armenia aiming to establish relations with local jewelry manufacturers. How did that cooperation took place?

We had several meetings with a lot of local manufacturers but in the first place our aim was mainly to open and operate a retail outlet. Although Armenia is still the home for a lot of skillful jewelry artisans, most of the country's production is oriented to ex-Soviet markets. So currently we are working with a lot of Armenian jewelers from all over the world (Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, Bulgaria, Italy, Belgium, Germany, Austria, US) but not from Armenia. The main reasons behind this decision are the different and diverse preferences of our clientele, difficulties in transportation, insurance as well as custom clearances and last but not least some differences in what I could name "business ethics" between the entrepreneurs of Armenia and the Western World. Unfortunately, the clash between these two worlds was also obvious during the last decade within the administrative bodies of the Armenian Jewelers Association. Finally, we also decided not to proceed with opening a store in Yerevan taking into consideration the gap between the investment required as well as the operating cost involved in relation with the expected turnovers and profits.

Who initiated the Hellenic-Armenian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and how effective is its activity?



and is still serving HACCI as Honorary President. The chamber is a wholly autonomous, nonprofit organization and receives no subsidy from any governmental body.

In its short period of its existence, HACCI has organized and got involved in a lot of successful projects for the support of the Greek – Armenian economic cooperation. Among the past indicative activities of HACCI we could name the following: (i) International Fair of Thessaloniki (1994-2021), (ii) Official visits of the Presidents of the Hellenic Republic Mr. Costis Stefanopoulos and Mr. Carolos Papoulias to Armenia (1999, 2007 & 2014), (iii) Traditional Products Exhibition – Festival (2010), (iv) Hellenic – Armenian Business Forum (2011, 2014, 2019), (v) MOU with the Armenian Development Agency (2014), Cooperation of Bilateral Chambers based in Greece Initiative (2015), Philoxenia Tourism Exhibition (2018, 2019, 2021), Money Show (2019) as well as numerous meetings with businessmen, ministers and prime ministers from both countries.

The Chamber is also supporting several projects in the field of education, culture and charity. It is worth mentioning i.e., that HACCI was the organization behind the introduction of Armenian Language as a foreign language at the University of Macedonia back in 2011.

Although bilateral trade remains relatively low for several reasons which I need a special interview to analyze, we strongly believe that due to our efforts the initial era of mutual skepticism between businessmen of the two countries has given its place to a restrained optimism. Currently, due to the Chamber's initiatives, all major companies of Armenia in the field of food and beverage are distributed in Greece, Armenian watch brands are also represented here and lately we also witness a gradually increasing flow of tourists in both countries.

Akis, we met in 2019 in Beirut, at the international conference organized by Haigazian University on

Armenian communities of Greece and Cyprus, where you presented a paper "History, Revival and Future Challenges: The Armenian Community of Komotini since the 17th Century." You also give speeches and lectures all over Greece concerning Armenian history as well as the historic Armenian presence in the region.

Indeed, I became interested in the history of the Armenian presence in Greece since the early years of my childhood. Taking into consideration the fact that our family established in Greece three centuries ago and – all these years up to now – preservation of our national identity, culture and virtues have played a very important role in shaping my own character as well. Moreover, as my late grandfather Sarkis Dagazian was a prominent member of the local Armenian community and president of the council of the Armenian Community of Komotini during the tough years of the interwar period I had the honor to inherit an important family archive and thus primary research material. Studying Political Science and International Studies at the renowned Panteion University of Athens gave me the opportunity to improve my research skills as well as the ability to conduct my essays on several fields that have to do with the history of Armenians in Greece. My research is still in progress and God willing, I am aiming to publish more announcements and papers in the future in cooperation with other scholars.

Now you live between Greece and Estonia – why? For Diaspora Armenians it is unusual to live and work in a Baltic country.

Due to my business activities that cover a wide range of sectors apart from jewelry trading such as finance, capital markets and renewable energy sources, I have first visited the Baltics back in 1999. All three states had the potentials of growth because of the convergence process of their economies due to the EU enlargement. Particularly Estonia was and still is the global pioneer in digital governance and retains the friendliest corporate environment. Foreigners can obtain an e-residency status and can operate their companies literally remotely. A businessman can establish a company in Estonia within 18 minutes including the time needed for the wire transfer of the share capital!!! Right now, the only thing an individual cannot do in Estonia is get married or divorce. They have even been voting online since 2007. For all these reasons we have preferred to come and invest in Estonia.

Are you in touch with Tallinn Armenians?

Being an active part of a global nation, we already had our contacts and friendships with Estonian Armenians even before we started our business activities in the country. Thus, we kept and even expanded our contacts after our establishment in the country. Unlike Greece, all of the Estonian Armenians have settled in Estonia during the Soviet times.

How do you see further cooperation between Armenia and Greece?

Despite the common historical background and cultural similarities, for several reasons the two nations have not yet realized the full potential or even the necessity for their cooperation. We need to work on a long-term master plan between the two countries in order to enhance our bilateral collaboration in every possible field such as education, cultural exchanges, sports, economy, tourism, technology, finance, diplomacy, defense just to mention some of them.

In terms of geopolitics our interests are or should be common but we all know that Armenia is relying on a wide scale cooperation with Russia and Greece is aligned with its NATO and EU partners. At the same time both Greece and especially Armenia are facing their own diverse internal and external challenges.

Nevertheless, we can still deepen our partnership and the Armenian community in Greece with its institutions should be the starting point and cornerstone of every such endeavor.

Despite the fact that numerous agreements have been signed between the two states only a few are effectively implemented due to several reasons that have to do with the well-known large-scale bureaucracy that both countries need to work and comply with. If you want my opinion, a specific high level intergovernmental committee should be formed setting the tasks and targets of our partnership. This body should meet physically or remotely every month to observe, surveil or reset the implementation of each project in every field.

Here, at the Hellenic Armenian Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Greece, both myself and our team, we are fully devoted to our scope, we are cooperating with all ministries, organizations as well as any institution in Greece or Armenia being flexible and active enough to overcome any potential obstacle in order to bring immediate and solid results.



ARTS & CULTURE

Recipe Corner



by Christine
Vartanian



The Vintage Press Caesar Salad From Chef David Vartanian

Many people believe the Caesar salad was named after Julius Caesar - it's not. The Caesar salad was invented by an Italian-American man named Caesar Cardini in about 1924. This legendary salad's creation is generally credited to restaurateur Cardini, an Italian immigrant who operated restaurants in Mexico and the United States. Cardini was living in San Diego, but he was also working in Tijuana where he avoided the restrictions of Prohibition. Throughout Prohibition, Tijuana was the place for many Southern California elites and celebrities to go for a drink and entertainment. The *Los Angeles Times* called Tijuana "the city that was Vegas before Vegas before Vegas."

Cardini was born in 1896. As expected, it's a little difficult tracing someone's life so long ago. However, an advertisement from Cardini's restaurant in 1919 suggests he moved to California in the 1910s. Early records document his first joint venture in Sacramento. There is also evidence that he worked at the Palace Hotel in San Francisco. Later, he opened another restaurant in San Diego. However, in 1920, Prohibition threw a wrench in his restaurateur dreams. It was shortly after this that he invented his famous salad. In her cookbook *From Julia Child's Kitchen*, Child recounted traveling to Cardini's restaurant:

My parents, of course, ordered the salad. Caesar himself rolled the big cart up

to the table, tossed the romaine in a great wooden bowl, and I wish I could say I remembered his every move, but I don't. The only thing I see again clearly is the eggs. I can see him break 2 eggs over that romaine and roll them in, the greens going all creamy as the eggs flowed over them. Two eggs in a salad? Two one-minute coddled eggs? And garlic-flavored croutons, and grated Parmesan cheese? It was a sensation of a salad from coast to coast, and there were even rumblings of its success in Europe.

Douglas Fairbanks, Mary Pickford, Jean Harlow, John Barrymore, and Charlie Chaplin were just a few of the famous movie stars known to frequent Tijuana in the 1920s for a little drinking and gambling. It was in this atmosphere that Caesar Cardini opened his restaurant along the then-hopping Main Street, today called Avenida Revolución.

Since 1966, the Vartanian family has welcomed countless local residents, travelers, and international dignitaries to The Vintage Press, their celebrated restaurant in downtown Visalia, California. With four distinctive dining rooms and classic and creative menus that reflect the seasons, The Vintage Press is a gourmet destination. Here's the restaurant's signature recipe for Caesar Salad created tableside each evening by Chef David Vartanian.*

INGREDIENTS:

3 large heads romaine lettuce
3/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
2 cups diced sourdough bread
3 large garlic cloves, crushed
1/4 cup fresh lemon juice
12 anchovy fillets
2/3 cup grated Parmesan-Reggiano cheese
Splash of hot pepper sauce
1 coddled egg
Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper

Serves 4.

PREPARATION:

Discard the large outer leaves of the romaine, using just the hearts. Wash the romaine hearts and dry them well. Set aside.

Sauté the diced bread and the garlic cloves in 1/4 cup olive oil until golden brown. Don't allow the garlic to burn. Discard the garlic before adding croutons to the salad.

Separate the lettuce leaves and place them in a large bowl. Add the remaining 1/2 cup olive oil along with the lemon juice, to the romaine. Toss lightly.

Finely chop six anchovy fillets and add them along with the cheese, hot pepper sauce and coddled egg. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Add the croutons and toss. Serve the salad immediately on chilled plates. Garnish each salad with a whole anchovy fillet, if desired.

Note: To coddle, immerse egg in boiling water for one minute.

The Vintage Press Restaurant
216 N. Willis St.
Visalia, CA 93291
Menu: thevintagepress.com
Reservations: opentable.com
Phone: (559) 733-3033

*David Vartanian was named one of America's Best Chefs, go to: <https://www.bestchefsamerica.com/david-vartanian>. For more information or to make reservations, go to: <http://www.thevintagepress.com/>

For David's recipes featured in the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* newspaper, see: <https://mirrorspectator.com/?s=david+vartanian>

Also: https://www.huffpost.com/entry/where-was-the-caesar-salad-invented_n_6839542

A New Window on Jerusalem

JERUSALEM, from page 12
printing press and its first photographic studio.

Through the centuries, countless wars have been fought over Jerusalem, thousands of innocent people have been killed, a greater number have suffered loss and deprivation.

And yet, behind the blood and tears, the sun continues to shine on this city of gold, where people continue to weave their elusive dreams for peace.

Along its twisting, cobblestoned alleys tread the prophets of old, preaching peace and teaching lovingkindness, spreading their message, like the rain that falls on the good and the bad alike, and performing

their miracles.

You can still experience the miracle that is Jerusalem as you retrace their footsteps.

For the miracle is everlasting.

Among the joys and sorrows, shines the touching story of the gentle village idiot, Penyamin, who once traipsed along the cobblestones to his giant tree, unharmed and molested through the bombs and bullets, to perch beneath its branches and engage in endless conversation with his man on the moon.

The book, which is published by Amazon, has been long overdue: as the aging pillars of the eternally vibrant Armenian community continue to succumb to attrition, who will be left to tell their story?

The author has also penned a book, *The Gospel of the 13th Apostle*, reconstructing the life of Jesus and his times against the background of the eschatological expectations of the age, and advancing the theory that he may have stayed with the Essenes at Qumran and travelled to India to study Buddhism.

He has also published a couple of children's stories featuring a cantankerous dragon and a talking tree, both with illustrations by the artist Jack Kaplanian.

The Ring in the Tummy of the Whale tells the story of three children, who live in an ancient castle, probably a previous pirate haunt, on an island in the middle of the ocean.

In the courtyard of the castle, a mysterious giant tree reaches up to the clouds. The children are not allowed to climb it until they embark on a dangerous quest, but a cantankerous dragon drops in for an unexpected visit and is cajoled into helping them.

The second book, *A Dog Called Yup*, is about a lonely stray who loves performing in public and a boy suffering from polio who befriends him and wants to adopt him, but is concerned his jealous cat won't like the idea.

The boy likes to draw and his aptitude attracts the attention of his teacher. He is offered a scholarship but gives up the chance to further his education, because he wants to find a job and help his mother who earns a living ironing shirts.

But a chance encounter with a philanthropist businessman, promises a more hopeful future.

ARTS & CULTURE

Revisiting War in Karén Karslyan's *Aterazma*

By Christopher Atamian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

Is it a book? A work of art? Book art? Or perhaps an art book? Karén Karslyan's 2020 tome goes by the name of *Aterazma*, a clever play on words: transliterated into Western Armenian, *Baderazm*, meaning war; the verb *adel* to hate and *yeraz*, dream. Part artwork, part fiction, *Aterazma* limns the borders between both disciplines. In its close to 500 pages, Karslyan aligns letters on the page like soldiers going to war: a prisoner on one page becomes liberated towards the end, a message of hope in an otherwise deadly serious book presented in the guise of a ludic exercise. Commenting on this constant play on meanings and words, Karslyan notes that:

The ludic effect is more of a byproduct of the initial concept for the book. It is an aftermath of imagining the language in ruins, when devastated by the reports of the first casualties flooding the news outlets and social media, following the surprise Azeri offensive on April 2, 2016. When I suddenly noticed the word 'yeraz' hidden in plain sight inside the word 'paterazm,' I started taking more and more words apart. And soon the whole book turned into an operating table, a lingual one. This ludus can be viewed as an alternative rhetoric strategy or as a key auxiliary to the four



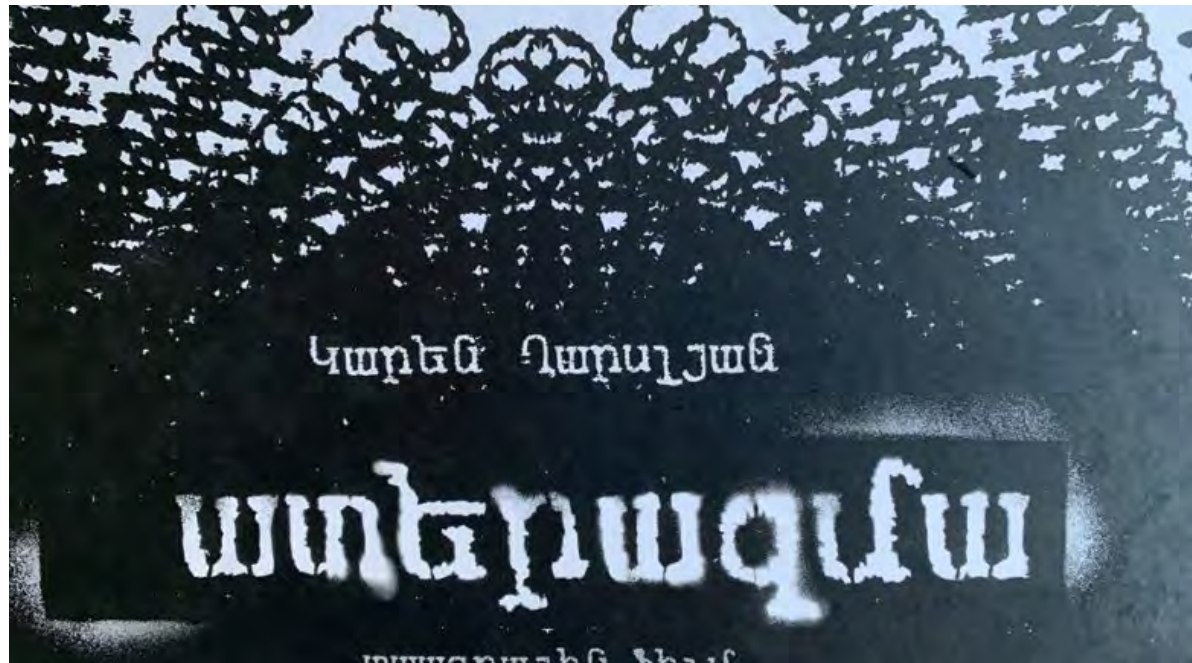
Karén Karslyan

major rhetoric appeals. We are, after all, homo ludens.

Aterazma obviously presents a dystopic world to readers, but one "that yearns to be refuted" as the author notes in a recent conversation. For all its deconstruction of traditional norms of both art and fiction, Karslyan's work remains binary in the sense that it opposes certain themes such as war and peace; heroism and cowardice, nationalism and individualism; patriotism and cosmopolitanism, inevitability of war, the limitations of language when it comes to expressing the horrors of war.

Born and raised in Yerevan, Karslyan obtained his PhD in English from the Brusov State Linguistic University with a dissertation on James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* and Lawrence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*; more deconstructable authors would be hard to find.

The author/artist/ animator then moved to the US at the age of 25 and now lives in Chicago where he mainly writes poetry and produces artwork in different media. Of the differences between living in Armenia and in the diaspora, Karslyan has much to say. He brands Armenia an "extrovert's paradise," though he himself is rather introverted but also notes "putrid manifestations of patriarchal values, toxic masculinity, overall intolerance toward new or different stuff, and sense of ethnic



superiority." In the end, the Armenian language is what bonds him to his homeland: "Armenian literature, art, cinema, and music are my building blocks. I do my best not to sever my ties with Armenia. I visit it almost every year, and during the 16 years outside Armenia, I have continued writing and publishing in Armenian."

As for the United States, he notes that despite the fact that he bears a woman's name and one that is used as a derogatory term for "a fussy middle-aged woman" he has never encountered any derision — a telling indicator of American society's tolerance. Or as he notes: "I bet I wouldn't fare as well, had I been a bearded Anahit in Armenia."

When asked about his literary influences, Karslyan not surprisingly lists a diverse series of poets and writers whose play with language takes front seat in their work: James Joyce, Nahapet Kuchak, Velimir Khlebnikov, Daniil Kharms, Emmet Williams, Guillaume Apollinaire, Aram Saroyan, Sergei Paradjanov, Paul Celan, and John Ashbery. As for *Aterazma*'s hybrid nature, Karslyan attributes them to his dual passions of drawing and animation which he has pursued since being a child in the '90s.

Karslyan dreamt of being the Walt Disney of Armenia. The war interrupted this dream to a certain extent, and Karslyan turned towards literature. That being the case, the book also includes elements of interactive theater and kinetic typography, etc. One of the may fascinating aspects of *Aterazma* lies in the fact that it can be read on many levels: a general anti-war tract, an artistic guidepost towards peace, a look at violence in human society on a general level, finally an almost interactive play between literature and art, letters and drawing, signs and referents. Given the recent 44-Day War and Armenian history in general, the book must also be read as a comment on relations between Armenians and Turks/Tatars and the continuing centuries-long conflict between these peoples. The second half of *Aterazma* is titled "Deleted Scenes" — this is where reconciliation, peace and friendship between Armenians and Azerbaijanis are imagined: "By putting these utopian scenes under Deleted Scenes, I wanted to emphasize that our nations have discarded this possibility at least for a very long time."

Does Karslyan believe, then, that peace is achievable between Armenians and their enemies, and if so at what cost?: "It doesn't appear that the ancient maxim *si vis pacem, para bellum* [if you want peace, prepare for war] will lose its validity in the near future, especially when your neigh-

bors are run by bellicose and irredentist authoritarian regimes. What Armenian authorities had been doing over the past 25 years was more like 'keep calm and rely on Russia,' albeit reject the Lavrov plan. And the current PM did everything to expedite the bloody endgame in 2020." From the ashes of defeat, can Armenia rise once again, Phoenix-like to claim a prosperous future?"

"The now defeated Armenia has to face Aliyev's irredentism, which was probably partly inspired by the Armenian popular culture of yearning for lost chunks of their homeland... If the Kosovars' right to self-termination was acceptable in the current

lyan are able to posit scenarios for peace, and to think peace in a sense in such creative and non-traditional ways, offers everyone a glimmer of hope for the future. And in the end, there can be few better uses for the disciplines of literature and art.

Buy *Aterazma*: <http://www.abrilbooks.com/books/literature/aterazma.html>

Watch Karslyan's performance of *Aterazma* in English: <https://youtu.be/5mVgbDJuHno>

In Armenian: <https://youtu.be/yj2GzuTvMuk>

Listen to a lecture by Marc Nichanian on *Aterazma*: <https://youtu.be/5mVgbDJuHno?t=5885>

world order, Artsakh people's rights should be, too. I do believe in the eventual reconciliation between the Azeris and the Turks, but I am afraid it will require miraculous transformations in these societies, including abolishment of autocratic regimes, domination of secularism, recognition of past atrocities, including the genocide, etc."

As the expression goes, good luck with that one. Still, the fact that thinkers like Kars-

CALENDAR

OF EVENTS & PROGRAMS

NEW YORK

OCTOBER 15 — Save the date! The Tekeyan Cultural Association of Greater New York Chapter is celebrating the diamond anniversary of the Tekeyan Cultural Association with a gala. Details to follow.

MASSACHUSETTS

10th Anniversary Celebration Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. Join us for events during the year at the Park. Watch this space for details.

APRIL 3 — ANNUAL RECONFIGURATION OF THE ABSTRACT SCULPTURE (Rain Date: April 10) A crane lifts and pulls apart the two halves of Abstract Sculpture, rhomboid dodecahedron made of steel and aluminum, to create a new sculptural shape. 7.30 a.m. The Park's Endowed Fund for the Annual Reconfiguration, the generous gift of Charles and Doreen Bilezikian, supports the annual reconfiguration. A&A Industries, Anahid and Aurelian Mardiros, manufacturer of the Abstract Sculpture, their generous gift in kind, oversees the annual reconfiguration. Coffee, hosted by Starbucks & Conversation is from 8:00am—9:00am. RSVP appreciated, hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

SEPTEMBER 21 — GALA BENEFIT CELEBRATING CONTRIBUTIONS OF OUR NATION'S IMMIGRANTS! InterContinental Hotel, Boston. 6 p.m. Honoring STEPHEN KURKJIAN, Distinguished Citizen, Leader, Pulitzer Prize Journalist and Author, and Recognizing Organizations Serving Immigrants and Refugees. Funds raised support the Legacy Fund, endowed fund to care for and maintain the Park year-round. Advance Reservations only. To receive the invitation, please send name and address to hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

MICHIGAN

FEBRUARY 24 — The four Armenian Churches of Greater Detroit (St. John Armenian Apostolic Church, St. Sarkis Armenian Apostolic Church, St. Vartan Armenian Catholic Church and Armenian Congregational Church) along with the Knights and Daughters of Vartan will commemorate the Feast of Sts. Vartanank, 6 p.m., St. Vartan Armenian Catholic Church, 256000 Drake Road, Farmington Hills. Celebrant will be Monsignor Andon Atamian. No reception will be held due to COVID



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Since its inception in 2001, the TCA Sponsor a Teacher Program has raised \$ 793,560.00 and reached out to 7,163 teachers and school staff in Armenia and Artsakh villages. These are the donors for the year 2021, listed by state. All figures are in US dollars.

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THE ARMENIAN MIRROR SPECTATOR

SINCE 1932



An ADL Publication

THE FIRST ENGLISH LANGUAGE
ARMENIAN WEEKLY IN THE
UNITED STATES

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

Baikar Association, Inc.

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02472-1509

Telephone: 617-924-4420

FAX: 617-924-2887

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES

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

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

ISSN 0004-234X

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

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and opinions expressed in this
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publisher.

EDITORIAL

Armenia Pays Down before Negotiations



By Edmond Y.
Azadian

Within the context of Armenian-Turkish rapprochement, Ankara is in the driver's seat; the first news about the appointment of the representatives of the two countries was announced by Mevlut Çavusoglu, the Turkish foreign minister, to the surprise of news media in Armenia.

The second wave of news is also emerging from the same source; indeed, Mr. Çavusoglu recently announced that Armenia's foreign minister would be participating in the Antalya Diplomacy Forum scheduled to take place March 11 to 13, also with Armenia's representative to the negotiations, member of parliament Ruben Rubinyan, while Armenian official sources are maintaining that Turkey's invitation for the forum is still under consideration.

Leaders and foreign ministers from 45 countries will participate in the forum to discuss and resolve regional and global issues in international relations.

Turkey's foreign minister has already defined the agenda for Armenia's delegates. He stated that Azerbaijan will also be represented by Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov and that Turkey would like to see each side express its own positions. After supplying drones and jihadis to Azerbaijan during the 44-day war, in Antalya Ankara is wearing the mantle of an unbiased mediator seeking to restore peace. As a matter of fact, Turkey is trying to impress on the international community that it has adopted the same role between Russia and Ukraine, after supplying Bayraktar drones to Kyiv and announcing that Ankara does not recognize Russia's takeover of Crimea.

As the Armenian side approaches the negotiation table, our historic experience has to serve as a guide, to gauge and understand Turkey's intentions and goals. Turkey's current policy is derived from its perennial goals of developing and leading a Turanic empire. Some historians and analysts believe that this idea is a figment of the Armenian imagination, but this was countered by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan himself in Baku, celebrating on the ashes of Shushi and evoking Enver Pasha's presence in the Caucasus and in Central Asia to muster forces to build a sultanate with him at the helm. Erdogan revived that dream by stating during that same celebration that "we are here to achieve the dream of our ancestors."

In order for Turkey to achieve that "dream," it has to eliminate an independent republic of Armenia, which now stands in its way.

It seems that Turkey, under any flag or administration, has been pursuing those goals. Under Mustafa Kemal, it destroyed the potential emergence of Armenian home rule in Cilicia, with the help of Bolshevik Russia. The same scenario was repeated when General Kazim Karabekir forced the Treaty of Alexandropol on Armenia in 1920, reducing the Republic of Armenia to a shadow of its former self.

Armed with these historical facts and precedents, Armenia's aim should be to survive through diplomacy, build its armed forces and develop a system of alliances with countries in the region targeted by Turkey.

In dealing with the situation in and around Armenia and analyzing the political situation there, one should avoid personalizing politics, because that would lead us to a cult of personality, the damage from which is still extant in Armenia. However,

politics is too personal there. Any judgement or statement on any political move is still interpreted as either pro or anti Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. Seldom is a statement judged on its own merit or in reference to Armenia's overall interests.

This hysteria creates strange bedfellows. A case in point was a vote at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) by an Armenian opposition member of parliament on January 27. PACE released a report favorable to Armenia. Only representatives of Turkey and Azerbaijan voted against the report, joined by Hayk Mamijanyan, a member of the opposition from Serzh Sargsyan's party, Pativ Ounem (I Have Honor), who justified his stand by stating that the report favored Pashinyan!

Incidentally, the Russian delegate abstained from voting.

This attitude of personalization is deeply ingrained in Armenia's polarized political system.

If Turkey has decided to improve relations with Armenia, it means that there is a "wind of change" in the region. Although Armenia was defeated during the recent war, there are some factors which favor its position. One factor is Turkey's battered economy, which has tamed its bellicose rhetoric and posture.

Although perhaps only temporarily, Ankara is forced to improve its relations not only with Armenia, but also with other regional nations.



The other factor is President Joe Biden's request to President Erdogan to lift the blockade of Armenia and establish diplomatic relations. Of course, President Biden's action did not stem from charity, because governments do not formulate policies based on the goodness of their hearts. Armenian advocacy may have had an impact on the president's decision. Certainly it does not constitute the overriding factor, but serves rather as a complementary factor to the US's foreign policy of containing Russia and weaning away peripheral allies like Armenia.

That policy is also in line with Turkey's policy both as a NATO ally and as a matter of self-interest.

The third factor which favors Armenia is the issue of the Genocide, which has taken a life of its own internationally, independent of Armenia. Whether Armenia presses Turkey to recognize the Genocide is irrelevant to the fact that the case has become a monumental humanitarian and human rights issue and has been used and will continued to be used by any country that has a score to settle with Ankara.

continued on next page



COMMENTARY

MY TURN



by Harut Sassounian

After Abandoning Artsakh, Pashinyan Now Gives Up the Armenian Cause

It is simply amazing that every time Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan opens his mouth, he makes a new and bigger blunder. To be convinced of this, all one has to do is follow his speeches, press conferences, contradictory statements in the Armenian Parliament, Facebook postings, flawed decisions and unqualified nominations. To make matters worse, he does not seem to learn from his errors. Pashinyan neither realizes nor admits his mistakes. He seems to be incorrigible.

On January 24, 2022, the prime minister gave another one of his so-called press conferences. No reporters were present to ask questions and challenge his misstatements. It was a poorly-orchestrated show to mislead the public. A young lady read the questions supposedly sent by the media. When one of the journalists complained later that his question was presented in a garbled manner, the young lady honestly confessed that she had simply read the questions given to her by the prime minister's aides.

Among the prime minister's biggest blunders was his reply to a question about Armenian historical demands from Turkey. Pashinyan stated that "the Republic of Armenia has never conducted a policy of the Armenian Cause. Never." I seriously doubt that he knows the meaning of "the Armenian Cause." His comment is no different than what a Turkish official would have said. It is shameful that after the horrendous genocide that was committed against Armenians in 1915-1923, killing 1.5 million innocent men, women and children, and dispossessing them of their historic homeland, the prime minister so casually dismisses Armenians' just demands and acts as if nothing had happened. This is exactly what the Turkish leaders want — that Armenians forget about the past and drop their demands.

Furthermore, the prime minister falsely stated that President "Robert Kocharyan in 2005 publicly announced that Armenia does not have territorial demands or territorial expectations from Turkey." I recall reporting about Kocharyan's statement back in April 2005, when a Yerevan State University student asked him about Armenia's demands for land from Turkey. Kocharyan cautiously responded: "This issue would have to be taken up by a future president." It is clear that at a time when Armenia had its hands full dealing with the conflict with Azerbaijan over Artsakh, it was not in Armenia's best interest to open a second front with Turkey over Armenian territories. Kocharyan did not say that Armenia had no territorial demands from Turkey. He simply said that

the resolution of that issue has to be taken up at a later date. It is a shame that Prime Minister Pashinyan repeated what the Turkish media had falsely reported rather than what was actually said by the previous President of Armenia.

Going from one distortion to the next, Pashinyan falsely added that President "Serzh Sargsyan had made a reference to Kocharyan's statement." I do not recall Sargsyan making such a reference. Pashinyan continued by stating that "Armenia never placed in doubt the Armenia-Turkey border. You will not find a single leader or government of the Armenian Republic who put in doubt the Armenia-Turkey border. We have not resigned from this policy." In reality, until Pashinyan, no Armenian President or government had accepted the current Armenia-Turkey border nor stated that Armenia did not have territorial demands from Turkey.

Coming to the issue of the Armenian Genocide, Prime Minister Pashinyan wrongly stated: "We must register that the locomotive behind the process of the recognition of the Genocide has always been the Diaspora and Diaspora organizations." This is exactly what the Turkish government would want the Armenian leader to say. There are several things wrong with the Prime Minister's statement.

1) Pashinyan is once again splitting the Diaspora from Armenia.

2) The Armenian Genocide is not exclusively a Diaspora issue. The descendants of Armenian Genocide survivors constitute today over one-third of Armenia's population. That is why every year on April 24 over one million Armenians march to the Armenian Genocide Monument in Yerevan.

3) All previous Armenian governments have pursued the international recognition of the Armenian Genocide. In fact, Armenia's Declaration of Independence, issued on August 23, 1990, declared the following: "Aware of its historic responsibility for the destiny of the Armenian people engaged in the realization of the aspirations of all Armenians and the restoration of historical justice," and "The Republic of Armenia stands in support of the task of achieving international recognition of the 1915 Genocide in Ottoman Turkey and Western Armenia." Significantly, the Declaration used the words "Western Armenia," which is now being abandoned by the Prime Minister. Later, Armenia's Constitution included a link to the Declaration of Independence.

4) The pursuit of the international recognition of the Armenian Genocide is a pan Armenian issue which concerns both the Diaspora and Armenia. Therefore, there must be a coordinated division of labor between the Diaspora and the Armenian government. What the Diaspora is able to do is different from what the Armenian government can do and vice versa.

The prime minister also made many other misstatements in his over two-hour-long so-called press conference. However, an entire book has to be written, not just an article, to expose all of his misstatements.

Armenia Pays Down before Negotiations

from previous page

Simply put, the legacy of the Armenian martyrs has become a huge debt for Ankara vis-à-vis the world community. The key to absolving Turkey is in Armenia's hand and must not be given away easily.

But contrary to the existence of these favorable factors, the government in Yerevan has already made down payments to Turkey even before negotiations start.

Thus the first concession may be considered Pashinyan's lifting of the ban on Turkish imports. That may impact Turkey's economy infinitesimally, but perhaps it showed the Armenian side welcomes Turkey's initiative of improving relations.

The other concession was directed at Azerbaijan, when Prime Minister Pashinyan stated that with regard to Karabakh, the ball is in the court of the United Nations' Security Council, which has omitted any reference in documents it has issued to consider Karabakh outside of Azerbaijan's territory. This statement even biases any action by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group co-chairs, who still insist that the Karabakh issue has not been settled, contrary to President Ilham Aliyev's claims to the contrary and that the enclave's status issue remains on the agenda.

A member of Pashinyan's party in the parliament has stated that no administration in Armenia has expressed any doubt on the current border between Armenia and Turkey. That is a backhanded compliment to Ankara because the issue had to be formulated in reverse. By learning about this statement coming from the parliament in Armenia, policymakers there can interpret that the current administration has indirect-

ly endorsed the Kars Treaty of 1921 which determines the current border between Armenia and Turkey. The treaty was signed by the Bolshevik government in Russia and the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. Neither entity was an internationally recognized government at the time. The treaty later on was forced on Armenia.

The Treaty of Kars has surfaced directly or indirectly every time Armenia and Turkey have had any semblance of rapprochement.

It was a blatant denial of the Armenian Case when during his latest press conference, the prime minister stated that "Armenian government has never conducted a policy of the Armenian Case and in the case of Genocide recognition. The diaspora has performed the role of the locomotive."

This is abdicating the legacy of the genocide victims. The Armenian Case is composed of two components: one is the extermination of 1.5 million Armenians and the other is the loss of the ancestral homeland of a millennia. The diaspora is not a government entity to present the case in world courts. That is the right and responsibility of an internationally recognized Armenian government.

However, Pashinyan is not alone in abdicating the case of genocide. His accomplice is former President Serzh Sargsyan, who had called then-Vice President Joe Biden to report to him that the recognition of the Armenian Genocide by the US administration was not a priority for the Armenian government. Perhaps the former president resorted to that treachery to promote his "Football Diplomacy," which was destined to failure.

A fundamental question should be raised here: if the top figures in Armenia do not

bother to pursue the recognition of the Armenian Genocide, why should President Biden or any other head of state bother?

Last but not least, there was a disguised cowardly action in canceling the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the founding of Armenia's armed forces. That was supposed to be celebrated on January 28 but was cancelled because Mr. Pashinyan and many of the Armenian army brass had contracted COVID. This is not the first time that Mr. Pashinyan was afflicted by a well-timed contraction of this virus.

Speculations abound about this decision. Most plausible are the ones suggesting it was done to avoid irritating President Aliyev by displaying Armenia's new weaponry, which is traditionally exhibited during such celebrations. Aliyev had warned that Armenia and any revanchist movement rearming the country would be neutralized.

Now that Armenia is prepared to sit at the negotiating table without preconditions, what are those preconditions that would hamper the success of the negotiations, when Armenia has disarmed itself even before battle?

Anyone familiar with Turkish policy planners will recognize that no concession will satisfy Turkey and it will demand even more.

Already, Mr. Çavusoglu's statement is a loaded one when he assured his audience that any step by Turkey will be coordinated with Azerbaijan. That was already a precondition by itself, when Baku insisted on getting the Zangezur Corridor on behalf of itself and Ankara.

There should have been no paying down before the start of negotiations.

LETTERS

Diocesan Council Needs Members with Professional Experience

To the Editor:

This past May, the delegates to the Diocesan Assembly voted for term limits for members of the Diocesan Council. I applaud this decision which was long overdue and need to add that had there been more of a turnover perhaps the difficulties that the Diocese faces today would have been mitigated long before they became so extreme.

I would like to add another suggestion which I hope will be seriously considered and voted upon next May:

I suggest that the Diocesan Council needs to be both regionally and professionally balanced. To be clear, too many representatives from one state skews a balance of power and fosters the formation of coalitions which is oftentimes detrimental to the general good.

In the interest of professional balance there needs to be representatives of several professions on the Council i.e. lawyer, accountant, engineer, educator, someone in media/communications, and of course representation by the clergy.

Hopefully this regional and professional broad based composition of the Diocesan Council will lend expertise and objectivity to future decisions.

Adrienne Alexanian
New York City



Ani Petrosyan - Hackathon Founder, IT Extraordinaire

By Christopher Patvakian
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN — Not many people can say they’ve created and led their own hackathon. And even fewer can say they did so at just 16, but Ani Petrosyan is an exception. Petrosyan born and raised in Armenia is now 17, and had the idea to create her own hackathon called Girlopolis (City of Girls), after seeing the lack of opportunities for young Armenian women to get involved in IT and entrepreneurship. By teaching workshops through Girlopolis, Ani hoped to create a platform where women encourage and support one another in IT, learn new skills and have their network.

Petrosyan, who learned to code at the age of 12, has always been seeking opportunities to further her passion in STEM and IT. Her inspiration was having a female role model, her robotics teacher, that encouraged her to get into the often male dominated field. Over the years, Ani noticed more barriers in advancing her studies such as the fact that hackathons and events tended to be held in English and outside

of Armenia, some of which she herself participated in. “It was so exciting to join and work with other youth in hackathons abroad, and I thought to myself ‘Why isn’t there something like this for girls in Armenia?’”. And after recognizing the void, Petrosyan decided to create Girlopolis and apply for grants to finance her vision to bring hackathons home. Ultimately it was a huge success.

The applications to join Girlopolis’s initial online event in March 2021 had more than 300, but initially the hackathon only had the capacity to support 50 participants. During the actual hackathon, which ran for three days, girls aged 18-35 were randomly divided into teams, grouped into them by different specialties, and tasked with coming up with startup ideas for problems in the world. Additionally, invited speakers gave advice in their areas of specialty, and also shared their expertise on how to get the finances to actualize ideas participants came up with.

Seeing such high demand, they’ve had more events in person in the summer, hosting over 900 young women in various



Ani Petrosyan, 17 Girlopolis Founder and IT extraordinaire

events. “We are trying to get them to be open, and on the first day compared to last they are such different people.” Petrosyan describes a feeling of immense pride and excitement when she sees “citizens” of Girlopolis to pursue the ideas generated at the hackathons. As far as the future, Ani wishes to continue inspiring more young people to get engaged in IT and STEM, and has an idea to create a large science museum or STEM city in Armenia, something which again she has seen abroad but lacks in the country. Her message to young adults who wish to help Armenia? “Take the time to help other young people, after all we are the future. Sadly, many youth don’t have many opportunities to do things they dream about or even get the education necessary for it,” emphasizing that no amount of support is too small.

(This article is Part I of the series Inspiring Armenian Young Adults, which highlights the accomplishments of 4 of Armenia’s brightest, bravest young adults. Their brief profiles showcase the talents of Armenia’s upcoming generation and shed light on their impressive accomplishments thus far.)

US Says Karabakh Status Not Determined Yet

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — US Ambassador to Armenia Lynne Tracy believes the status of Nagorno-Karabakh has not been determined yet and that the process should be carried out under the mandate of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group Co-Chairs.

Tracy reportedly made the remarks at a meeting with Deputy Prime Minister Hambardzum Matevosyan on Monday, January 31. The latter stressed the role and mission of the United States as a Co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group in the final and comprehensive settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Matevosyan hailed the support provided to Armenia by the United States over the past 30 years aimed at the strengthening of a more prosperous, democratic society, in particular, aimed at the fight against corruption, as well as the implementation of judicial and police reforms.

At the end of the meeting, the two reaffirmed their readiness to contribute to the strengthening of Armenia-US working relations and the development of bilateral ties.



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