**Foreign Ministers Engage in New Talks**

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — In a rare phone call, the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan discussed on April 11 plans to sign a peace treaty between their countries and demarcate their border.

The conversation came less than a week after Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev met in Brussels for talks hosted by European Council President Charles Michel. Aliyev and Pashinyan agreed to instruct their foreign ministers to start official negotiations on the comprehensive treaty and to set up before the end of this month a joint commission on the border demarcation.

The Armenian Foreign Ministry said Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan and his Azerbaijani counterpart Jeyhun Bayramov “exchanged views on the creation of the commission on delimitation and border security, preparation of peace negotiations and humanitarian issues.” It gave no other details.

The call came hours after the conflicting parties traded fresh accusations. In a statement on the 30th anniversary of mass killings of ethnic Armenian civilians in the Karabakh village of Marakh, the Armenian Foreign Ministry said “ethnic cleansing” of the Karabakh Armenians remains “the real goal of official Baku.” It also said Armenia.

**EU Plans More Armenian-Azeri Dialogue**

By Héghine Buniatian

BRUSSELS (RFE/RL) — The European Union (EU) plans to organize more negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan to follow up on understandings reached by their leaders in Brussels on Wednesday, according to a senior EU diplomat.

“What will actually happen very practically is that we’re going to be having very regular meetings and a continued role of facilitation for the EU,” the diplomat privy to the talks told RFE/RL’s Armenian Service.

During their trilateral meeting with European Council President Charles Michel on April 6, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev decided to instruct their foreign ministers to start official negotiations on an Armenian-Azerbaijani peace treaty.

They also agreed to set up before the end of this month a joint commission on demarcating the Armenian-Azerbaijani border.

“I’m fully conscious when I say that there’s not much time left,” said the diplomat. “I think we will need to be following up quite quickly with this. And I think there is an expectation that we would look to have a meeting at leaders’ level relatively soon to review progress and tackle any outstanding issues that are blocking the moves forward.”

The source, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, gave no possible dates for the next Aliyev-Pashinyan encounter.

Michel described the four-hour talks hosted by him as “productive,” saying that they yielded “concrete and tangible results.”

Critics in Armenia point out that the top EU official made no mention of Nagorno-Karabakh, letting alone an agreement on its status or the Karabakh Armenians’ right to self-determination. They say this is a further sign that Pashinyan is ready to agree to Azerbaijan control over the disputed territory.

see PLANS, page 4

---

**Tribute to Aurora Mardiganian by Arsinée Khanjian at University of Michigan Screening**

BY HARRY KEZELIAN

ANN ARBOR, Mich. — How can we remember someone so deserving of being remembered, but whom we truly know so little about? And how can we do justice to their story?

These were some of the questions that seemed haunt actress and producer Arsinée Khanjian as she set about to retell the story of Aurora Mardiganian, the Genocide survivor and exploited star of the groundbreaking 1919 silent film, “Auction of Souls.”

Mardiganian’s story, little known for most of the mid-to-late 20th century, has gained greater awareness in recent years.

Tribute to Aurora Mardiganian by Arsinée Khanjian at University of Michigan Screening

see TRIBUTE, page 15

---

**EU Plans More Armenian-Azeri Dialogue**

By Héghine Buniatian

BRUSSELS (RFE/RL) — The European Union (EU) plans to organize more negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan to follow up on understandings reached by their leaders in Brussels on Wednesday, according to a senior EU diplomat.

“What will actually happen very practically is that we’re going to be having very regular meetings and a continued role of facilitation for the EU,” the diplomat privy to the talks told RFE/RL’s Armenian Service.

During their trilateral meeting with European Council President Charles Michel on April 6, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev decided to instruct their foreign ministers to start official negotiations on an Armenian-Azerbaijani peace treaty.

They also agreed to set up before the end of this month a joint commission on demarcating the Armenian-Azerbaijani border.

“I’m fully conscious when I say that there’s not much time left,” said the diplomat. “I think we will need to be following up quite quickly with this. And I think there is an expectation that we would look to have a meeting at leaders’ level relatively soon to review progress and tackle any outstanding issues that are blocking the moves forward.”

The source, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, gave no possible dates for the next Aliyev-Pashinyan encounter.

Michel described the four-hour talks hosted by him as “productive,” saying that they yielded “concrete and tangible results.”

Critics in Armenia point out that the top EU official made no mention of Nagorno-Karabakh, letting alone an agreement on its status or the Karabakh Armenians’ right to self-determination. They say this is a further sign that Pashinyan is ready to agree to Azerbaijan control over the disputed territory.

see PLANS, page 4

---

**Tribute to Aurora Mardiganian by Arsinée Khanjian at University of Michigan Screening**

BY HARRY KEZELIAN

ANN ARBOR, Mich. — How can we remember someone so deserving of being remembered, but whom we truly know so little about? And how can we do justice to their story?

These were some of the questions that seemed haunt actress and producer Arsinée Khanjian as she set about to retell the story of Aurora Mardiganian, the Genocide survivor and exploited star of the groundbreaking 1919 silent film, “Auction of Souls.”

Mardiganian’s story, little known for most of the mid-to-late 20th century, has gained greater awareness in recent years.

Tribute to Aurora Mardiganian by Arsinée Khanjian at University of Michigan Screening

see TRIBUTE, page 15
The right to self-determination of the people of Artsakh was and will be the main guide of the foreign policy of the Government, the President of the Republic of Artsakh Arayik Harutyunyan announced on April 12 at the meeting with heads of administrative districts of Askeran, heads of communities and local activists, emphasizing that the official Stepanakert will not deviate from that agenda.

The fact that the right of the people of Artsakh to self-determination is not a subject of bargaining is unequivocal. We will not deviate from our path of independence,” said Harutyunyan.

At the meeting he talked about the recent geopolitical developments and the actions he carried out in that context. Harutyunyan referred to the actions of Azerbaijan, in particular that on March 24 again the provisions of the trilateral agreement of November 9, 2020 were violated and Armenia doesn’t hide its expansionist aspirations.

“Azerbaijan violated the conditions and for the first time questioned the Russian peacekeeping mission,” he said.

Opposition Lawmakers Boycott Parliament, Visit Karabakh

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Armenia’s two main opposition groups said on Tuesday, April 12, that their lawmakers will not attend this week’s parliament sittings and will visit Nagorno-Karabakh instead as part of their campaigns to prevent far-reaching Armenian concessions to Azerbaijan.

The Hayastan and Pativ Unem alliances rallied thousands of supporters in Yerevan on April 5 before Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan met with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev in Brussels.

“Baku is not treating us as an equal; they are preparing the ground for ‘new concessions’ by scaring Armenians with the territorial integrity with his conciliatory policy towards Azerbaijan. “These authorities have no mandate to lead the country to new concessions with false promises of peace,” Hayastan’s Ishkhan Saghatelian told the crowd that gathered in Yerevan’s Liberty Square.

Saghatelian claimed that instead of strengthening national defense and security they are preparing the ground for “new concessions” by scaring Armenians with the prospect of another war with Azerbaijan.

“We can’t lose again because we have nothing to lose anymore,” agreed Pativ Umom’s Hayk Mamijanyan.

A resolution presented by the two opposition groups to the demonstrators says that this would spark a popular uprising.

“Any government that deviates from our vital demands will be sent to hell,” said Aram Vartevanyan, another senior Hayastan figure.

“The grounds and possibilities for a possible application to the international court over the Armenian Genocide was also discussed at the seminar. The continuous genocide against Armenians, the responsibility of the Turkish-Azeri powers.

The documentary “Maraga 1992: Golgotha of the late 20th Century” was also screened.

Some of the panelists for Maraga 30

The grounds and possibilities for a possible application to the international court over the Armenian Genocide was also discussed at the seminar.

Armenian, Azeri FM’S Hold Peace Talks

DISCUSSIONS, from page 1

will continue to defend the Karabakh Armenians’ right to a “free, secure, dignified life in their homeland.” Azerbaijan’s Foreign Ministry responded by accusing Yerevan of lacking a “real desire” to make peace with Baku.

Earlier in the day, Mirzoyan met in Yerevan with Brice Roquefeil, the French co-chair of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group.

Aram Mirzoyan presented Armenia’s position on the start of negotiations on Azerbaijan over the peace agreement, emphasizing in that context the mediation role of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs,” read a separate statement released by his press office.

Speaking after talks with Mirzoyan in Moscow on Friday, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said France and the United States have stopped working with Russia within the framework of the Minsk Group co-headed by the three world powers. Lavrov claimed that they have “canceled the co-chairing troika” of the group.

US and French officials have not publicly confirmed that.

Opposition Stages Huge Rally in Yerevan

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — On April 11 the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) of Armenia hosted the “Maraga 30: Unp-ished and Ongoing Genocide” Seminar dedicated to the 30th anniversary of the Maraga massacre – the genocidal killings of peaceful Armenian population of the village of Maraga in Artsakh’s Martakert region committed by the Azerbaijani military.

The seminar was organized by the NAS Institute of History, the Against Legal Arbitrariness NGO and the Center of Human Rights and Genocide Studies NGO.

“This is history and we must remember it. This was the beginning of a series of geno-

cides perpetrated by Azerbaijan against the Armenian people. Historians, all of us must work in order for this to remain in history as a memory, and that generations remember,” NAS President Ashot Saghyan said in his remarks.

“Some authorities and the issues of Armenians and Armenian communities in the post-war peri-

Ararat Mirzoyan presented Armenia’s position on the start of negotiations on Azerbaijan over the peace agreement, emphasizing in that context the mediation role of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs,” read a separate statement released by his press office.

Speaking after talks with Mirzoyan in Moscow on Friday, Russian Foreign Min-

ister Sergei Lavrov said France and the United States have stopped working with Russia within the framework of the Minsk Group co-headed by the three world powers. Lavrov claimed that they have “canceled the co-chairing troika” of the group.

US and French officials have not publicly confirmed that.

The seminar was organized by the NAS Institute of History, the Against Legal Arbitrariness NGO and the Center of Human Rights and Genocide Studies NGO.

“Ararat Mirzoyan presented Armenia’s position on the start of negotiations on Azerbaijan over the peace agreement, emphasizing in that context the mediation role of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs,” read a separate statement released by his press office.

Speaking after talks with Mirzoyan in Moscow on Friday, Russian Foreign Min-

ister Sergei Lavrov said France and the United States have stopped working with Russia within the framework of the Minsk Group co-headed by the three world powers. Lavrov claimed that they have “canceled the co-chairing troika” of the group.

US and French officials have not publicly confirmed that.

The seminar was organized by the NAS Institute of History, the Against Legal Arbitrariness NGO and the Center of Human Rights and Genocide Studies NGO.

“Ararat Mirzoyan presented Armenia’s position on the start of negotiations on Azerbaijan over the peace agreement, emphasizing in that context the mediation role of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs,” read a separate statement released by his press office.

Speaking after talks with Mirzoyan in Moscow on Friday, Russian Foreign Min-

ister Sergei Lavrov said France and the United States have stopped working with Russia within the framework of the Minsk Group co-headed by the three world powers. Lavrov claimed that they have “canceled the co-chairing troika” of the group.

US and French officials have not publicly confirmed that.
Vadim’s Crazy Tours: From Churches to Explosion Sites

By Lilit Shahverdyan
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

STEPANAKERT — “Crazy Tours” is not only about discovering the magnificent peaks and churches of Artsakh. After the first rockets burst during the recent war, Vadim made changes to his routes from hidden mountains and monasteries towards centers of explosions, and missile sounds replaced the tranquility of nature.

The Birth of Crazy Tours

In 2017, Vadim Balayan, 46, received a phone call from his cousin: two German tourists met with the manager of their hotel in Stepanakert and do not require much effort to enjoy the panoramas of Artsakh,” said Vadim.

Soon after Vadim started sharing photos and videos from his first “crazy” tour, he received several requests from locals to organize trips for them. “I decided to dig deeper into the field of domestic tourism, found new routes, and included lunchboxes and potlucks,” he said.

“Once a famous Russian chef visited Artsakh. We wanted to take him to harvest grapes for his show. I discovered later that he had a popular YouTube vlog,” recalled Vadim.

To expand his audience, Vadim started collaborating with other local entrepreneurs, such as the Maro Bed & Breakfast in Togh, Hadrout region, or the Hippodrome in Shushi. “Our collaboration gave color and diversity to the trips and supplemented them,” said Balayan.

Marco B&B organized dinners for the tourists and offered traditional dishes, such as havisa or jengyalov hats, allowing the tourists a full immersion into local culture.

Vadim’s routes were always diverse: the peaks of Kataro and Dipazayt, the monasteries of Ste. Georgy and Hohakavan, and he even went out of Artsakh, to visit the Tavtyan monastery in Syunik, Armenia. The tours were initially intended for the youth because of the distance and rough mountainous terrain, but demands from others grew, so Vadim came up with a solution for adults. He gave them a chance to peek over the horizon and discover the majesty of the history of Artsakh and its churches, and the views left everyone astonished.

“Artsakh is a place to which one must often shout ‘This is crazy!’ and we named our group ‘Crazy Squad.’ That is how I came up with the name,” said Vadim.

Vadim’s routes were always diverse: the peaks of Kataro and Dipazayt, the monasteries of Ste. Georgy and Hohakavan, and he even went out of Artsakh, to visit the Tavtyan monastery in Syunik, Armenia. The tours were initially intended for the youth because of the distance and rough mountainous terrain, but demands from others grew, so Vadim came up with a solution for adults. He gave them a chance to peek over the horizon and discover the majesty of the history of Artsakh and its churches, and the views left everyone astonished.

“A few days later, Vadim was drafted into military service. He returned for a shift change after two weeks and was shocked to see the city bombarded, since he believed military operations were carried out only on the frontline. One of the local hotels was fully operating, and while enjoying coffee at the bar, Vadim made his new life-changing acquisitions.

“I told the journalists in the hotel that I used to be a taxi driver. When they learned that I had a car, they asked me to guide them for a fee. Turned out that the locals refused to drive under shelling, so I agreed,” said Vadim.

Vadim’s tour routes changed notably: instead of mountains and churches, he drove towards centers of explosions, and missile sounds replaced the tranquility of nature.

The post-war situation in the country pushed some people to rethink and set new priorities, which is cause of uncertainty about Artsakh’s status and risk, Maria thinks differently. “People are scared to visit Artsakh because they think it’s dangerous, but for me, it’s quite a safe spot,” she said.

Ivanova visited Artsakh several times after the war, and to diversify her routine, she decided to find a tour guide and travel to unknown places. Social media played its role and Maria noticed an announcement shared by Crazy Tours on Facebook. The organization’s name seemed intriguing and mysterious, and she made “crazy” assumptions about its tours. “Are they going to travel to Baku or walk along the borderline on a knife’s edge?” were Maria’s first perceptions of the name.

“I discovered that is Vadim, organizing his quiet, calm tours around Artsakh,” she added. Crazy Tours attracted Ivanova with its name but kept her as a loyal customer with its professionalism and tranquil atmosphere, which it maintained even in big groups. The experience of traveling with good people gave Maria a second wind and changed her attitude towards her roots.

“I love Artsakh because it was aggrieved, and no one condemned the aggressor. I liked Artsakh because of the injustice of the world community in the 44-day war. It withstood, lost its sons and lands... It survived. I wanted to support Artsakh and I saw only beauty in everything, from people to nature,” confessed Ivanova.

One of the reasons why she chose Crazy Tours is the friendly relationship with Vadim due to his versatility and creativity. She especially liked their idea of opening an exclusive kindergarten for disabled kids.

Other than being a tour guide, Vadim manages a family cafe on Tumanyan, one of the main touristic streets of Stepanakert. The family opened a wine bar and cafe which offers traditional dishes made by Vadim’s wife, and the interesting panoply complement the Armenian ambience.

For the spring and summer seasons, the Balayans will try to connect their two enterprises and organize tea at their cafe after the tours, where the tourists could discuss their impressions and enjoy the atmosphere. Currently they are focusing on special events for kids, such as pottery classes, movie screenings or cooking.

“We also decided to open a Christmas Market to cheer up the people, but unfortunately, the storage area caught fire and hindered our plans,” says Vadim. Vadim’s friends organized a fundraiser to raise money for the restoration of damaged areas.

“Loving the importance and necessity of Artsakh’s rebirth, Maria Ivanova said, “Every Armenian should spend his money in Artsakh, spend his holidays there, and invest in the economy of Artsakh, even if passively, through tourism.”

A Crazy Tour to Ulubab in May 2021

Ed while hiking with us. One of them already has a baby,” said Vadim.

Maria Ivanova, 37, was born and raised in St. Petersburg, Russia, but her roots are in the village of Shelker in Artsakh. Ivanova first visited Artsakh in 2010 upon her husband’s request to get acquainted with her ancestors’ culture and land, and she was not impressed by the region. The second visit in 2017 was not memorable either, but her perception of Artsakh drastically changed during and after the war of 2020.

“I felt very sympathetic towards the people and the lands, which underwent wars,” she said. “We don’t know who will own these lands tomorrow, and I want to enjoy it while it’s possible.”

“Though the tourists’ inflow shrinking has contributed to Artsakh’s rebirth and prosperity,” Maria Ivanova, 37, was born and raised in St. Petersburg, Russia, but her roots are in the village of Shelker in Artsakh. Ivanova first visited Artsakh in 2010 upon her husband’s request to get acquainted with her ancestors’ culture and land, and she was not impressed by the region. The second visit in 2017 was not memorable either, but her perception of Artsakh drastically changed during and after the war of 2020.

“I felt very sympathetic towards the people and the lands, which underwent wars,” she said. “We don’t know who will own these lands tomorrow, and I want to enjoy it while it’s possible.”

“Though the tourists’ inflow shrinking has contributed to Artsakh’s rebirth and prosperity,” Maria Ivanova, 37, was born and raised in St. Petersburg, Russia, but her roots are in the village of Shelker in Artsakh. Ivanova first visited Artsakh in 2010 upon her husband’s request to get acquainted with her ancestors’ culture and land, and she was not impressed by the region. The second visit in 2017 was not memorable either, but her perception of Artsakh drastically changed during and after the war of 2020.
Azerbaijan Appropriates Monastery in Georgia

TBILISI (News.am) — Azerbaijan has appropriated the Georgian David Gareja monastic complex, the Azerbaijani government announced on April 12. The Azerbaijan State Service for Protection, Development and Restoration of Cultural Heritage has announced that the installation of an information board at the beginning of the asphalt road leading to an information board at the beginning of the asphalt road leading to the site has been renamed “Keshikjidagh” and, in accordance with Armenian documents, it is presented as “Caucasian Albanian.”

Germany to Give 116 Million Euros in Aid

YEREVAN (Armenpress) During the April 12 session in the Parliament, Deputy Minister of Economy of Armenia Gevorg Gevorgyan presented the draft on ratifying the 2020 financial cooperation agreement between the Armenian and German governments. Gevorgyan said that Armenia will be provided with 116 million euros in financial aid.

School Gate in Istanbul Vandalized with Swastika

ISTANBUL (PanARMENIAN. Net) — A swastika was drawn on the gate of the Armenian Bomiian school in Istanbul, according to images spreading on Twitter. The vandalism comes ahead of the 107th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

Armenian, Russian Foreign Ministers Meet in Moscow Immediately after Pashinyan-Aliyev Talks in Brussels

YEREVAN (Jam News) — The Armenian Foreign Minister met with his Russian counterpart in Moscow on April 7, the day after the regional meeting. Earlier, Russian Foreign Minister, in a conversation with Putin, spoke about the need to investigate the “actions or inactions” of the peacekeeping forces.

The Armenian government said early this year that the process should start only after a mutual withdrawal of troops from contested border areas. “I think there’s a recognition that you need a pullback on both sides of the border,” the EU diplomat said in this regard, adding that the demarcation commission is expected to also deal with “those contested areas where tension reduction is a priority.”

EU Plans More Armenian-Azeri Talks

PLANS, from page 1
Pashinyan reiterated on April 7 that Bakau’s proposals on the treaty, including a mutual recognition of each other’s territorial integrity, are acceptable to Yerevan. But he said the question of Karabakh’s status must also be on the agenda of the talks on the peace treaty.

The European diplomat suggested that this would imply a visit at the invitation of Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan, left, with his Russian counterpart, Sergei Lavrov.

EU ambassador to Brussels Werner Schnell called partners in this group, in a Russo-phobic frenzy and in an effort to cancel everything related to the Russian Federation, said that they would not communicate with us in that format. This is their right. If they are ready to sacrifice their interests in the settlement in Karabakh and in the Transcaucasus as a whole, then this is their choice.

Russia considers such an approach irresponsible, Lavrov stressed, but “it will not unsettle Moscow.” Russia will continue to contribute to the implementation of the agreements reached through its mediation by the parties to the conflict.

EU ambassador to Brussels Werner Schnell called partners in this group, in a Russophobe frenzy and in an effort to cancel everything related to the Russian Federation, said that they would not communicate with us in that format. This is their right. If they are ready to sacrifice their interests in the settlement in Karabakh and in the Transcaucasus as a whole, then this is their choice.

Russia considers such an approach irresponsible, Lavrov stressed, but “it will not unsettle Moscow.” Russia will continue to contribute to the implementation of the agreements reached through its mediation by the parties to the conflict.
Inaugural Session of Armenia and China Forum Takes Place in Yerevan

YEREVAN — The inaugural gathering of the Armenia and China Forum, which was dedicated to the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, took place in Yerevan recently. The occurrence was organized by the China-Eurasia Council for Political and Strategic Research in partnership with World Socialism Institute, Renmin University of China. It was supported by the Embassy of the People’s Republic of China in Armenia.

In his welcoming speech, Dr. Mher Sakhyan, the founder of the Armenia and China Forum, director of the China-Eurasia Council for Political and Strategic Research, announced the creation of annual Armenia and China Forum, where Armenian and Chinese scholars and diplomats will introduce research and recommendations for improving bilateral relations.

In his opening remarks Ambassador of the PRC to Armenia Fan Yong welcomed the establishment of Armenia and China Forum by the China-Eurasia Council for Political and Strategic Research. He noted, that after the establishment of diplomatic affairs, both countries created fruitful relations and supported each other on an international level. He noted that China is the second trade partner of Armenia and sides support each other in the international arena.

Fan emphasized the importance of developing relations within the framework of China’s Belt and Road Initiative.

Former Prime Minister of Armenia Prof. Armen Darbinyan mentioned that historically Armenia played an important role in trade relations between East and the West. He expressed hope that Armenia will be able to regain the mediator’s role between different players of Eastern and Western parts of Eurasia by the help of developing infrastructure. He also noted, that as a Rect. of the Russian-Armenian University he gives great importance to the development of Chinese studies at the university, where many students study Chinese language with great enthusiasm.

General Secretary of the Good-Neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation Commission of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Wei Zheng noted: “We see that in 30 years a whole generation has grown up committed to deepening friendship between China and Armenia and plays an important role in the social development of the two countries. No matter how the international situation changes, we always understand, respect and support each other.”

Deputy Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of Armenia Dr. Artur Martirosyan presented the range of existing programs of China-Eurasia Cooperation, which includes student exchange programs, cooperation in educational, scientific and technical spheres. As he mentioned, Armenian students, who came back from China contribute to develop the Armenian economy.

Dr. Robert Ghazaryan, director of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the National Academy of Sciences, emphasized the importance of cooperation between China-Eurasia Council for Political and Strategic Research and Institute of Oriental Studies in the field of academic diplomacy. As he mentioned these efforts are serving for the developing scientific relations between scholars of Armenia and China.

Director of the World Socialism Institute at Renmin University of China Dr. Yuntian Zheng mentioned: “While COVID-19 disrupted global flow of people and offline conferences, people-to-people exchanges between our two countries have never come to a halt. So far, we’ve managed to hold a number of online events. For the year of 2021 only, we celebrated the 100th anniversary of the foundation of CPC, the publication of our book, China and Eurasia: Rethinking Cooperation and Contradictions in the Era of Changing World Order, and the 3rd China- Eurasia conference was held. Through these activities, our friendship continues to grow and prosper.”

Armenia Sends Ambassador Back to Israel

TEL AVIV (Azatutyun) — Armenia has sent its ambassador back to Israel in an apparent effort to mend bilateral relations that soured during the 2020 war in Nagorno-Karabakh. Ambassador Arman Hakobyan presented his credentials to Israeli President Isaac Herzog on Thursday 18 months after his predecessor, Armen Smbatyan, was recalled by the Armenian government in protest against continuing Israeli arms supplies to Azerbaijan.

The Armenian Foreign Ministry said at the time that Israel did not halt those deliveries even after Azerbaijan launched a full-scale offensive in and around Karabakh on September 27, 2020.

Smbatyan was recalled to Yerevan in October 2010 just two weeks after inaugurating the Armenian embassy in Tel Aviv. The envoy was subsequently sacked by the Armenian government after being indicted in a corruption investigation.

Hakobyan was appointed as Armenia’s new ambassador to Israel in December 2021 one month after a phone call between Foreign Minister Mirzoyan and his Israeli counterpart Yair Lapid. The two ministers discussed Armenian-Israeli relations and “prospects for their promotion,” according to the Foreign Ministry in Yerevan. Reports from Israel said that during the Armenian-Azerbaijani war Azerbaijani transport planes frequently carried out flights between Baku and Israeli airfields. Observers suggested that they delivered more weapons to Azerbaijan.

According to the Armenian military, Azerbaijan has been using Israeli-made attack drones and multiple-launch rocket systems throughout the six-week hostilities stopped by a Russian-brokered ceasefire in November 2020.

In an October 2020 report, Human Rights Watch said that the Azerbaijani army used Israeli cluster munitions in the shelling of Karabakh’s civilian areas. The US watchdog said its researchers identified the remnants of these widely banned weapons in the Karabakh capital Stepanakert and the town of Hadrut.

“Azerbaijan received these surface-to-surface rockets and launchers from Israel in 2008-2009,” the report added.

Russia Complains to Turkey over Drones Sales to Ukraine, Turkish Bureaucrat Says

ISTANBUL (Reuters) — Russia has complained to Turkey over its sale of Bayraktar TB2 armed drones to Ukraine, a high level Turkish bureaucrat said on Friday, but added the sales were by a private Turkish company and not state-to-state deals.

Turkey has forged close ties with Russia in energy, defense and trade, and relies heavily on Russian tourists. The Turkish defense firm Baykar had sold the drones to Kyiv despite Russian objections and signed a deal to co-produce more before the invasion, angering Moscow.

NATO member Turkey shares a maritime border with Ukraine and Russia in the Black Sea, has good ties with both and has taken a mediating role in the conflict. It has hosted peace talks and is working to bring together the Ukrainian and Russian presidents.

While supporting Ukraine and criticizing Russia’s invasion, Turkey has also opposed widespread Western sanctions on Moscow, saying communication channels need to remain open and casting doubt on the effectiveness of the measures.

Ankara also opposes Russian policies in Syria and Libya, as well as its annexation of Crimea in 2014. After peace talks between negotiators in Istanbul last week, Ukraine listed several nations, including Turkey and members of the UN Security Council, as possible guarantors for Kyiv’s security. The bureaucrat said some countries listed would face “legal issues” as security guarantors, without elaborating.

Turkey has said it is ready, in principle, to be Ukraine’s guarantor, but the details of the format need to be finalized.
Turkey, US Launch New Strategic Mechanism amid Ukraine Crisis

BEIRUT, Lebanon — From March 17-19, 2022, 70 delegates from Armenia, Cyprus, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Switzerland, the UK, and Lebanon, traveled to Peru to participate in an intensive three-day conference with Washington to discuss topics of mutual interest, including economic and defense cooperation, counter-terrorism, and key send its S-400 missiles to Ukraine, said Ulgen. In a letter dated March 17, the State Department said the potential sale of F-16 fighter jets to Turkey would be in line with US national security interests and would also serve NATO's long-term unity, Reuters reported.

But Ulgen cautioned that it would be more difficult for foreign investors to navigate the legal and regulatory framework in the Middle East - from the US policy on oil and gas exploration in the eastern Mediterranean, as well as human rights issues. Moreover, Turkish officials have been widely critical of the US in recent years.

The statement said that Nuland and Erdogan need a narrative of good relations, and buy new F-16s has been snagged by Turkey's re- its acquisition of Russia's S-400 missile defense system - but neither they can and prevent outstanding issues against his party to endorse Biden's presidential election efforts have intensified with the Armenian diaspora, Ankara has begun to think about its relations with Washington, and he is eager to use his knowledge, ties, and time here to improve and deepen Turkey's relations with Washington, said one diplomatic source.

"There is the possibility of progress on the F-16 issue - at least from the administration if not from the Congress," said Ulgen. In a letter dated March 17, the State Department said the potential sale of F-16 fighter jets to Turkey would be in line with US national security interests and would also serve NATO's long-term unity, Reuters reported.

But Ulgen cautioned that it would be more difficult for foreign investors to navigate the legal and regulatory framework in the Middle East - from the US policy on oil and gas exploration in the eastern Mediterranean, as well as human rights issues. Moreover, Turkish officials have been widely critical of the US in recent years.

The statement said that Nuland and Erdogan need a narrative of good relations, and buy new F-16s has been snagged by Turkey's re- its acquisition of Russia's S-400 missile defense system - but neither they can and prevent outstanding issues against his party to endorse Biden's presidential election efforts have intensified with the Armenian diaspora, Ankara has begun to think about its relations with Washington, and he is eager to use his knowledge, ties, and time here to improve and deepen Turkey's relations with Washington, said one diplomatic source.

"There is the possibility of progress on the F-16 issue - at least from the administration if not from the Congress," said Ulgen. In a letter dated March 17, the State Department said the potential sale of F-16 fighter jets to Turkey would be in line with US national security interests and would also serve NATO's long-term unity, Reuters reported.

But Ulgen cautioned that it would be more difficult for foreign investors to navigate the legal and regulatory framework in the Middle East - from the US policy on oil and gas exploration in the eastern Mediterranean, as well as human rights issues. Moreover, Turkish officials have been widely critical of the US in recent years.

The statement said that Nuland and Erdogan need a narrative of good relations, and buy new F-16s has been snagged by Turkey's re- its acquisition of Russia's S-400 missile defense system - but neither they can and prevent outstanding issues against his party to endorse Biden's presidential election efforts have intensified with the Armenian diaspora, Ankara has begun to think about its relations with Washington, and he is eager to use his knowledge, ties, and time here to improve and deepen Turkey's relations with Washington, said one diplomatic source.

"There is the possibility of progress on the F-16 issue - at least from the administration if not from the Congress," said Ulgen. In a letter dated March 17, the State Department said the potential sale of F-16 fighter jets to Turkey would be in line with US national security interests and would also serve NATO's long-term unity, Reuters reported.

But Ulgen cautioned that it would be more difficult for foreign investors to navigate the legal and regulatory framework in the Middle East - from the US policy on oil and gas exploration in the eastern Mediterranean, as well as human rights issues. Moreover, Turkish officials have been widely critical of the US in recent years.

The statement said that Nuland and Erdogan need a narrative of good relations, and buy new F-16s has been snagged by Turkey's re- its acquisition of Russia's S-400 missile defense system - but neither they can and prevent outstanding issues against his party to endorse Biden's presidential election efforts have intensified with the Armenian diaspora, Ankara has begun to think about its relations with Washington, and he is eager to use his knowledge, ties, and time here to improve and deepen Turkey's relations with Washington, said one diplomatic source.

"There is the possibility of progress on the F-16 issue - at least from the administration if not from the Congress," said Ulgen. In a letter dated March 17, the State Department said the potential sale of F-16 fighter jets to Turkey would be in line with US national security interests and would also serve NATO's long-term unity, Reuters reported.
Connecticut Genocide Commemoration Committee Program to Take Place April 23

NEW BRITAIN, Conn. — On Saturday, April 23, the Connecticut Armenian Genocide Commemoration Committee will present a program remembering the 107th anniversary of the beginning of the Genocide. The program will be held at the Armenian Church of the Holy Resurrection, 1910 Stanley Street, at 10:30 a.m. as an in person event but will also be livestreamed.

Because of COVID restrictions in place while the program was being planned, utilization of the State Capitol was not possible this year. The Armenian flag will fly over the Connecticut State Capitol building from April 20 to 27.

John C. Geragosian of New Britain, Connecticut State Auditor and a member of the committee, will serve as master of ceremonies. Geragosian stated that the commemoration and the lessons learned from studying past history is vital especially in the current climate of aggression by Azerbaijan against historic Armenian lands and the war in Ukraine.

The program will begin with the Martyrs’ Service which was created in 2015 on the occasion of the centennial of the Genocide and the canonization of the Martyrs. Clergy from Armenian Churches in Connecticut will lead the service.

Rev. Hroutouman Sabounjian, pastor of the Armenian Church of the Holy Resurrection in New Britain, commented on the significance of the commemoration: “The story of our holy martyrs of the Armenian Genocide is a story of a group of exceptional individuals who kept their focus on the most important thing even in the midst of the darkest imaginable turmoil. Every year we gather together as Armenians and Christians to learn from their example, to ask for their intercession, and to become re-inspired by their example: that we as children of God might also keep our eyes on that most important thing and orient our lives as they did around growing into the love of our compassionate Father in heaven.”

Remarks will be given by Connecticut State Rep. Edwin Vargas, Jr. The keynote speaker will be Lillian Avedian, journalist and poet who works as a staff writer for the Armenian Weekly reporting on domestic and geopolitical issues in the South Caucasus. She is also pursuing master’s degrees in journalism and Near Eastern Studies at New York University. She will speak on “Narrating Genocide: Journalism without Facts, Art without Truth.”

The mission of the Armenian Genocide Commemoration Committee of Connecticut, in addition to honoring the memory of the one and a half million people killed, is to keep the Armenian Genocide in the consciousness of the world. The program also serves as a special opportunity to recognize SOAR’s 17th Anniversary Gala, March 26th, Springfield Country Club, PA

SOAR Celebrates 17th Anniversary Gala, March 26th, Springfield Country Club, PA

Lillian Avedian

SPRINGFIELD, Penn. — Founded in 2005, the Society for Orphaned Armenian Relief (SOAR) provides humanitarian relief to orphaned children and adults with disabilities in Armenia. During the past 17 years, SOAR has remained vigilant by spearheading child protection issues and satisfying the needs of Armenia’s most vulnerable populations. Growing to meet these needs while keeping true to its mission, SOAR has expanded to prevent institutionalization by providing financial, educational, and humanitarian assistance to at-risk children, youth, and families. Today, SOAR boasts more than 600 volunteers in 145 Chapters worldwide, supports 34 orphanages and facilities in four countries, and has distributed more than $11.5 million in humanitarian aid since its inception.

The week-long SOAR anniversary festivities kicked off Wednesday, March 23, with a Board of Trustees Meeting followed by a catered dinner held at the home of George S. Yacoubian Jr., SOAR Founder and Executive Board Chairman. On Thursday, SOAR welcomed global Chapter leadership to Tavola Restaurant in Springfield, PA, for a cocktail party where many, for the very first time, had the opportunity to meet their peers and SOAR’s Executive Board and staff.

Global Chapter Meetings took place Friday and Saturday at the Springfield Country Club, providing a forum for Chapters, facility directors, and invited speakers to exchange ideas and initiatives and explore areas of opportunity for cross cooperation and collaboration. The meetings also served as a special opportunity for organizing Chapter volunteers with 5-year, 10-year, and 15-year service pins for their unwavering dedication to the organization.

SOAR’s Crimson and Crystal Gala took place Saturday, March 26 at the Springfield Country Club, with more than 250 celebrants in attendance. The lavish anniversary event began with a cocktail party where guests had a chance to mingle and bid on a variety of silent auction items while enjoying the musical talents of the Lucy Yeghiyazarian Jazz Quartet.

Ardashes ‘Ardy’ Kassakhian Selected As Glendale Mayor

GLENDALE — On Tuesday, April 5, 2022, Glendale City Council Member Ardashes “Ardy” Kassakhian was selected as the city’s mayor by fellow councilmembers. Kassakhian takes over the position from outgoing Mayor Paula Devine. This is Kassakhian’s first time serving in the role of mayor.

Born in Boston, Kassakhian has been a resident of Glendale since 1986. Prior to his election to City Council, Kassakhian served as the elected City Clerk for Glendale for 15 years, having been elected and re-elected four times by Glendale’s voters.

Kassakhian is the product of Glendale schools, having attended John Marshall and R. D. White Elementary schools, Wilson Middle School, and Glendale High School (’94). Kassakhian graduated from the University of California, Los Angeles with a Bachelor of Arts in History. He received his Master of Arts in Public Policy and Administration from Northwestern University. More recently, he attended the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and completed the Certificate Program for Senior Executives in State and Local Government. He is also an alumnus of the Coro Public Affairs Fellowship.

Mayor Ardashes ‘Ardy’ Kassakhian of Glendale

The California Senate Rules Committee appointed Mayor Kassakhian to serve on the California New Motor Vehicle Board and to the Language Accessibility Advisory Committee by Secretary of State Alex Padilla. Kassakhian currently serves as the Chair of the Glendale Housing Authority and was appointed to serve as Glendale’s representative on the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California Board of Directors and the California Contract Cities Association.

“I have dedicated the majority of my career to serving the residents of the City of Glendale,” said Kassakhian. “From my beginnings as the editor, clerk, and as a councilmember, and now as mayor, I will continue to serve this great community and ensure its future. I am honored for this opportunity and thank my colleagues for enlisting their trust in me in this coming year.”

Kassakhian and his wife, Courtney, live in the Pelanconi neighborhood of Glendale with their son.
Clergy of the Eastern Diocese Refresh Their Spirits at Three Lenten Retreats

PARMA, Ohio — Under the leadership of Diocesan Primate Bishop Daniel Findikyan, the clergy of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America gathered at three regional retreats during the recent season of Great Lent.

The retreat for the Midwest took place at the Jesuit Retreat Center in Parma, OH (March 15-17); for New England at the Bethania II Spiritual Retreat and Conference Center in Medway, MA (March 30-April 1); and for the Mid-Atlantic region at St. Raphaela Retreat Center in Haverford, PA (April 5-7).

The theme of the retreats was “Refreshed by the Living Water.” Each retreat began with a reflection led by Bishop Daniel on Psalm 42: “As a hart longs for flowing streams, so longs my soul for thee, O God.”

Guest speakers at the retreats included Bishop Gregory Mansour, Bishop of the Eparchy of St. Maron of Brooklyn (Midwest); Bishop John Abdalla, Antiochian Orthodox Bishop for Worcester and New England (New England); and Archbishop Mor Dionysius John Kawak, Patriarchal Vicar of the Syriac Orthodox Archdiocese for the Eastern U.S. (Mid-Atlantic). Each guest speaker developed the theme in a unique way, sharing insights from their pastoral experiences, using Bible studies and active discussions with the clergy.

On the last morning of each retreat, Diocesan Director of Ministries Fr. Mesrop Par sassian instructed the clergy on the basics of meditation according to the traditional monastic practice of the Armenian Church, and led the clergy in a discussion of Jesus’ sermon on “Rivers of Living Water.”

As in past retreats, the clergy prayed the Jhamekoytoun each morning and evening. New to this year’s retreat was an evening spent at the local Armenian Church (St. Gregory of Narek, in Richmond Heights, OH; Holy Translators, in Framingham, MA; and St. Sahag and St. Mesrob, in Wynnewood, PA) for a Lenten meal and film discussion.

Because the Mid-Atlantic retreat coincided with the Feast of the Annunciation to the Holy Virgin Mary (April 7), the Divine Liturgy was celebrated by Fr. Arakel Derian, pastor of St. Mary Church in Liv ingston, NJ, and the priests received Holy Communion together. Each of the retreats concluded with Bishop Daniel’s remarks on the necessity of receiving the “living spiritual water,” to energize the clergy in their important mission of ministering to their respective flocks.

California State Bar to Investigate Armenian Genocide Insurance Victim Payments

LOS ANGELES — Chief Trial Counsel George Cardona of the State Bar of California said on April 5 to the LA Times that the agency was taking a fresh look at attorney conduct in Armenian Genocide insurance reparations cases following a Times investigation that detailed corruption and misdirection of funds in the AXA French insurance company settlement case.

“The State Bar is reviewing these cases to determine whether there is any new information that would warrant further action,” said Cardona, a former federal prosecutor appointed last year to lead investigations and prosecutions at the agency that regulates the legal profession in California. The bar previously disciplined one attorney and attempted to discipline two others in connection with the genocide litigation.

“There was a terrible injustice done when descendants of those murdered in the Armenian Genocide were denied their rightful settlements,” Cardona said in his LA Times statement. He described those already prosecuted as “most directly responsible for these misappropriations” but added, “the State Bar has the responsibility to take action when it becomes aware of new evidence.”

Connecticut Genocide Commemoration Committee Program to Take Place April 23

COMMEMORATION, from page 7

million victims and survivors of the Armenian Genocide, is to support programs and events, itself or with other organizations, to inform the public and remember the Genocide. It is in the process of establishing a suitable permanent Genocide Memorial. The committee also assists in the legislative mandate to provide Genocide related curricula in the public schools.

Melanie Kevorkian-Brown, chairperson of the Committee stated that she is gratified by the interest in the Armenian Genocide shown by both the Armenian and non-Armenian communities. She stressed that the failure to recognize and condemn past genocides can only lead to increased crimes against humanity in the future. She commended the Connecticut Genocide Commemoration Committee for its diligence in conducting its annual commemoration, and especially these past two years in light of restrictions posed by COVID related circumstances.


Mazadoorian noted, “Great strides have been made in recent years, especially with the recognition and condemnation resolutions of both houses of the US Congress in 2020 and the recognition by President Biden in 2021. Nonetheless, it is heartbreaking that 107 years after the Genocide, atrocities continue in the form of physical aggressions, human rights violations and cultural desecration against Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh, a region which has long been an integral part of historic Armenia.

The program will also contain appropriate musical selections and a candle lighting. A reception will follow the program. The Livestream link is: bit.ly/34VhG8H.
Dickran Toumajan, Teacher, Scholar of Armenian Language, Dies at 77

TOUMAJAN, from page 1

Born in 1945 in Cambridge, Mass., to Garin native Nishan Toumajan and Is- tian native Louise Ajemian Toumajan, Dickran spent his early formative years in the Washington Heights neighborhood of New York City. The Toumajan home was a bustling house where Dickran, his two older brothers, and their family, who often gathered to discuss intellectual and cultural topics of the day, in addition to Armenian customs and traditions.

The youngest of three sons, Dickran attended public elementary school in Man- hattan, while simultaneously being treated with his siblings, Thomas and Bartev, to baseball games and the movies, thanks to their doting uncles, Hrant and Mihran.

In 1955, the Toumajans left the hustle and bustle of Washington Heights and settled at 55 Union Street in idyllic Milford, NH, where Nishan worked as an accountant for the AGBU Alex & Marie Manoogian Cultural Society of Armenians from Istanbul. Their home in Southfield, MI — like Dick- ran enjoyed editing for 30 years. In addition to teaching, Dick-ran taught Armenian history to the senior class of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) Alex and Marie Manoogian School in Southfield. In 1979, Dick- ran embarked on a career as a lecturer in Armenian Language and Culture at Wayne State University (WSU) in Detroit.

Founded in 1950 upon the initiative of the Armenian Apostolic Church's Sunday School in Iran, the NAASR was the first Armenian non-profit organization in the United States. This mission was enter- tained by clergy from all Armenian churches in America. Dickran Toumajan served as President of St. John Armenian Church, with the participation of clergy from all Armenian church denominations. Funeral arrange- ments are by the Edward Korkoian Funeral Home.

NA SSR Presents Inaugural Varton Gregorian Lecture on April 28

BELMONT, Mass. — The National Asso- ciation of Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) will present its first annual Varton Gregorian Memorial Lecture on Thursday, April 28, at 7:30 p.m. (Eastern) / 4:30 p.m. (Pacific) at the NAASR website (www.naasr.org) in a webinar by presentation of Prof. Houri Berberian of the University of California, Irvine, and Professor Berberian will be a guest speaker at the AGBU Alex & Marie Manoogian Cultural Society of Armenians from Istanbul. Their home in Southfield, MI — like Dickran enjoyed editing for 30 years. In addition to teaching, Dick-ran taught Armenian history to the senior class of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) Alex and Marie Manoogian School in Southfield. In 1979, Dick- ran embarked on a career as a lecturer in Armenian Language and Culture at Wayne State University (WSU) in Detroit.

Founded in 1950 upon the initiative of the Armenian Apostolic Church's Sunday School in Iran, the NAASR was the first Armenian non-profit organization in the United States. This mission was enter- tained by clergy from all Armenian churches in America. Dickran Toumajan served as President of St. John Armenian Church, with the participation of clergy from all Armenian church denominations. Funeral arrange- ments are by the Edward Korkoian Funeral Home.

NA SSR Presents Inaugural Varton Gregorian Lecture on April 28

BELMONT, Mass. — The National Asso- ciation of Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) will present its first annual Varton Gregorian Memorial Lecture on Thursday, April 28, at 7:30 p.m. (Eastern) / 4:30 p.m. (Pacific) at the NAASR website (www.naasr.org) in a webinar by presentation of Prof. Houri Berberian of the University of California, Irvine, and Professor Berberian will be a guest speaker at the AGBU Alex & Marie Manoogian Cultural Society of Armenians from Istanbul. Their home in Southfield, MI — like Dickran enjoyed editing for 30 years. In addition to teaching, Dick-ran taught Armenian history to the senior class of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) Alex and Marie Manoogian School in Southfield. In 1979, Dick- ran embarked on a career as a lecturer in Armenian Language and Culture at Wayne State University (WSU) in Detroit.

Founded in 1950 upon the initiative of the Armenian Apostolic Church's Sunday School in Iran, the NAASR was the first Armenian non-profit organization in the United States. This mission was enter- tained by clergy from all Armenian churches in America. Dickran Toumajan served as President of St. John Armenian Church, with the participation of clergy from all Armenian church denominations. Funeral arrange- ments are by the Edward Korkoian Funeral Home.

Dickran Toumajan, Teacher, Scholar of Armenian Language, Dies at 77

TOUMAJAN, from page 1

Born in 1945 in Cambridge, Mass., to Garin native Nishan Toumajan and Is- tian native Louise Ajemian Toumajan, Dickran spent his early formative years in the Washington Heights neighborhood of New York City. The Toumajan home was a bustling house where Dickran, his two older brothers, and their family, who often gathered to discuss intellectual and cultural topics of the day, in addition to Armenian customs and traditions.

The youngest of three sons, Dickran at- tended public elementary school in Man- hattan, while simultaneously being treated with his siblings, Thomas and Bartev, to baseball games and the movies, thanks to their doting uncles, Hrant and Mihran.

In 1955, the Toumajans left the hustle and bustle of Washington Heights and settled at 55 Union Street in idyllic Milford, NH, where Nishan worked as an accountant for the AGBU Alex & Marie Manoogian Cultural Society of Armenians from Istanbul. Their home in Southfield, MI — like Dickran enjoyed editing for 30 years. In addition to teaching, Dick-ran taught Armenian history to the senior class of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) Alex and Marie Manoogian School in Southfield. In 1979, Dick- ran embarked on a career as a lecturer in Armenian Language and Culture at Wayne State University (WSU) in Detroit.

Founded in 1950 upon the initiative of the Armenian Apostolic Church's Sunday School in Iran, the NAASR was the first Armenian non-profit organization in the United States. This mission was enter- tained by clergy from all Armenian churches in America. Dickran Toumajan served as President of St. John Armenian Church, with the participation of clergy from all Armenian church denominations. Funeral arrange- ments are by the Edward Korkoian Funeral Home.

Dickran Toumajan, Teacher, Scholar of Armenian Language, Dies at 77

TOUMAJAN, from page 1

Born in 1945 in Cambridge, Mass., to Garin native Nishan Toumajan and Is- tian native Louise Ajemian Toumajan, Dickran spent his early formative years in the Washington Heights neighborhood of New York City. The Toumajan home was a bustling house where Dickran, his two older brothers, and their family, who often gathered to discuss intellectual and cultural topics of the day, in addition to Armenian customs and traditions.

The youngest of three sons, Dickran at- tended public elementary school in Man- hattan, while simultaneously being treated with his siblings, Thomas and Bartev, to baseball games and the movies, thanks to their doting uncles, Hrant and Mihran.

In 1955, the Toumajans left the hustle and bustle of Washington Heights and settled at 55 Union Street in idyllic Milford, NH, where Nishan worked as an accountant for the AGBU Alex & Marie Manoogian Cultural Society of Armenians from Istanbul. Their home in Southfield, MI — like Dickran enjoyed editing for 30 years. In addition to teaching, Dick-ran taught Armenian history to the senior class of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) Alex and Marie Manoogian School in Southfield. In 1979, Dick- ran embarked on a career as a lecturer in Armenian Language and Culture at Wayne State University (WSU) in Detroit.

Founded in 1950 upon the initiative of the Armenian Apostolic Church's Sunday School in Iran, the NAASR was the first Armenian non-profit organization in the United States. This mission was enter- tained by clergy from all Armenian churches in America. Dickran Toumajan served as President of St. John Armenian Church, with the participation of clergy from all Armenian church denominations. Funeral arrange- ments are by the Edward Korkoian Funeral Home.
STOP THE DENIAL.
THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE
THE ANNUAL COMMEMORATION IN TIMES SQUARE

Truth
Justice
Recognition

SUNDAY
APRIL 24, 2022
at 1:30pm
SOAR Celebrates Anniversary, Marks Efforts on Behalf of Orphans and Adults with Disabilities

SOAR, from page 7

Heartfelt video messages to SOAR were offered by Elisha Wiesel, the Armenian Evangelical Boarding School (AEBS), and California Rep. Jacqueline Speier, followed by inspirational words from Mother Arousiag Sajonian.

“Many charitable organizations help, but very few think about changing systems,” said Mother Arousiag. “The mentality in Armenia was orphans are not intelligent, orphans cannot accomplish something, orphans are secondary people...SOAR has changed this mentality. If today the Our Lady of Armenia is souring, it’s because of SOAR.”

Continuing with words of encouragement, Mark Geragos, Esq., Master of Ceremonies shared, “The idea that we are the first Christian nation in a nascent democracy who exists in sea of hostility and we have been able to thrive throughout all of these challenges and have organizations like that do God’s work literally is a story that is not told and is a story that needs to be told.”

Annually, SOAR honors patrons and volunteers whose unparalleled service to the organization deserves recognition. 2020 and 2021 awards were distributed at the gala as follows: Sevana Petrosian, Greg and Laurel Sarian, 2020 Patrons of the Year; Syneke Hakobyan, 2020 Chapter Volunteer of the Year; New York Juniors of the Year, Margaret Vosdokian, Vargos Yerganian, 2021 Patrons of the Year; Tenny Amin, 2021 Chapter Volunteer of the Year; and New Jersey and Philadelphia Junior Volunteers of the Year (2021).

Greg and Laurel Sarian have provided significant financial support to SOAR since its inception, and Greg Sarian serves as an integral part of the Board of Trustees.

The more than 250 guests celebrating SOAR’s Crimson and Crystal Gala at the Springfield Country Club, sponsored by the SOAR Philadelphia Chapter, and all supporters who made its 17th anniversary week unforgettable. Headquartered in Philadelphia, SOAR is the world’s only charitable organization devoted exclusively to providing humanitarian relief to orphaned Armenian children. To learn more about SOAR and view the gallery of anniversary photos and videos, visit soar-us.org.
Rémi Panossian

‘Jazz Is My Religion!’

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN / TOULOUSE — Jazz pianist Rémi Panossian was born in 1983, in Montpellier, France, to an Armenian father and a French mother, and started playing piano at 7. He studied at the Lycée Jean Monnet in Montpellier, as well as Montpellier Jazz School and the Toulouse College of Music, where he received a National School of Music Certificate in Jazz and Improvised Music. Panossian taught jazz piano at the Enfants du Jazz Workshop and International Trio Session in Cape Breton.

In 2009 he founded the Rémi Panossian Trio with Maxime Delporte (double bass) and Frederic Petitprez (drums). In 2011, the trio released their first album, “Add fiction,” and have released seven more. The trio has performed in countries including France, Japan, South Korea, China, India, Taiwan, Canada, Norway, Brazil, Germany, Venezuela, Portugal and Germany.

Last February 27, the Rémi Panossian Trio held a concert in Yerevan, after his concert in Yerevan. “It is really inspiring when you are discovering new things. It is really inspiring when you are discovering new things. It is really inspiring when you are discovering new things,” Rémi, the performance of your trio is just bewitching. Where do you find inspiration for your bottomless drive and passion? I think mostly in travelling and meeting different people, cultures, food. It is really inspiring when you are discovering new things.

I can see that with Maxime and Frederic you are not only colleagues, but also close friends, am I right? Yes, we have known each other for 20 years and we were friends even before we built this trio 13 years ago. see PANOSSIAN, page 13

Celebrating German Publisher, Human Rights Activist Helmut Donat on His 75th Birthday

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BREMEN, Germany — It is not only his family and friends who have reason to congratulate Helmut Donat on his 75th birthday, members of the Armenian community everywhere should join in as well. As a publisher, he has done more to educate the reading public on Armenia, its people and history, its tragedies and achievements, than any other German publisher. In her birthday greetings (printed below) his long-standing friend and colleague, the well-known genocide scholar and human rights advocate Tessa Hofmann references a few of the many books he has produced, which cover a wide range of topics and genres, reaching back in time to before the first World War. The list of valuable resources he has made available includes works examining the role of Imperial Germany: In 2004 his publishing house Donat-Verlag presented the account of the genocide written by Heinrich Vierbächer, Armenia 1915: What the German Imperial Government Concealed from Its Subjects. Then came Armenia, Turkey and the Duties of Europe by Eduard Bernstein and Otto Umfrid (2005). The Slaughter of a Civilized People at the Hands of the Turks, Two War Years in Constantinople 1915-1916 by German newspaper correspondent Harry Stürmer appeared in 2015. In the year of the centenary of the genocide, Donat-Verlag also released the definitive biography of Walter Rößler (1871-1929) by Kai Seyffarth. Rößler was a German consul in Aleppo, who displayed extraordinary courage in exposing the genocide as it unfolded, in hopes of influencing German policy to end the atrocities. And Yervart Feciciyan revealed what the public could read in The Armenian Genocide as Reflected in the German Language Daily Press 1915-1923. Among the works documenting its horrors is Expulsion, Persecution, Extermination, an album of photographs and texts associated with a permanent exhibition by Tessa Hofmann, in collaboration with Gerayr Koutcharian and Wolfgang Bremner.

In making such books available to the German public, Donat has performed the role of educator. And, most important, he has joined other scholars and human rights advocates like Hofmann, as an indefatigable campaigner for the recognition of the genocide by the German political establishment. Publishing, for Helmut Donat, is not a commercial enterprise but a vocation; he produces books and wields them like weapons in a campaign for historical justice. Discovering the Armenians Who is Helmut Donat? And how did he come to devote his energies to Armenian issues? He was born in Lower Saxony in the immediate post-war period, in a family of refugees. see DONAT, page 14
Let’s talk a little about jazz. For some people jazz is an endless musical expression, for some it is just musical garrulity. Jazz is my religion! People always struggling to describe what jazz is! For some people jazz stopped in 1959; for others it is infinite. I don’t really know. For me jazz is freedom. I try to play good music with a lot of influence and a lot of freedom.

Some people blame jazz for various sins.” American singer Cathy Berberian once said that jazz is the root of all mischiefs of the 20th century. With all my respect and admiration to Berberian, I found her opinion quite misleading. I would say the opposite. Jazz is the root of all the wonders of the 20th century: soul funk, rock, hip hop, etc. When the music is good, no matter what is the name on it.

Very few people know that an Armenian musician, Gregor or Krikor Kéléki-an (1898-1971) was one of the founders of French jazz. And one of your teachers was jazz pianist Stéphane Khochoyan. I met Stephanie when I was 14 years old; he taught me a lot of things and a few years after he gave a job as a teacher in a workshop, he always follows my works. He is a great musician and wonderful human being.

I totally agree with it. I used to play a few Armenian folk songs and for sure I could feel some links between these two music. It is really great to improvise on Armenian folk songs!

Have you ever cooperated with other Armenian musicians?

I have known pianist Tigran Hamasyan for a long time; we have had a tour in Japan together. And now I know cellist Artyom Manukyan; we played together a few songs, he is just amazing.

How would you describe your trip to Armenia and concert in Yerevan?

It was really special, it was like I was at home: it was my first time, but I felt like I have already been there. I cannot wait to come back.

And we cannot wait to listen you again! Is there also something unusual that happened to you in Armenia you would like to mention?

Not really - maybe that I cried during my dinner at Yerevan Tavern listening to beautiful Armenian duduk music.

Rémi, I wish to see you often in Armenia and Armenian stages. And one day to listen your own jazz interpretations of popular in Armenia music!

Thanks a lot! It will be my pleasure!

Are you from a musical family?

Not really. My mom was a social worker and my father a psychologist. They are now retired, but they always loved music and arts and they supported me a lot.

At the concert you said you know only few words in Armenian from your grandfather. What are they? And please tell us about everything Armenian you have had in your family.

It is difficult to know where my Armenian ancestors were really born. My grandfather Kamer Panossian was a survivor of the genocide; he had been through so many difficulties before arriving in France. I had the chance to spend a lot of time with him. He was an incredible source of inspiration. The words he told me often were gamazt (calm), nestaţ (sit down) and achkapatz (smart). My father is a great cook. I used to eat a lot of Armenian food in France: kétla, beureks, soudjouk, pastema, etc. Also my grandmother Marie Baroian used to sing a lot of Armenian folk songs. I especially remember of one song named Jorve (Dreams). I played it also with duduk player Levon Minassian.

There is an opinion that Armenian traditional music has elements of jazz and that’s why folk jazz has been so popular in Armenia since 1930s. What is your impression?

New Film by Dilchanian to Be Released in May

FILM, from page 12

Despite unprecedented challenges, and an aggressive schedule, “Pride Jewel” began production on July 7, 2020, during the worldwide COVID 19 pandemic and with no vaccines available at that time. Due to 4D Legacy Studios’ rigid COVID 19 safety guidelines, top-notch cast, crew, and their dedication to excellence, the talented team completed this epic feature-length film in just two weeks.

Born into an Armenian family, Dilchanian immigrated to the US when he was 12 years old and saw his own father start his life over again. Years later, Armen attended a lavish Armenian wedding and thought what a great place it would be if someone wanted to pull off a heist!

Thus was born the idea for “Pride Jew-el,” a heist film that unites the glamor of the genre with elements of an immigrant narrative many Armenians and others will recognize.

Armen has an MFA in theater and an extensive background writing and producing plays in and around San Francisco, CA. He has also written and produced several short films. Pride Jewel is his first feature, and he hopes it will resonate with audiences far and wide.

Director Doug Thomsen Doug Thomsen is a director and production company owner of BT Studio. He belonged to an acting workshop for 6 years, giving him in-depth insight into what actors need to be successful.

David Pennino’s transition to commercial and corporate work.

Director Megan Louise Thill Megan Louise Thill is an actor, singer, and producer from Wisconsin with theater, film, dance, and casting experience. After working as a project manager for many years in healthcare IT, Megan enjoys producing and acting in feature and short films, commercials, and industrials in San Francisco. She is an alumni of the SFSU Cinema program where he began his career as a director of photography shooting short films. His experience ranges from independent features, documentaries to commercial and corporate work.

Cinematographer Jonathan Salazar Jona-than Salazar is a narrative cinematographer based in San Francisco. He is an alumni of the SFSU Cinema program where he began his career as a director of photography shooting short films. His experience ranges from independent features, documentaries to commercial and corporate work.

FILM, from page 12

Despite unprecedented challenges, and an aggressive schedule, “Pride Jewel” began production on July 7, 2020, during the worldwide COVID 19 pandemic and with no vaccines available at that time. Due to 4D Legacy Studios’ rigid COVID 19 safety guidelines, top-notch cast, crew, and their dedication to excellence, the talented team completed this epic feature-length film in just two weeks.

Born into an Armenian family, Dilchanian immigrated to the US when he was 12 years old and saw his own father start his life over again. Years later, Armen attended a lavish Armenian wedding and thought what a great place it would be if someone wanted to pull off a heist!

Thus was born the idea for “Pride Jew-el,” a heist film that unites the glamor of the genre with elements of an immigrant narrative many Armenians and others will recognize.

Armen has an MFA in theater and an extensive background writing and producing plays in and around San Francisco, CA. He has also written and produced several short films. Pride Jewel is his first feature, and he hopes it will resonate with audiences far and wide.

Director Megan Louise Thill Megan Louise Thill is an actor, singer, and producer from Wisconsin with theater, film, dance, and casting experience. After working as a project manager for many years in healthcare IT, Megan enjoys producing and acting in feature and short films, commercials, and industrials in San Francisco. She is an alumni of the SFSU Cinema program where he began his career as a director of photography shooting short films. His experience ranges from independent features, documentaries to commercial and corporate work.

Cinematographer Jonathan Salazar Jona-than Salazar is a narrative cinematographer based in San Francisco. He is an alumni of the SFSU Cinema program where he began his career as a director of photography shooting short films. His experience ranges from independent features, documentaries to commercial and corporate work.

Films, Pride Jewel is his first feature, and he hopes it will resonate with audiences far and wide.

FILM, from page 12

Despite unprecedented challenges, and an aggressive schedule, “Pride Jewel” began production on July 7, 2020, during the worldwide COVID 19 pandemic and with no vaccines available at that time. Due to 4D Legacy Studios’ rigid COVID 19 safety guidelines, top-notch cast, crew, and their dedication to excellence, the talented team completed this epic feature-length film in just two weeks.

Born into an Armenian family, Dilchanian immigrated to the US when he was 12 years old and saw his own father start his life over again. Years later, Armen attended a lavish Armenian wedding and thought what a great place it would be if someone wanted to pull off a heist!

Thus was born the idea for “Pride Jew-el,” a heist film that unites the glamor of the genre with elements of an immigrant narrative many Armenians and others will recognize.

Armen has an MFA in theater and an extensive background writing and producing plays in and around San Francisco, CA. He has also written and produced several short films. Pride Jewel is his first feature, and he hopes it will resonate with audiences far and wide.

Director Megan Louise Thill Megan Louise Thill is an actor, singer, and producer from Wisconsin with theater, film, dance, and casting experience. After working as a project manager for many years in healthcare IT, Megan enjoys producing and acting in feature and short films, commercials, and industrials in San Francisco. She is an alumni of the SFSU Cinema program where he began his career as a director of photography shooting short films. His experience ranges from independent features, documentaries to commercial and corporate work.

Cinematographer Jonathan Salazar Jona-than Salazar is a narrative cinematographer based in San Francisco. He is an alumni of the SFSU Cinema program where he began his career as a director of photography shooting short films. His experience ranges from independent features, documentaries to commercial and corporate work.

Films, Pride Jewel is his first feature, and he hopes it will resonate with audiences far and wide.

FILM, from page 12

Despite unprecedented challenges, and an aggressive schedule, “Pride Jewel” began production on July 7, 2020, during the worldwide COVID 19 pandemic and with no vaccines available at that time. Due to 4D Legacy Studios’ rigid COVID 19 safety guidelines, top-notch cast, crew, and their dedication to excellence, the talented team completed this epic feature-length film in just two weeks.

Born into an Armenian family, Dilchanian immigrated to the US when he was 12 years old and saw his own father start his life over again. Years later, Armen attended a lavish Armenian wedding and thought what a great place it would be if someone wanted to pull off a heist!

Thus was born the idea for “Pride Jew-el,” a heist film that unites the glamor of the genre with elements of an immigrant narrative many Armenians and others will recognize.

Armen has an MFA in theater and an extensive background writing and producing plays in and around San Francisco, CA. He has also written and produced several short films. Pride Jewel is his first feature, and he hopes it will resonate with audiences far and wide.

Director Megan Louise Thill Megan Louise Thill is an actor, singer, and producer from Wisconsin with theater, film, dance, and casting experience. After working as a project manager for many years in healthcare IT, Megan enjoys producing and acting in feature and short films, commercials, and industrials in San Francisco. She is an alumni of the SFSU Cinema program where he began his career as a director of photography shooting short films. His experience ranges from independent features, documentaries to commercial and corporate work.

Cinematographer Jonathan Salazar Jona-than Salazar is a narrative cinematographer based in San Francisco. He is an alumni of the SFSU Cinema program where he began his career as a director of photography shooting short films. His experience ranges from independent features, documentaries to commercial and corporate work.
He trained for a career in the banking sector before returning to complete his secondary education, then pursued university studies in Braunschweig to become a teacher. From 1975 to 1981 he worked as an academic tutor and lecturer at the Bremen university, where he had settled. In 1981, Donat published his first work, a book on a

valuable source for historians and social scientists.

It was not clear to me what this meant, and all I could remember was my geography teacher declaring that Ararat was the highest mountain in the Caucasus and that German soldiers had fought there in the Second World War. Then he said, "A Jew can swindle ten Arabs, but an Armenian can swindle ten Jews." That was it. Nothing else. To me, the idea of a German imperial government having once spread over the Armenian people, in order not to incriminate its Turkish ally, continued to be a pawn of the Great Powers. Byzantines and Persians, Arabs and Turks have in turn subjugated and mistreated peoples, in particular the Armenians and Russian Jews. It was not clear to me what this meant, and all I could remember was what my geography teacher had said. So, I started to do some research on the Armenians. I was confronted with terrible events. It was not on the slaughter fields of Ver-

ation of the Armenian people..." Over the decades, Donat has contributed significantly to ac-

quainting Germans with this heritage, by organizing cultural events, like the Armenian Cultural weeks in Bremen, and the velation of freedom and the independence movement of the Ar-

menian region of Artsakh, which was not only annexed to Azerbaijan by the Soviet regime in 1920.

Today we are one Karabakh war (autumn 2020) further, but still no closer to the realization of the right to self-de-
termination in Artsakh. And it seems that in the shadow of the Ukraine War, which is occupying the attention of Europe almost completely, war and acts of violence in the South Caucasus are being once again "ignored."

With your engagement, dear Helmut, you have actively and effectively supported the movement for genocide recognition launched by the Armenian community in Germany as well as human rights organizations working here. We know of no other publishing house - even by comparison on the international stage - that has published as many books on the Armenian Genocide as yours; the following publications are currently available from Donat Verlag: http://www.donat-verlag.de/buch-kategorie.

"The Armenian people represent one of the oldest Christian cultures," he began. "Any population has accumulated so much suffering in the course of its history. It has consistently been a pawn of the Great Powers. Byzantines and Per-

sians, Arabs and Turks have in turn subjugated and mis-

treated it. That German imperial government however have not perished, but rather have survived and have preserved their cultural identity, bears testimony to a robust resilience to be found in almost no other people."

"It took another 20 years before I was to hear anything about Armenia again. At the time I was collaborating on a manuscript of the Bremen pacifist Ludwig Quidde, edited by Karl Holl, titled, The History of German Pacifism during the First World War. One of my tasks was to clarify facts that the contemporary reader might not be familiar with. For example, in November 1915 the General Meeting of the German Peace Society 'expressed its sympa-

thies for the suffering and mistreated peoples, in particular the Armenians and Russian Jews.' It was not clear to me what this meant, and all I could remember was what my geography teacher had said. So, I started to do some research on the Armenians. I was confronted with terrible events. It was not on the slaughter fields of Ver-

dan that the bloodiest chapter of the First World War had been written, but 'down in Turkey, far away.' In an extremely cru-
el manner, over one million Armenians were tortured to death in 1915-16; they were victims of an organized extermination and systematic killing. I was 30 years old at the time, and all I remember is that I heard anything about the first genocide of the 20th cen-
tury. I felt misled, was outraged, swore to myself that I would do something about it, and began to inform my-
self, read newspapers, visit museums, go to libraries. Unfortunately, many old newspapers, found collections of documents and set up an 'Armenian section' in my library. When a couple of years later I began to publish books, they soon includ-
ed pamphlets, booklets and writings on Armenia. Likewise, many others have contributed to breaking through the

Celebrating German Publisher, Human Rights Activist Helmut Donat on His 75th Birthday

Helmut Donat

Donat told this story 12 years ago to a gathering at a cultural event in a suburb of Bremen, an "Armenian Even-

ning." He entitled his speech, "Wounds from the Past – Impact on the Future." After sharing his own experience, he turned to the political reality of the day, issuing sharp criticism of the German government for kowtowing to Turkish government sensitivities, and refusing to recog-
nize the genocide.

"In the Federal Republic of Germany," he went on, "there are about 42,000 Armeni-

ans. They should know that we extend our hand to them and stand by them whenever from whatever quarters – the attempt is made to confuse public opinion and blame their grandparents and great-grandfa-
thers for the crimes committed against their people. And they should know that we do not stand in the tradition of those Germans who, out of loyalty to their Turkish allies, have betrayed truth and justice and have stifled freedom of opinion. In this sense," he explained, "the 'Armenian Evening' aims at recalling what happened and what must never happen again, and at the same time making clear that forgetting, silence and indifference – today as in the past – are accessories to crimes."

For Helmut Donat, such an "Armenian Evening" was a means of assisting Armenia and its people in building their future. "And we can help out even just by becoming ac-

quainted with their great heritage of literature, music, poetry and culture, by the Armenian people..." Over the decades, Donat has contributed significantly to ac-

quainting Germans with this heritage, by organizing such cultural events, like the Armenian Cultural weeks in Bremen, but, especially, by publishing works on Ar-

menian history, politics and rich culture. He has received numerous awards for his achievements. In April 1990, he was given the Bremen Villa Ichot’s Peace and Culture Prize in recognition of his editorial achievements "which demonstrate a commitment to peace on a high cultur-
al level." In May 1996, he got the Carl von Ossietzky Prize for Contemporary History and Politics. By spring 2007, his publishing house had produced over 300 books on contemporary history, with a focus on the peace movement, Nazism, the Armenian genocide, paci-

fism and the history of militarism, especially in Germany. Since then, the list of publications has continued to grow in quantity, quality and impact.

And, although he has reached an age at which many people retire into private life and tend their gardens, it is to be hoped and expected that Helmut Donat will pre-
serve his energy and determination, to continue producing meaningful, beautiful books.

Herzlichen Glückwunsch zum Geburtstag! or: Con-
gratulations on Your Birthday! Tessa Hofmann

The Bremen publisher Helmut Donat is celebrating his 75th birthday. And the Working Group Recognition Against Genocide for International Understanding (AGA e.V.) says thank you wholeheartedly: Thank You, dear Helmut, for having worked towards human rights, peace and justice as a publisher for 40 years. Your com-

mitment as a publisher for and with Armenians stems from your pacifist orientation. You have recognized that wars — including civil wars — are among those constellation that promote genocide and conflicts. This was the case in World War I in the Ottoman Empire as well as in World War II in Nazi-occupied Europe. You have reissued classics of German-language docu-

mentary works on the extermination of Ottoman Armeni-

ans, especially the correspondence of the German For-

eign Office published by Johannes Lepsius under the title "Germany and Armenia" in 1919 (reprint 1986), but also documentation of current violence against Armenians, including the one published in 1989 by the Armenische Kolonie zu Berlin e.V., the Armenian Apostolic Church Community of Berlin and the Federation of Armenian As-

sociations in the German-Speaking World, "Tanks against Perestroika: Documentation on the Conflict in and around Artsakh (Karabakh)." This work, published shortly before the beginning of the First Karabakh War (December 1991 - May 1994), helped many Germans to understand the struggle for freedom and the independence movement of the Ar-

menian region of Artsakh, which was finally annexed to Azerbaijan by the Soviet regime in 1920.

Today we are one Karabakh war (autumn 2020) further, but still no closer to the realization of the right to self-de-
termination in Artsakh. And it seems that in the shadow of the Ukraine War, which is occupying the attention of Europe almost completely, war and acts of violence in the South Caucasus are being once again "ignored."

With your engagement, dear Helmut, you have actively and effectively supported the movement for genocide recognition launched by the Armenian community in Germany as well as human rights organizations working here. We know of no other publishing house - even by comparison on the international stage - that has published as many books on the Armenian Genocide as yours; the following publications are currently available from Donat Verlag: http://www.donat-verlag.de/buch-kategorie.

The German Bundestag (Parliament) in June 2016 finally recognized the historical fact of the Ottoman geno-
cide against about three million Christians before, after and especially during the First World War, is therefore also thanks to you. Some matters, unfortunately, take a long time. We, the Working Group on Recognition, sub-
mitted the first petition for parliamentary recognition to the Petitions-Committee of the German Bundestag as ear-
ly as April 2000. As a historian, you are familiar with the staying power of history, the slowness and obstinacy of politicians, but also the power of perseverance. On your birthday, you can look back on many achievements which have boosted your perseverance and principledness. But at the same time, unfortunately, we still face many unresolved issues. Na-
tionalism and murder are again rearing their ugly heads. We wish our birthday is therefore also to know that you will continue to be healthy and strong at our side, and to be able to leaf through the latest books of your publishing house, which as always, you will print with attention and loving care.
Aurora Mardiganian, circa 1918

Aurora Mardiganian in 1988 interview

dememnor; with her deep knowledge of Khanjian’s as well as Egoyan’s work (she is one of the foremost scholars of Egoyan), Baronian was able to gently guide the discussion, making the end result quite fruitful and interesting for the audience assembled. Audience questions followed which sparked more discussion.

Khanjian’s work, with its subtitle “Performing Memory,” raised important questions about how the atrocities of the Armenian Genocide and the experiences of very real, though romanticized, people like Aurora Mardiganian can be remembered, how their stories can and should be told, and whether it is even possible to truly remember or tell these stories. Whatever one’s opinion about the merits of narrative storytelling and film as opposed to more avant-garde approaches, Khanjian, Baronian, and most of the rest of us would probably agree on one essential: we owe it to the survivors to at least make the effort, the attempt, to remember and tell their stories. In this respect, Khanjian’s work, which approached the subject matter with the utmost respect and with the desire to honor Mardiganian, cannot be seen as anything but successful.
Recipe Corner
by Christine Vartanian

Traditional Armenian Chorag
from TheArmenianKitchen.com

Robyn Kalajian from TheArmenianKitchen.com suggests this traditional Lenten or Easter recipe: Armenian Chorag. It contains mahlab (or mahlep), an aromatic spice derived from the ground kernel of the St. Lucie cherry. Prized across Greece, Turkey, Syria, Iran, and other Mediterranean and Middle Eastern countries, mahlab is often incorporated into breads and pastries.

“Mahlab makes a great addition to cakes, cookies, pies, brownies, muffins, cheese, and fruit salad, and is excellent in chocolate preparations. Treat mahlab like nutmeg. You don’t need too much for it to make an effect, but it can make all the difference between an ordinary dessert and something alluring. Many spiced desserts would benefit from a judicious application of the stuff, but using too much can cause bitterness. Like saffron and other more precious spices, mahlab is rather expensive. Most recipes call for a small amount, allowing a container to last for multiple bakes,” adds Robyn.

Mahlab, whole seed or powdered, is sold in specialty food shops (such as https://foodsofnations.com/product/mahlab-mehleb-or-mahlep-whole/- and via online retailers like https://snukfoods.com/products/whole-mahlab/) and via online retailers like https://snukfoods.com/products/whole-mahlab/?variant=14691811131504&currency =USD> Snuk Foods, both pre-ground and as whole kernels. Of course, most chefs and cookbook writers recommend buying the kernels whole and grinding them at home in order to capture the spice’s full aroma. It appears in Syrian string cheese—the plump, braided ropes of stretchy white cheese (similar to mozzarella) that come speckled with black nigella seeds. Not all recipes for the cheese, which is still commonly made at home, include the powdered kernel. But those that do benefit tremendously from its floral presence.

In Greek cuisine, mahlep is sometimes added to different types of holiday tourekli breads, including Christmas bread, the New Year’s vasilopita and the braided Easter bread called cheorog (or chorog) in https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armenian_cuisine—Armenian and paskalya çöreği in https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turkish_cuisine—Turkish. In https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turkey—Turkey, it is used in https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Po%C3%81%C3%A7a%C3%A7a—pağaça scones and other pastries. In the Arabic Middle East, it is used in https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ma%27amoul—ma’amoul scones. In https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egypt—Egypt, powdered mahlab is made into a paste with honey, sesame seeds and nuts, eaten as a <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dessert>—dessert or a snack with bread. In England, it is used in shortbreads, and in sugar syrups to go over fruit salad or to flavor whipped cream in the same way as you would use vanilla. (https://ottolenghi.co.uk/en/shafters-and-gifts/spices).

Liliana Myers, who is the pastry chef at Safta, Alon Shaya’s modern Israeli restaurant in Denver, incorporates mahlab powder into Safta’s date-filled ma’amoul shortbread pastries. She also uses it in less traditional ways: in a flourless almond cake served on Passover and in an Ottolenghi-inspired Persian love cake offered for Valentine’s Day.


Armenian Chorag Courtesy of Robyn Kalajian

“Chorog, the traditional Armenian braided yeast roll, can be sweet or savory. Savory rolls may be a bit intimidating for those who have not baked bread before, but they are also quite rewarding.”

“Chorag, like many other traditional Armenian treats, contains mahlab, a spice often used to flavor homemade cheese—the plump, braided ropes of stretchy white cheese that is still commonly made at home. In the recipe, mahlab is used to flavor the bread for a savory treat.”

“Chorag is a traditional Armenian Easter recipe: Armenian Chorag. It contains mahlab (or mahlep), an aromatic spice derived from the ground kernel of the St. Lucie cherry. Prized across Greece, Turkey, Syria, Iran, and other Mediterranean and Middle Eastern countries, mahlab is often incorporated into breads and pastries. But those that do benefit tremendously from its floral presence.

In Greek cuisine, mahlep is sometimes added to different types of holiday tourekli breads, including Christmas bread, the New Year’s vasilopita—Vasilopita, and the braided Easter bread called cheorog (or chorog) in https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armenian_cuisine—Armenian and paskalya çöreği in https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turkish_cuisine—Turkish. In https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turkey—Turkey, it is used in https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Po%C3%81%C3%A7a%C3%A7a—pağaça scones and other pastries. In the Arabic Middle East, it is used in https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ma%27amoul—ma’amoul scones. In https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egypt—Egypt, powdered mahlab is made into a paste with honey, sesame seeds and nuts, eaten as a <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dessert>—dessert or a snack with bread. In England, it is used in shortbreads, and in sugar syrups to go over fruit salad or to flavor whipped cream in the same way as you would use vanilla. (https://ottolenghi.co.uk/en/shafters-and-gifts/spices).

Liliana Myers, who is the pastry chef at Safta, Alon Shaya’s modern Israeli restaurant in Denver, incorporates mahlab powder into Safta’s date-filled ma’amoul shortbread pastries. She also uses it in less traditional ways: in a flourless almond cake served on Passover and in an Ottolenghi-inspired Persian love cake offered for Valentine’s Day.


Armenian Chorag Courtesy of Robyn Kalajian

“Chorog, the traditional Armenian braided yeast roll, can be sweet or savory. Savory rolls may be a bit intimidating for those who have not baked bread before, but they are also quite rewarding.”

“Chorog is made with a yeast dough and is often served with hot pita bread. The dough is formed into a braided roll and baked until golden brown. The result is a soft, pillowy bread that is perfect for snacking or serving with approval.

“Using the dough, you can create a variety of shapes, such as a heart, star, or wreath. This recipe uses a traditional Armenian shape called chorag. The dough is shaped into a horse-shoe or “U” shape. Place the shorter piece of dough in the center of the “U,” and one-third (5 inches) of the dough. Shape the longer piece of dough into a horse-shoe or “U” shape. Place the shorter piece of dough in the center of the “U,” and begin braiding the 3 strips of dough.

“Place braided dough on an ungreased baking sheet. Cut the dough into 5-inch portions. Place each portion on a baking sheet. Bake until golden brown, about 25-30 minutes.

“Remove the baked dough from the baking sheet and let it cool on a wire rack. Once cooled, slice the dough into 1-inch thick slices. Serve as is or with butter or jam.

“In conclusion, the traditional Armenian braided yeast roll, also known as chorag, is a delicious and versatile bread. It can be enjoyed on its own or as a base for various spreads or condiments. Whether you choose to make it sweet or savory, it is sure to be a hit with family and friends.”

INGREDIENTS:

1 1/2 lb. unsalted butter
1 cup whole milk
1 large egg
1 package dry active yeast
1/4 cup sugar
2 teaspoons active baking powder

PREPARATION:

1. Melt butter in a saucepan. Add milk and heat to a gentle simmer (do NOT boil).
2. Beat egg and add to cooled milk.
3. In a small bowl, dissolve yeast in 1 cup warm water (about 105-110°F). You can check the temperature with a food thermometer, or by putting a drop on your wrist. If it feels comfortable to your wrist, the temperature is good to go. Set aside.
4. Mix the sugar, salt, spices, and baking powder together. Set aside.
5. Place 5 cups of the flour into a large mixing bowl. Combine the blended spice mixture into the flour. Add the milk-egg mixture to the dry ingredients. Stir in the dissolved yeast and mix well.
6. Place dough on a lightly floured work surface and knead dough until it is smooth and elastic, about 10 minutes. (This can also be done in an electric stand mixer using a dough hook, but only mix for about 2 minutes.) If the dough seems a bit sticky, add some of the extra 1/2 cup flour that wasn’t used earlier.
7. Place dough in a large, clean bowl, cover with plastic wrap, and let sit for 2 hours.
8. Remove plastic wrap. Refrigerate for 2 hours.
9. Remove dough from refrigerator and allow to sit at room temperature for 1 hour.
10. Shape the dough into a horseshoe or “U” shape. Place the shorter piece of dough in the center of the “U,” and begin braiding the 3 strips of dough.
11. Place braided dough on an ungreased baking sheet. Cut the dough into 5-inch portions. Place each portion on a baking sheet. Bake until golden brown, about 25-30 minutes.
12. Remove the baked dough from the baking sheet and let it cool on a wire rack. Once cooled, slice the dough into 1-inch thick slices. Serve as is or with butter or jam.

NOTE: Before you begin, test the baking powder to make sure it is “active.” To do this, simply sprinkle some baking powder into a small amount of tap water. If it is active, the baking powder will fizz and foam. For this recipe and how-to-make video, go to: https://thearmeniankitchen.com/savory-or-sweet-its-still-chorag/
CALENDAR OF EVENTS & PROGRAMS

CALIFORNIA

JUNE 5 — Save the date. The Armenian Assembly of America will mark its 50th anniversary with a program on Sunday, at 3:30 pm, at the Jonathan Club. This special event will highlight five decades of the Assembly’s influential achievements in advocacy, education, and awareness on Armenian issues. For more information visit https://www.armenianassembly.org/

CONNECTICUT

APRIL 23 — The Armenian Genocide Commemoration Committee of Connecticut will host a program on the 109th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, on Saturday, at 10:30 am. Armenian Church of the Holy Resurrection, 1910 Stanley Street, New Britain, CT. Following the service, a program featuring marinated and memorable speakers, and a memorial service will be held at 12:30 pm. To register or for more information, contact the Armenian Church of New Britain at 860-562-3677.

MAY 1 — Chris Bohjalian and Stephen Kurkjian in Conversation at the Armenian Heritage Park. A screening of Kursk by director and native Armenians Chris Bohjalian and Stephen Kurkjian, a conversation about their life’s work, and a musical celebration of the beauty and soul of the Armenian people, with music by award-winning composer Astghik Martirosyan. Sponsored by the Northeastern University Department of Music, tickets are available online at: http://www.nwewaitforyourreturn.com

MAY 7 — In Celebration of the 109th Anniversary of Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Celebrate Public Art! Saturday, 1 pm. Labyrinth Day: Walk As One in Peace and Harmony. Joining people in cities and towns in countries worldwide followed by reception to celebrate the abstract sculpture and all its configurations. Welcome: Ted Touloukian, AIA, Principal, Touloukian Touloukian Inc. Trustee, Boston Society of Architects Foundation. Greetings: Karin Goodfellow, Director of Public Art, City of Boston. Reception is hosted by Starbucks. RSVP appreciated hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

MAY 7 — Yere Pointe Church’s Armenian Church Youth Organization of America (ACTOYA) is sponsoring a Mother’s Day Armenian Concert. Doors open 6:30 p.m. Concert at 7 p.m. Featuring singer Margar Yeghiazaryan, duduk and clarinet player Mher Mnatsakanyan, dhol and percussion player Markos Shabahazyan and keyboardist Gegham Margaryan. Tickets adults $60, 18 and under $40. For tickets go to: http://www.hyepointearmenianchurch.org or contact Sarah Tatian at 978-652-8448, sarahyatiant@yahoo.com SEPTEMBER 21 — Gala Benefit Celebrating Contributions of Our Nation’s Immigrants. InterContinental Hotel, Boston. 6pm Honoring Stephen Kurkjian, Distinguished Citizen, Leader, Pulitzer Prize Journalist and Author; and Lillian Avedian, journalist and poet who works as a staff writer for the Armenian Weekly. She will speak on “Narrating Genocide: Journalism without facts, Art without truth.”

MASSACHUSETTS

MAY 7 — “We Wait for Your Return — A Love Letter to Armenia,” evening of photography, storytelling, and music is a theatrical experience will take you on a unique journey from Watertown to Armenia through the intimate stories and evocative imagery of American photographer Winslow Martin. It is an odyssey of memory and memories of Der Dajad Davidian, who set Winslow on his road to Armenia. Northeastern's Blackman Auditorium, Eli Hall, 342 Huntington Ave, Boston, on Saturday, at 8 p.m. A visual and musical celebration of the beauty and soul of the Armenian people, with music by award-winning composer Astghik Martirosyan. Sponsored by the Northeastern University Department of Music, tickets are available online at: http://www.nwewaitforyourreturn.com

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.

RHODE ISLAND

APRIL 24 — The Philadelphia Armenian Intercommunal Committee presents a commemorative program. Dr. Vartan Mattosian will discuss, “The Politics of Naming the Armenian Genocide.” Students from the Armenian Sisters Academy will also participate in the program. The event will be held at St. Gregory’s Armenian Church, 8701 Ridge Ave, Philadelphia, on Sunday, 3 p.m. A reception shall take place after the program. All are welcome.

RHODE ISLAND

APRIL 20 — 107th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. Cultural committee of the Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church in cooperation with the Armenian Martyrs Memorial committee presents “Solemn Memorial Service and Concert of Armenian Patriotic Songs” on Wednesday, at 7 pm. In Egavian Hall (70 Jefferson St., Providence, RI). Featuring Armenian Chorale of Rhode Island, Soloists. Free admission. Fellowship following concert. All invited!

APRIL 24 — 107th Commemoration of the 1915 Armenian Genocide on Sunday, at the Armenian Martyrs’ Memorial site at North Burial Ground, Providence, at 12:30 p.m. with the participation of the three major Armenian churches and organizations. Stepan Piligian is the host speaker. All are welcome.

Armenian Rock Band Lav Eli Launches East Coast Tour

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — The popular Armenian rock band Lav Eli this week announced a concert tour of select U.S. East Coast cities this spring. The tour will kick off in Richmond, VA on April 27, followed by performances in Washington, DC on April 28, New York, NY on April 29, Boston, MA on April 30, and conclude in Portland, ME on May 1.

Lav Eli was formed in 1996 by Vanador, Armenia natives Mher Manukyan and Gor Mkhitarian. Previously from the band SNACK, they picked up two members from the group ALQ in David Grigoryan and Vahe Terteryan and formed their classic lineup for a demo recording in 1997 entitled “The First Lav Album.” This limited edition cassette of two hundred units was printed in Armenia and had 21 songs — ten in English and eleven in Armenian. It became a local underground classic in the hands of kids and adults alike who craved an original Western rock sound that was homegrown and Armenian.

In 2020, Lav Eli updated its lineup, now consisting of Mher Manukyan (guitar/vocals), Gor Mkhitarian (guitar/vocals), Gagik Tadevosyan (guitar/backup vocals), Tigran Voskanyan (bass), Shoghag Manukyan (cello), and Arvardan Parumazyan (drums) of the Tumbl. Lav Eli’s website – https://lavelmusic.com – features videos, photos, and more.

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

MAY 18 — Chris Bohjalian and Stephen Kurkjian in Conversation at the Armenian Museum of America. Chris Bohjalian will be in conversation with Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Stephen Kurkjian (author of Master Thieves) at the Armenian Museum of America discussing The Lighthouse and what words and reading and books can mean to the soul. This is a free event and registration is not required. Thursday, 7 p.m. Armenian Museum of America, 65 Main St., Watertown.

MAY 19 — The Armenian Assembly of America Honor Gala Talian O’Reilly with Distinguished Humanitarian Award at a program at 6 p.m. at Hyatt Regency/Cambridge, 575 Memorial Dr, Cambridge. For tickets, donations or more information, visit https://www.armenianassembly.org/

MAY 20-21 — Armenian Memorial Church Fair Friday, 5-8 p.m., Saturday 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Delicious Armenian chicken, lish and beef kebab dinners served under the tent or take-out, Armenian baked delicacies. Armenian Memorial Church, 32 Bigelow Ave., Watertown. For information call: 617-923-0498. Armenian Memorial Church, 32 Bigelow Ave., Watertown.

JUNE 8 — Armenian Night at the Pops will feature violinist Diana Adamyan as the featured soloist with the Boston Pops Orchestra, Keith Lockhart conducting. Wednesday, 8 p.m. Symphony Hall, Boston. Presented by the Friends of Armenian Culture Society. Details to follow.

_Charlotte_
There is a law of physics which also applies to politics: for every action, there is a corresponding reaction.

The 44-day war between Armenia and Azerbaijan ended in a ceasefire brokered by Russia on November 9, 2020. At that time, Moscow haphazardly declared a ceasefire and then attempted to sign on to the ceasefires, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia. The agreement favored Azerbaijan, which recaptured most of Karabakh, in addition to the Azerbaijani lands the Armenians had captured and held as insurance in the 1990s war, and also Russia, which regained a foothold in Azerbaijan, through the introduction of 2,000 Russian peacekeepers.

But what was achieved globally in addition to the local arrangements was Russia’s control of the situation, sidelining the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group and the West, which expressed a preference for international peacekeepers, specifically from the Scandinavian countries.

Now that Russia has been muted in the West and its nemesis, Ukraine, the opportunity for a reaction from the West has arrived. Indeed, the European Union has taken the lead to achieve peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan, this time, pushing Russia to the sidelines.

Now, however, the EU has been performing its tasks lukelike at best, Russia complicates the performance of the EU and the Minsk Group. The French and Armenian sides added, however, that the visit had been planned in advance and was not a reaction to Mr. Lavrov’s statement. However, Michel assessed the meeting as a success with positive signs that meeting signifies that Armenia is caught in a geostrategic trap.

Following the summit, the three sides signaled a positive movement toward a peace agreement for the Caucasus, although none of the statements touched upon the core issue of Karabakh, which seems barren.

Ever since the November 9, 2020 declaration, President Aliyev has been claiming that there is no longer a Karabakh issue and that the Minsk Group has an important role to play in bringing peace to Karabakh. This was an unusual rebuke, given that the Armenian government representatives never publicly react to the statements of the Russian side, no matter how provocative they might be.

In an indirect response to Mr. Lavrov’s remarks regarding the demise of the OSCE Minsk Group, the French co-chair of the group, Brice Roquefeuil, spoke up in Yerevan this week to signal that the group is still alive and well and in pursuit of its mission in Karabakh. The French and Armenian sides added, however, that the visit had been planned in advance and were not a reaction to Mr. Lavrov’s statement.

Thus, the Kremlin believes that the West is stealing the show during which time three Armenian soldiers were killed and a strategic elevation in Parukh (Karabakh) under its control to the Azerbaijani forces. This statement was meant to assure his counterpart that Armenia is forever a partner, and as the main foreign investor, we will continue to look for the new prospects that will ensure the sustainability of our trade, and create new production facilities and jobs.

This statement was meant to assure his counterpart that Armenia’s expectations will be met. Armenia’s representatives remained uncomplained about the poor performance of the Russian peacekeepers in Karabakh, which had ceded a strategic elevation in Parukh (Karabakh) under its control to the Azerbaijani forces, during which time three Armenian soldiers were killed and a dozen wounded. The incident was characterized as a “minor border incident,” which was being investigated for an entire month.

Referring to the resumption of the Armenian side, Mr. Lavrov said, “For us, these circumstances are not completely clear. I would not get ahead of myself and make a final judgement. We are convinced that our Armenian friends fully trust the Russian peacekeepers.”

Unfortunately, the Russian peacekeepers have been deficient in the performance of their duties on many occasions, by trying to placate the Azerbaijani side whenever it is unhappily Armenians going about their lives—for example, while cultivating their lands. Such dereliction of duty occurred when Armenian blew up the gas line to Karabakh, leaving the Armemians living in the enclave to freeze for two weeks in inclement weather. While their performance has been lackluster at best, Russia has always been fishing for compliments from Armenians to say how wonderful the Russian soldiers have been performing their tasks and that Armenia is forever grateful.

The climax of the conference came when Mr. Lavrov referred to the role of the OSCE in settling the Karabakh issue: ‘Our French and American partners [the so-called partners in this group] in a Russo-ophbic frenzy and in an effort to cancel everything related to the Russian Federation, said that they would not communicate with us in that format. This is their right; if they are ready to sacrifice their interests in the settlement of Karabakh and in Transcaucasia as a whole, this is their choice.’

When Mr. Lavrov cast doubt in the future of the OSCE, Mr. Pashinyan reacted by saying that international community believes that the Minsk Group has an important role to play in bringing peace to Karabakh. This was an unusual rebuke, given that the Armenian government representatives never publicly react to the states of the Russian side, no matter how provocative they might be.

In an indirect response to Mr. Lavrov’s remarks regarding the demise of the OSCE Minsk Group, the French co-chair of the group, Brice Roquefeuil, spoke up in Yerevan this week to signal that the group is still alive and well and in pursuit of its mission in Karabakh. The French and Armenian sides added, however, that the visit had been planned in advance and were not a reaction to Mr. Lavrov’s statement.

Thus, the Kremlin believes that the West is stealing the show in the Caucasus from the Russians and Armenia is collaborating with the Western powers. There is a tug of war between the two camps and Armenia is caught between them. Hopefully, Armenia’s nascent diplomacy can cope with this complex situation and come out unscathed.

Although Pashinyan and Aliyev have placed separate calls to President Putin, informing him about the Armenia’s diplomatic situation, the Kremlin is expected to visit the Kremlin on April 19, to hold further talks with the Russian leader, who certainly will repri- mend his guests for steering Armenia toward the West.

As the East-West confrontation continues, particularly continued on next page
The dispute continues between those who want to re-
ward Turkey and those who wish to condemn it, because of its contradictory positions on the Russia-Ukraine war.

The Wall Street Journal (WSJ) published on April 7 a detailed article by Jar-
ed Malin and Elvan Kivlican, titled: “Superpowers, Seaside Apartments and Subsidies Full of Cash: Russians Pour Money Into Turkey.” As a result of the sanctions imposed by the West on Russian banks and businesses, tens of thousands of Russians have fled to Turkey with suitcases full of dollars to Turkey as long as the money is legal.” Such scrutiny, if it ever existed, very quickly disappeared, ignoring the requirement that foreigners obtain a residency permit before being allowed to open a bank account. Ac-
cording to the WSJ, “at a single branch of one state-owned bank in Istanbul, Russians have opened more than 600 accounts in recent weeks.” The WSJ reported that “Turkey’s central bank took in about $3 billion in just two days in mid-March. ... That money was likely largely composed of deposits from Russians, said Omer Gencal, an economist and former executive at HSBC, who monitors Turkey and other major Turkish banks. Gül Güll, the chief executive of Istanbul’s real-estate company Golden Sign, told the WSJ: ‘the newly arrived Russians are buying as many as four apart-
maments in our towers, in order to register about 1,000 euros of citizenship. ‘Currently, out of 10 flats [apartments] we sell, six or seven are bought by Russians, said Ms. Güt. They are mostly businessmen, wealthy

ens, some of them oligarchs.’”

Russian oligarch Roman Abramovich moved two of his superyachts to Turkish ports in recent weeks. Former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev docked his 74-meter-long (249 ft.) vessel called Universe in Istanbul last week, according to the WSJ.

Furthermore, the WSJ reported that “the search-engine company Yandex, classified-ad site Avito, commercial bank Tinkoff and software firm DataArt collectively had more than 1,000 workers fly to Turkey. About 900 Yandex workers flew to Turkey shortly after the beginning of the war, though around 300 of them have since left.”

Visa and Mastercard’s decisions to shut down operations in Russia have provoked Russians to the “Russian Mir” payment system, which works at certain locations in Turkey. “We accept Mir” signs have begun cropping up in grocery stores around Istanbul, the WSJ wrote.

“Middle-class Russians have mostly bought a few thousand dollars at a time, either in exchange for euros, or in the belief that this could continue to operate in Turkey. One popular service is KoronaPay, which allows people to wire money out of Russia and withdraw money in Turkey and a range of other countries. The company allows transfers worth more than 15,000 euros, equivalent to $16,400, as long as customers verify their source of income, ac-
cording to the company’s website, reported the WSJ. “Volkan Celil yrek, a money changer in Istanbul’s Ladeli neighborhood, which is frequented by Russian traders and one of the only areas where exchange offices buy and sell Rubles,” told the WSJ, “I sold at most 100,000 Rubles at a time. But there are those who bought millions.”

In the meantime, Turkey’s economy is benefitting from the flow of Russian money, while its political opponents claim that the military conflict is driving millions of Russians from Western Turkey and those who want to condemn it, because of its contradictory positions on the Russia-Ukraine war.
CRIMES, from page 19

Cosmopolitan individuals, both were always held by the gravitational pull of their provincial pasts. And as for those pasts, both were punctuated by pogroms in both the countryside and cities.

Soon after Lemkin arrived at the university in 1921 — Lauterpacht had left two years earlier — a former Turkish minister, Mehmed Talaat, was shot dead on a street in Berlin. His assassin, Soghomon Tehlirian, was avenging his family, as well as more than one million fellow Armenians, who had been murdered by the Turkish government during the war. The Allies, who had sentenced Talaat to death in absentia, sought Talaat’s extradition, but Germany refused the requests. As for Tehlirian, he had been arrested by German authorities and awaited trial for murder.

Lemkin found the paradoxical nature of these crimes and punishments as both morally and legally troubling. In an exchange with one of his law professors, he asked why the Armenians could not try Talaat for the massacre.

"Consider the case of a farmer who owns a flock of chickens," the professor replied. "He kills them and this is his business. If you interfere, you are trespassing." Blunting that the victims were not chickens, Lemkin asked, "Is it a crime for Talaat to kill a man, but it is not a crime for his oppressor to kill more than a million men?"

Lemkin’s effort to answer that question eventually led to his coining of a term for a crime, which, until then, did not have an adequate name. The term had to both capture our attention and convince us that something new and awful had exploded into our world, something that entailed “a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves.”

To give a name to the crime, this man of many languages fused the Greek derivative geno, meaning “race” or “tribe,” to cide, the Latin derivative for “kill.” This unexpected joining of these words gave the world the word for the unholiest of acts: genocide. Lemkin settled on this word while the Nazis were launching the Final Solution. This was of more than academic interest to Lemkin. Though he had, by then, made his way to the United States, the lives of nearly his entire family, as with Lauterpacht’s, were extinguished in what the historian Timothy Snyder has memorably described as the “bloodlands.”

Though Lemkin did not mean for the term genocide to be exclusively used to categorize the Nazi project to eliminate Jews from the world, it became forever intertwined with this effort. This was, as historians like Samantha Power point out, a tragic confusion. Lemkin’s aim was to prevent such atrocities from ever reaching the point where a state has the time and means to build state of the art death factories. And yet, as Power writes, the link between genocide and Auschwitz “would cause endless confusion for policymakers and ordinary people,” who assume genocide happens only when death factories are already belching the ashes of dead men, women and children towards the heavens.

This is where the perspectives of Lemkin and Lauterpacht diverge. The latter, who had settled in Great Britain in the early 1920s and would assist at the Nuremberg trials, focused on the individual victim of such crimes. Yet Lemkin, who also attended the trials (but in a vaguely defined capacity), instead insisted on the primacy of the group. In his recent book “East West Street,” the renowned international lawyer and former U.S. ambassador to the Philippines Shira Scheindlin considers the clash between these two concepts.

He writes that, whereas Lauterpacht held that people are “individual human beings who are made up of individual human beings,” Lemkin argued that this ignores what, in fact, happened to the Armenians. Whereas, he says, in the Holocaust, people are killed not as individuals, but because they belong to a particular group. For Lauterpacht, the danger in Lemkin’s “group approach” is that, in Sands’ phrase, it would “create the very conditions that Lemkin was trying to protect us from — namely, it would pit one group against another.”

Lauterpacht’s approach is that crimes against humanity, “which concerns crimes committed against individuals. Usually many, many individuals. And yet, as Sands acknowledges, Lemkin was also right: Armenians in Turkey and Jews in Europe, Tutsis in Rwanda and Muslims in Bosnia were killed en masse because, well, they were seen as nothing more than a mass. It’s as if the individual effectively dissolves in the alchemic in the group. — a group that another and dominant group does not wish to share the world with.

For Sands, part of whose family also hailed from Livos, the tension between these two perspectives seems inevitable. Lauterpacht was right, in his embrace of individual rights, to reject tribalism, but Lemkin was also right, in his concept of genocide, to insist that murderous tribalism not only existed, but would flourish if the law ignored it.

This tension is more than inevitable; it is tragic. But as we try to make sense of events now unfolding in Ukraine, it also makes sense to try and hold on to both concepts. Several things are already clear, most immediately that appalling crimes have been committed by Russian soldiers and that these crimes have not troubled Vladimir Putin. It is less clear — and this is crucial — that he has either ordered or encouraged these acts with the intent of “annihilating an entire people.”

This becomes yet more problematic given Putin’s attitude towards the legitimacy of an independent Ukraine. Such a posteriori, he insists, does not exist. Instead, it is a fiction wrought by Soviet rulers and weaponized by those he dismisses as “Nazis” who are now seeking to carve out this slice of Russian land from the underbelly of Mother Russia.

For this reason, his “special military operation” more closely resembles a crime against humanity than a genocide. The former, according to the International Criminal Court, applies to "crimes such as murder, extermination, rape, persecution and all other inhumane acts of a similar character (willfully causing great suffering, or serious injury to body or to mental or physical health), committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, with knowledge of the attack.”

To define Putin’s action as a crime against humanity, and not a genocide, does not diminish its appalling nature. Moreover, as George Orwell would have reminded us, at a time when Putin and his apologists use language to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, getting words right becomes more vital than ever.