

Karabakh Official Laments ‘Lack of Support’ by Armenia

By Artak Khulian

STEPANAKERT (RFE/RL) — Armenia has not only stopped being the guarantor of Nagorno-Karabakh’s security but is also not providing the Armenian-populated territory with adequate diplomatic support, a senior official in Stepanakert complained on Monday, April 4.

Hayk Khanumyan, the Karabakh minister for local government and public infrastructures, said this is what is fueling calls by some Karabakh Armenians for a referendum on becoming part of Russia.



Hayk Khanumyan

“The Republic of Armenia used to be the guarantor of our security, and in essence it cannot perform that function anymore,” Khanumyan told RFE / RL’s Armenian Service in an interview. “The Russian peacekeeping contingent does not have a mandate to ensure such protection. So people are just trying to raise security issues. They want to be protected.”

“Defense is not just about weapons and ammunition,” he said. “It’s a whole set of measures. Diplomacy, diplomatic service



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—HAYK KHANUMYAN
KARABAKH MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURES

is an important part of that, and it is quite dire straits these days. I’m talking about Armenia.

“Often times not only does it not carry out tasks but also does not receive tasks. The bodies formulating [Armenia’s] see SUPPORT, page 3

Armenia, Azerbaijan Leaders Hold Talks Amid Renewed Tensions

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan were scheduled to meet on April 6 for European Union-mediated talks in Brussels, amid renewed tensions over Karabakh.

statement said.

“Armenia and Azerbaijan will also address issues related to prospects for a peace agreement between them,” it added.

Pashinyan also spoke with Russian Pres-

talked about “ongoing steps to ensure security and stability in Nagorno-Karabakh” and the “tense situation” there resulting from last week’s Azerbaijani incursion into the disputed territory.



“I plan to meet on April 6 in Brussels with the European Council President Charles Michel and Azerbaijani President [Ilham Aliyev],” Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan told a cabinet meeting on Thursday, March 31.

He added that he hoped “to agree on all the questions related to the start of peace talks” with Baku.

“Armenia once again declares that it is ready to sign a peace agreement with Azerbaijan and to start negotiations without delay,” Pashinyan said.

Aliyev said the two countries “must advance towards peace and to sign, as soon as possible, a peace agreement”.

“Azerbaijan has tabled basic principles for the agreement,” he told a news conference.

The EU said that high-ranking Azerbaijani and Armenian officials met in Brussels on Wednesday to prepare for the summit.

The officials “reviewed the political and security situation and the full spectrum of issues between Armenia and Azerbaijan,” a

“ARMENIA ONCE AGAIN DECLARES THAT IT IS READY TO SIGN A PEACE AGREEMENT WITH AZERBAIJAN AND TO START NEGOTIATIONS WITHOUT DELAY,”

—NIKOL PASHINYAN

ident Vladimir Putin on Friday, April 1, regarding the conflict zone.

The Kremlin reported that they continued “the exchange of opinions on maintaining stability in the Nagorno-Karabakh region.” It said they both stressed the need for “strict observance” of Armenian-Azerbaijani agreements brokered by Moscow during and after the 2020 war over Karabakh.

A statement on the phone call issued by the Armenian government said the two men

Russia accused Azerbaijan of violating the ceasefire regime after Azerbaijani forces seized a village in eastern Karabakh and surrounding territory on March 24. They reportedly withdrew from the village on Monday but continue to occupy nearby hills.

Putin discussed the situation in that area with Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev in separate phone calls reported on Thursday. Pashinyan told him that the Azerbaijani side may be planning “new provocations.”

The 2020 conflict that killed more than 6,500 people ended with a Russian-brokered ceasefire that saw Armenia cede swaths of territory it had controlled for decades and Moscow deploy peacekeepers to the mountainous region.

On Monday, April 4, Armenia’s security council accused Azerbaijan of “preparing the ground for fresh provocations and an offensive on Nagorno-Karabakh.”

It urged Baku to “immediately start talks on a comprehensive peace treaty.”

Akçam Appointed to UCLA Armenian Genocide Research Program within Promise Armenian Institute

By Aram Arkun

Mirror-Spectator Staff

WATERTOWN — After a period of expansion, Armenian studies in the United States appeared to have entered a slump or slow period. This seems to be changing again, with the establishment of new academic centers, chairs and programs, especially in California. At the University of California, Los



Angeles (UCLA), the Promise Armenian Institute is playing a supportive role in this movement. Most recently, it announced the creation of the Armenian Genocide Research Program as one of its component parts, with Taner Akçam appointed as its inaugural director.

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Space Medicine Fellowship Program Welcomes First Inaugural Fellow



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ARMENIA

NEWS from ARMENIA

Quake Hits Near Ashotsk Village in Armenia

YEREVAN (Panorama.am)

— The Territorial Survey for Seismic Protection of Armenia's Ministry of Emergency Situations detected a magnitude 2.6 earthquake in Shirak Province of Armenia on Tuesday, April 5, at 1:27 p.m. local time.

The earthquake hit 18 kilometers south-east off the village of Ashotsk at a depth of 10 kilometers. The tremor measured 3-4 on the MSK scale at the epicenter.

The jolts were felt in Shirak Province.

U.S. Emb. Urges Azerbaijan To Release POWs

YEREVAN (Panorama.am)

— On March 29, US Ambassador to Armenia Lynne Tracy met with relatives of Armenian servicemen who were captured in 2020 and 2021 — some of whom have received long sentences from Azerbaijani courts, some whose fates are currently unknown, the U.S. Embassy in Armenia said in a [statement](#) on April 5.

The discussion focused on human rights issues, including the eight point of the November 2020 trilateral ceasefire statement by Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Russia on the exchange of prisoners of war, hostages and other detained persons, and dead bodies as well as the Geneva Convention.

“We urge the release of all prisoners as well as increased efforts to obtain information about the fate of missing servicemembers, including from the 1990s, noting the pain of families who do not know their loved ones’ whereabouts or fate,” the statement said.

Ex-Minister Tonoyan Subjected to ‘Emotional Abuse,’ Lawyers Say

YEREVAN (Panorama.am)

— The lawyers of Armenia's former Defense Minister Davit Tonoyan insist their client is being held in a discriminatory manner.

Tonoyan was arrested on September 30 on charges of “fraud and embezzlement of large sums of money” as part of a criminal probe into supplies of allegedly faulty ammunition to the Armenian army.

“In addition to the fact that the court hearings are held behind closed doors, they are held once every 2 months for various technical reasons,” they said in a statement on April 4.

“Moreover, the next court hearing is scheduled for May 2, 2022. We assess it as psychological abuse and punishment for the arrested persons,” the lawyers said.

“Davit Tonoyan also stated in the Court of Appeals that he had made the right decision on the acquisition of missiles, which at that stage helped enhance the capacity of the Armenian military, a striking proof of which is that contrary to the claims that the purchased missiles were not used during the 44-day war and the training, the evidence obtained in the criminal case has proved the contrary.

Karabakh Authorities Say Azerbaijan Is Destroying Armenian Cultural Heritage in Parukh, Karaglukh

STEPANAKERT (Public Radio of Armenia) — Azerbaijan is destroying the Armenian cultural heritage in Parukh and Karaglukh and resorting to open falsifications, Artsakh's Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport said in a statement this week.

In the statement, the government says, “On March 24, 2022, as a result of Azerbaijani aggression, the area around the village of Parukh in the Askeran region of the Artsakh Republic, the former settlement of Karaglukh and the homonymous height, were occupied by the enemy, and the Azerbaijani Armed Forces immediately proceeded to the well-known script of the

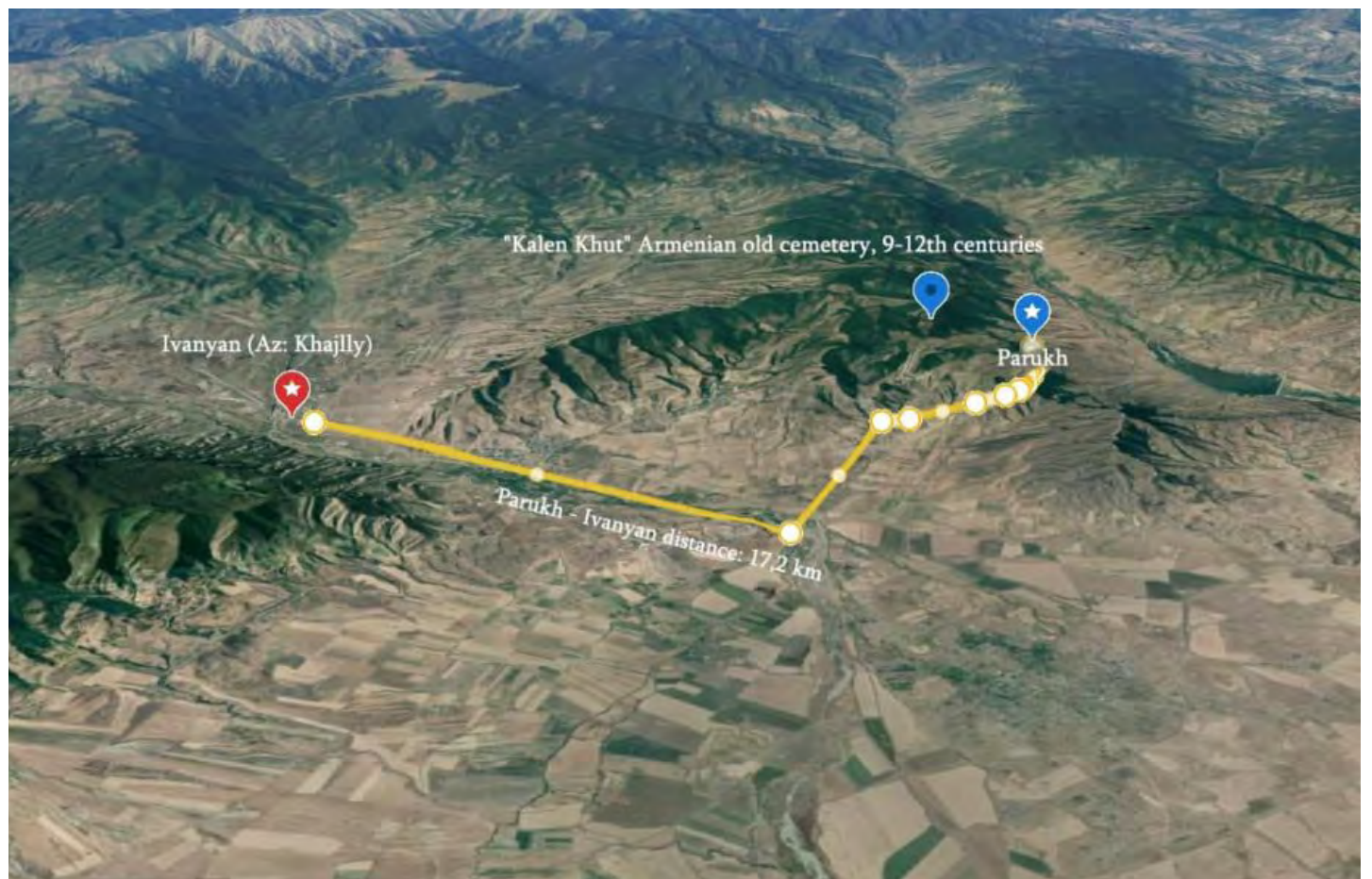
destruction of the Armenian historical and cultural heritage in the occupied territory.

“Apart from its strategic importance, the area is also important for its unique historical-cultural and historical-natural environment. According to the government list of immovable monuments of culture and history, about 20 monuments are officially registered in the above-mentioned territories, including 2 churches (one of them is the 13th-century Holy Mother of God church), the famous Shikakar-Karaglukh fortress, cultural monuments of archeological value, cemeteries, *khachkars*, tombstones. The Shikakar cave is also located in here, where a research was conducted by

the Azokh international archaeological expedition in 2011.”

The statement suggested that Azerbaijani media outlet AZTV on March 30, 2022 showed ancient human remains and said they were fresh corpses of Azerbaijanis murdered by Armenians.

The government also noted that appeals to the United Nations and its cultural arm, UNESCO, remain unanswered. “We regret that to date UNESCO, despite its commitments and mission, has not sent a fact-finding mission to the occupied territories of Artsakh, and does not exert significant efforts to prevent the commission of new crimes by Azerbaijan,” the statement noted.



Map of Parukh and Karaglukh

Vanadzor Oppositionists Decry ‘Illegal Power Grab’

By Karine Simonian

VANADZOR, Armenia (RFE/RL) — Opposition groups in Vanadzor on Monday, April 4, accused Armenia's leadership of seeking to nullify their victory in last December's municipal election through what they see as an unconstitutional bill.

The city has had no mayor since Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's Civil Contract party was defeated in the election.

Civil Contract won only 25 percent of the vote there, compared to 39 percent polled by an opposition bloc led by former Vanadzor Mayor Mamikon Aslanyan. The bloc teamed up with the opposition Fatherland party, giving them a majority of seats in the local council empowered to elect the head of the community.

Aslanyan thus looked set to regain his post lost in October. But ten days after the ballot, he was arrested on corruption charges rejected by him as politically motivated.

Later in December, Armenia's Administrative Court banned the new Vanadzor council from holding any sessions until July this year. It cited an appeal against the election results lodged by another pro-government party.

The Armenian parliament hastily passed late last week government-backed legal amendments allowing Pashinyan to appoint

an acting mayor of the city. The authors of the bill said it is aimed at addressing the post-election “disruption of normal governance” in Vanadzor and possibly other communities.

Opposition lawmakers dismissed that explanation, condemning the bill as an attempt to overturn local election results.

Aslanyan's Vanadzor-based political allies echoed those claims. One of them, Fatherland member Vahe Dokhoyan, said that Pashinyan's administration violated the Armenian constitution and may now be preparing to force another municipal election later this year.

“Why did they push such a bill through the National Assembly? In order to install a person of their choice as community head,” he told RFE / RL's Armenian Service.

Dokhoyan also claimed that the government was behind the court injunction blocking sessions of the Vanadzor council.

“What keeps them from allowing the court or telling it, as they always do, to let [the council] meet and elect a mayor?” he said.

Vahagn Hovakimyan, one of the authors of the amendments affiliated with Civil Contract, said it is aimed at addressing “disruption of normal governance” in such communities.

“We have such a problem in Vanadzor at the moment,” Hovakimyan said during a short parliament debate held under a so-

called “urgent procedure.”

Opposition lawmakers dismissed the official rationale for amending the law. They insisted that Pashinyan is doing everything to retain control over Vanadzor and possibly other communities against the will of local voters.

“We are discussing an issue which solely applies to a community or communities where [the ruling party] failed to take power,” said Agnesa Khamoyan of the Hayastan alliance.

“If the authors of this bill were a bit more honest they would call it a bill on disenfranchising Mamikon Aslanyan and the people of Vanadzor,” charged another Hayastan parliamentarian.

Four other communities were also left in limbo as a result of nationwide local elections held on December 5. Pashinyan's party was defeated or failed to win outright there. Opposition politicians and human rights campaigners in Yerevan accused the authorities of sabotaging the election of their new mayors to prevent them from falling under opposition control.

In one such community comprising the town of Vartenis and surrounding villages, police cordoned off the municipal administration building in early January to prevent a local opposition figure, Aharon Khachatryan, from taking over as mayor. Khachatryan finally managed to take office last month.



ARMENIA

Catholikos of All Armenian Receives British Lawmakers

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) — Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, this week received members of the UK-Armenia Friendship Group of the UK Parliament, headed by Tim Loughton. Armenian Ambassador to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland Varuzhan Nersesyan was also present at the meeting.

Welcoming the visit of the delegation of the UK-Armenia Friendship Group to Armenia, the Catholicos of All Armenians expressed his appreciation for their support and constant attention to the protection of the rights of the people of Artsakh. His Holiness expressed his concern over the new encroachments on the right of the people of Artsakh to live in peace, the ongoing hostilities, as well as the protection of the Armenian historical and cultural heritage. The Armenian Patriarch emphasized the international community’s consistent efforts to return the captives.

Karekin II noted with satisfaction the close cooperation between the UK-Armenia Friendship Group and the Armenian community of Great Britain.

Loughton, in turn, attached importance to making efforts for the establishment of peace in Artsakh, ensuring the right of the Artsakh Armenians to a secure life, and expressed readiness to bring his support to the Armenian people in the British Parliament.

On the occasion of the visit, Karekin



Members of the British delegation, including Baroness Caroline Cox, third from right, visiting with Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II.

II expressed his special appreciation to House of Lords, for her constant support for the protection of the free and independent life of Artsakh Armenians in various international bodies.

Georgian Delegation Visits Armenia

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) — A delegation led by Speaker of the Georgian Parliament Shalva Papuashvili was in Armenia on a two-day official visit.

On April 5 they visited Tsitsernakaberd Memorial Complex in Yerevan, accompanied by Ruben Rubinyan, a deputy speaker of the Armenian parliament and head of the Armenia-Georgia Friendship Group, the parliament press service said.

The members of the delegation laid a wreath and flowers at the Eternal Flame perpetuating the memory of the Armenian Genocide victims. Afterwards, they got acquainted with the exhibits documenting the massacre of the 20th century in the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute.

President Vahagn Khachaturyan received the delegation later in the day. Khachaturyan noted that such meetings give special dynamics to the development and

further deepening of cooperation between the two countries and should be as frequent as possible. He stressed that this visit is of special importance, as it takes on the 30th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between Armenia and Georgia.

In the context of establishing security and stability in the region, President Khachaturyan presented Armenia’s long-standing efforts to establish peace, emphasizing the protection of the rights of the Armenians of Nagorno Karabakh.

Expressing gratitude for the reception, Papuashvili congratulated Khachaturyan on assuming the presidency. He expressed his support for the efforts for long-term peace in Karabakh, emphasizing that they are in favor of resolving the issues through dialogue, are ready to play a role and contribute to the matter.



The Georgian delegation at the Armenian Genocide Monument

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foreign policy, whose orders the diplomatic service is supposed to execute, are confused or do not operate normally on the issue of Artsakh and defense.”

Khanumyan spoke two days before Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan’s scheduled talks with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev that will be hosted by European Council President Charles Michel. The talks are expected to focus on an Armenian-Azerbaijani “peace treaty” sought by Azerbaijan.

Baku wants the treaty to be based on five elements, including a mutual recognition of each other’s territorial integrity. Pashinyan publicly stated on March 31 that Yerevan is ready to negotiate a deal along these lines.

Pashinyan did not explicitly mention the question of Karabakh’s status, speaking instead of the need to protect “the rights of Nagorno-Karabakh’s Armenians.” His remarks were construed by Armenian opposition leaders and other critics as a further indication that the Armenian government is ready to recognize Azerbaijani sovereignty over Karabakh.

Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan insisted on April 1 that Yerevan will seek to include the issue of the status on the agenda of negotiations on the peace accord.

On March 26, Karabakh’s leadership appealed to Russian President Vladimir Putin to deploy more Russian soldiers in Karabakh. It said that Russia 2,000-strong peacekeeping contingent is too small to carry out its mission.

The appeal came two days after Azerbaijani forces seized a village in eastern Karabakh and surrounding territory before engaging in deadly fighting with Karabakh Armenian troops. The fighting stopped following the peacekeepers’ intervention.

Khanumyan said that the current situation in the conflict zone leaves the Karabakh Armenians with no choice but to primarily rely on their military and other security forces.

The Russian peacekeepers were deployed in Karabakh under the terms of a Russian-brokered ceasefire agreement that stopped the Armenian-Azerbaijani war in November 2020.

INTERNATIONAL

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

France Says Situation in Karabakh Is 'Disturbing'

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — French Ambassador to Armenia Anne Louyot has described the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh) as "disturbing."

Louyot made the remarks at a meeting on April 5 with Vice President of the National Assembly Ruben Rubinyan, who provided details about the situation in the Karabakh, created as a result of the invasion of the Azerbaijani armed forces.

According to Rubinyan, the policy of Azerbaijan is aimed at the eviction of Armenians from Artsakh.

Azerbaijan has made incursions into Nagorno-Karabakh, with the last incident leaving three Armenian soldiers dead and at least 14 others injured. On March 24, Azerbaijan stormed into the zone of the responsibility of the Russian peacekeepers stationed in the area and is refusing to completely withdraw its forces from strategic heights.

Mourinho Campaigning to Keep Henrikh Mkhitaryan Amid Contract Talks

ROME (Panorama.am) — Coach José Mourinho is campaigning to keep Roma star Henrikh Mkhitaryan amid contract talks, The Cult of Calcio reports.

Mkhitaryan decided the contest between Sampdoria and Roma with his fourth goal of the season. His contract runs out in June.

The coach invited the parties to reach an agreement in his post-game remarks to Sky: "I want him to stay, and I think the management and the player are on the same page. Mino Raiola is enamored with his clients. If Mkhitaryan wishes to continue playing with Roma, his agent will make it happen."

Shushi Named 'Cultural Capital of Turkic World'

SHUSHI (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Shushi which came under Azerbaijan's control in the war in 2020, has been declared the "cultural capital of the Turkic world" for 2023, Caspian News reports.

The announcement was made at a ministerial meeting of the International Organization of Turkic Culture, known as TURKSOY, in the Turkish city of Bursa.

During the war, the Holy Savior (Ghazanchetsots) Cathedral in Shushi was struck twice by Azerbaijan, which resulted in the collapse of part of the roof, injuring people sheltering inside and journalist covering the hostilities.

Human Rights Watch (HRW) said back then that the two attacks "suggest that the church, a civilian object with cultural significance, was an intentional target despite the absence of evidence that it was used for military purposes."

In 1920, the Armenian half of Shushi was destroyed by Azerbaijani armed forces, which also defiled the cathedral of the Holy Savior and other Armenian heritage sites.

Armenia Signals Willingness to Cede Control over Karabakh

By Joshua Kucera

The Armenian government is effectively conceding that Armenians will not be able to retain control of Nagorno-Karabakh, paving the way for Azerbaijan to regain full sovereignty over the territory and boding an uncertain future for the area's current ethnic Armenian residents.

The concession has not been made explicitly, but rather via a conspicuous shift in official rhetoric from Yerevan.

After Azerbaijan in mid-March offered a new framework for resolving the conflict, which included a mutual recognition of the territorial integrity of both countries — which would in effect mean Armenia recognizing Azerbaijani sovereignty over Karabakh — Armenia said it did not object, adding only that it also expected some "guarantee of the rights and freedoms" of the Armenians living there.

"For us, the Karabakh conflict is not a territorial issue, but a matter of rights," Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan said.

That followed statements in recent months that were less explicit, but in the same vein, by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. He has emphasized that the UN recognizes Karabakh as part of Azerbaijan and said the rights of the former Azerbaijani residents of the region had to be respected.

For decades, the question of Karabakh's status has been the core sticking point between the two sides. Both sides have presented it in nearly existential terms, with what diplomats working on the issue call "mutually exclusive positions and completely contrary narratives."

The recent shift in rhetoric amounts to a concession that Yerevan will not be able to secure a status for Karabakh outside Azerbaijan, but "in a way vague enough to be acceptable to the general public," said one Yerevan-based analyst.

Officially, Yerevan denies that it is conceding anything. "Armenia's position is that the status of Nagorno-Karabakh should be discussed and it should consider ensuring all the rights of Armenians living in Nagorno-Karabakh," a senior Foreign Ministry official said on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly. "Saying 'all' means including their right to self-determination as well."

It's not clear what the shift would mean for the roughly 150,000 Armenians who had been living in Karabakh since Armenian forces won control of the territory in a war in the 1990s. Until the 2020 war, in which Azerbaijan retook most of that territory, Baku had been saying it

was willing to offer some sort of special autonomous status for the region as long as Armenians recognized it as Azerbaijani territory.

But following Azerbaijan's 2020 military victory, President Ilham Aliyev immediately rescinded those promises, gloating that the ceasefire agreement ending the fighting did not contain any promises of autonomous status for the region. "The status went to hell. It failed; it was shattered to smithereens. It is not and will not be there. As long as I am president, there will be no status," he said.

The Armenian concession of territorial control, however, seems to have been offered in the hopes that Azerbaijan will reciprocate with some kind of special rights for the Armenian population.

The specific nature of those rights is a big open question "because one of the key rights has always been self-determination. [...] But if they are willing to think about that in terms other than the traditional Karabakhi-Armenian view that it means something essentially leading to independence, then there may be some room to negotiate," one foreign diplomat familiar with the negotiations told Eurasianet on condition of anonymity.

"That [the rights of Armenians in Karabakh] continues to be the core question of the whole basket of issues that continue to divide Armenia and Azerbaijan," the diplomat continued. "Most of them can be resolved if the issue of the future of the Armenian population could be addressed. That is the issue that started the conflict and ... the issue that needs to be addressed to resolve the conflict."

But if the two sides managed to work out a position under which Armenians would stay in Karabakh under the Azerbaijani flag, it would represent an exception to the otherwise zero-sum game of territorial control in the region.

The rights under discussion for Karabakh's Armenians could be cultural rights, like the ability to have schools and media in the Armenian language, said Benyamin Poghosyan, head of the Yerevan think tank Center for Political and Economic Strategic Studies. "Putting the emphasis on rights means that the Armenian government is ready to view Artsakh as part of Azerbaijan if Azerbaijan provides some rights and some autonomy," he told Eurasianet.

One Baku-based analyst said that the government there may be interested in offering some kind of political rights as well, but would still stop short of a special status for the region. "After the war, it seemed that returning to the '90s with an administrative status for Nagorno-Karabakh would

be impossible, but the government would like to offer a minimum plan like talking about cultural rights. And if there is an appetite from the local Armenians, then the discussion could turn into something bigger than cultural rights," the analyst told Eurasianet on condition of anonymity.

But Baku is only interested in discussing the issue with Russia, which has a 2,000-strong peacekeeping mission in Karabakh and which Azerbaijan sees as the real power. "The issue is that Azerbaijan doesn't see Armenia as a counterpart when discussing the fate of local Armenians. They see Russia as the party with whom they will discuss the future of the region," the analyst said.

Conceding sovereignty over Karabakh would represent a dramatic turn from Yerevan, and particularly Pashinyan.

While Karabakh declared independence in the 1990s, that status has not been recognized by any country, including Armenia. Negotiations since then were conducted under a framework stipulating that following a peace agreement, the status of the region would be determined by the will of its people.

But for Armenians, it was anathema to think of Karabakh as anything other than Armenian. When Pashinyan declared, in 2019, that "Artsakh is Armenia, and that is it," it was seen as undiplomatic coming from the prime minister but nevertheless representative of how most Armenians thought.

When Azerbaijan launched its attack in September 2020, Pashinyan suggested that Armenia may formally recognize Karabakh's independence, but did not follow through.

Following the launch of the war, a concept in international law called "remedial secession" gained popularity among Armenians as a possible means of gaining recognition of Karabakh's independence. Pashinyan himself repeatedly endorsed the idea, but the last such mention was on June 21, 2021, at an election rally.

So what has changed?

"Their assessment of the situation on the ground," the foreign diplomat suggested. "They saw what happened in 2020, they don't want that to happen again, so they are looking at different options."

Armenia also is trying to advance the process of normalization with Turkey, in which Azerbaijan is playing an outside role in influencing its ally, Turkey. "Progress on that [Armenia-Turkey] track requires progress on the other [Armenia-Azerbaijan] track as well," the diplomat said. "They're not explicitly [linked], but realistically there has to be some progress on both tracks for them to go forward."

Armenian Genocide Monument Unveiled in Sydney

SYDNEY (PanARMENIAN.Net) — A monument was unveiled this week in Sydney's Northern Beaches dedicated to the lives of past, present and future Armenians.

The eight-meter-high monument was unveiled at the Frenchs Forest Bushland Cemetery, in the presence of Jonathan O'Dea, Speaker of the New South Wales (NSW) Legislative Assembly and Chair of the NSW Armenia-Australia Parliamentary Friendship Group, Armenian-Australian community and religious leaders and members of the community.

The monument was commissioned by Northern Metropolitan Cemeteries Land Manager and designed by Armenian-Australian architect, Andre Vahagn Vartan-Bog-



The new Armenian Genocide monument in Sydney

hossian paying tribute to the 1.5 million Armenian lives lost during the Armenian

Genocide, perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire between 1915 and 1923.

Boghossian explained: "The stone base of the monument represents Armenian historic culture and knowledge, as a tree rooted in the earth where the Armenians of the past rest."

"Portrayed in the break of the stone is the Armenian Genocide of 1915, an event which defines the identity of all Armenians today and when culture was once on the brink of coming to a halt. Out of the trunk blossoms the continuation of this culture in a new form, no longer in stone but in bronze. It is a new culture, augmented by the past and flowering in Australia," he added.



INTERNATIONAL

Ani Hovannisian Shows 'Hidden Map' Documentary, Speaks in UK Parliament

LONDON — Filmmaker Ani Hovannisian was invited to speak and share her documentary, "The Hidden Map," in the British Parliament on March 23. The gathering was attended by the All Party Parliamentary Group for Armenia, with invited guests including Armenia's Ambassador Varuzhan Nersesyan and his wife Narine Malkhasyan, Prof. Richard Hovannisian, and Scottish explorer Steven Sim, who is featured in the film.

The event, which marked the film's inaugural presentation in the United Kingdom, was organized and hosted by Chair of the APPG, Parliamentarian Tim Loughton, and initiated by Annette Moskofian, Chair of the Armenian National Committee UK.

Hovannisian prefaced the film with a reminder about the continuing cycle of human destruction when colossal crimes as those inflicted upon Armenia and Artsakh are allowed to go unrequited. "The power of memory against forgetting is a great weapon," she added, "and this film is for all of us and for the people whose voices cannot be heard."

The diverse group watched "The Hidden Map" attentively, as an Armenian-American granddaughter of Genocide survivors journeys to her lost ancestral homeland to face the forbidden past. She encounters a Scottish explorer there, and together, they dig beneath the surface of modern-day Turkey, uncovering buried secrets, sacred relics, daring resilience, and the hidden map. A robust, constructive discussion followed, particularly about the current state of Armenian affairs, Turkish denial, world response and lack thereof, and building grassroots relationships between people, while trying to affect State policy.



Group photo of some of the participants of The Hidden Map event in UK Parliament.

Bishop of Coventry, Lord Christopher Cocksworth called it an extraordinary piece of work, adding that he was particularly moved by the people in the film: "The State will not acknowledge it, but we can't give up on the people."

Alix Buckerfield de la Roche, advisor to the Chiefs of Defense, declared, "How to build community post-genocide is very difficult. What you've done in this movie is critically important in terms of building

In her closing remarks, Ani Hovannisian quoted former UK Prime Minister H.H. Asquith (1908-1916): "To stand aside with stopped ears, folded arms, with an averted gaze when you have the power to intervene is to become not a mere spectator, but an accomplice." She continued, "And that's what we have done as a world. We have watched and allowed it to happen over and over again. They knew here that it was wrong, and every piece of evidence one ever needs is in your archives, my archives, our grandparents' stories, and countless books." Speaking also of the current atrocities in Artsakh, she noted, "It is a continuation of man's inhumanity to man that is not addressed," concluding, "We have to get beyond power and might, and do what is right. Thank you, because you are the voices here of truth and humanity, and we need the world not to forget."

The group topped off the evening with personal exchanges, Karas Armenian wine, and photographs of the historic gathering, just days before an APPG delegation was scheduled to depart for Armenia.



Richard Hovannisian and daughter Ani outside of Big Ben just before entering Parliament (which is under Big Ben).



Armenia's Ambassador to the UK, Varuzhan Nersesyan and filmmaker Ani Hovannisian in the UK Parliament.

Loughton commented, "That film was absolutely fascinating. The fact that so many sacred sites that have meant so much to so many generations of Armenian Christians are completely neglected or proactively destroyed as we saw in the film is heartrending." MP Fiona Bruce, the Prime Minister's Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief, added, "Thank you for allowing me to understand more about the very sad history of so many parts of Armenia and for drawing this history to a much wider audience."

community after genocide." In his words of gratitude to MP Tim Loughton, Steven Sim, Ani Hovannisian, and especially Ani's father, Professor Richard Hovannisian for his lifelong dedication to genocide scholarship, documentation, and teaching, Ambassador Nersesyan stressed, "This documentary is the result of such great dedication, and reminds us of the tasks ahead... The Genocide is not only about the past. It's about contemporary times and the prevention of future atrocities and crimes."



Parliamentarian Tim Loughton, Scottish explorer Steven Sim, ANC UK Chair Annette Moskofian, filmmaker Ani Hovannisian, Armenia's Ambassador to the UK, Ambassador Varuzhan Nersesyan, his wife, Narine Malkhasyan, Professor Richard Hovannisian

Community News

NAASR Panel Shows Ukraine Quagmire Is Spilling Over into Armenian Security

By Harry Kezelian
Mirror-Spectator Staff

BELMONT, Mass. — On Thursday, March 31, the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) held a virtual panel discussion titled “The Ukraine War and Armenia(ns): Immediate Impacts and Repercussions.”

Dr. Vicken Cheterian (History/International Relations, University of Geneva), Dr. Nerses Kopalyan (Political Science, University of Nevada – Las Vegas), and Dr. Anna Ohanyan (Political Science/International Relations, Stonehill College), served as panelists discussing the impact that the war in Ukraine is having on the Armenian world.

Introduced by NAASR director Marc Mamigonian, the panel was moderated by community activist and member of the NAASR Board of Directors, Stepan Piligian.

First to speak was Cheterian, who opened with the comment that “the Russian invasion has been full of surprises.” One surprise, at least in the minds of many in the West, was that Putin would actually make good on his threats to invade Ukraine. The assumption by key analysts and foreign policy advisers was Putin was bluffing to obtain concessions, said Cheterian, crediting President Biden as one of the few who actually took Putin at his word.

The second surprise, he said, was that while Putin has been “very meticulous” and “a strong technician” in the past who understood “the balance of forces,” the Putin who is invading Ukraine is a different man; ideological and bitter. Cheterian also noted that the Russian military performance in Ukraine has been subpar.

The Russians themselves were in for another surprise, said Cheterian; he claims they didn’t expect such a strong show of unity between the US and Europe in support of Ukraine.

The result of this invasion, Cheterian said, is a new phase of strong polarization in Europe. While prior to the war, there had been some voices in Western Europe supporting Putin — both among right-wing populist groups and some intellectuals — today, such viewpoints have been marginalized, he explained.

Looking at Turkey, the war did not bring a very dramatic change, Cheterian stated. Turkish policy is the same; they are maintaining their balancing act between a rejuvenated NATO and Russia. Turkey tries to portray itself as a mediator. But while they make declarations against the invasion, they continue to do business with Russia and have imposed sanctions. Azerbaijan is also playing a balancing act, said Cheterian.

Therefore, said Cheterian, it seems that countries in the Middle East and elsewhere are not getting caught up
see EDUCATION, page 11



Dr. Haig Aintablian stands atop the Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center’s helipad. The training program will begin in July and consist of activities such as simulating a Mars mission. (Sandra Ocampo/Daily Bruin)

UCLA’s New Space Medicine Fellowship Program Welcomes First Inaugural Fellow

By Anna Dai-Liu

LOS ANGELES — The University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) in March launched its newest space medicine fellowship to train flight surgeons for future expeditions into space.

UCLA will run the program alongside SpaceX, NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory and the California Institute of Technology, letting fellows continue practicing emergency medicine at UCLA and gain expertise in space and biomedical engineering. Dr. Haig Aintablian, the program’s inaugural fellow, will begin the two-year program in July, according to a press release from UCLA Health.

Aintablian, who is also an emergency medicine resident at Olive View-UCLA Medical Center, said his previous studies in biology and chemistry led to a passion for medicine and understanding of how the human body functions. He eventually chose to specialize in emergency medicine because of those doctors’ extensive range of knowledge and the fast-paced environment of the emergency room.

“Seeing the strokes, the heart attacks — everything was happening in the ER,” he said.

However, his interest in space since childhood led him to astrophotography — taking photos of the night sky — a passion that continued throughout medical school, he said. As a resident, Aintablian has also been researching the impact of low or zero gravity conditions on the human body, particularly over sustained periods of time, said Dr. Scott Lundberg, medical director of Olive View-UCLA Medical Center Department of Emergency Medicine.

see MEDICINE, page 7



Dr. Haig Aintablian stands in front of the entrance of the emergency room at Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center. Aintablian is the first ever fellow in UCLA’s new space medicine fellowship program, meant to train emergency medicine physicians in treating and diagnosing diseases in space. (Shane Yu/Daily Bruin)

Maloney and Bilirakis Spearhead Measure To Secure \$10 Million for Armenian Genocide Education

WASHINGTON — Representatives Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) and Gus Bilirakis (R-FL) are introducing the Armenian Genocide Education Act, a bipartisan measure — introduced in the wake of official U.S. Congressional and Presidential recognition of this crime — to fund Library of Congress educational programs about the history, lessons, consequences, and ongoing costs of the Armenian Genocide, reports the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA).

This landmark legislation seeks to provide \$10 million in funding over five years for the Library of Congress to educate Americans about Ottoman Turkey’s systematic and deliberate state-sponsored mass murder, national dispossession, cultural erasure, and exile of millions of Armenians, Armenians, Greeks, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Syrians, Arameans, Maronites, and other Christians, between 1915 and 1923.

“The ANCA thanks Congresswoman Maloney and Congressman



Rep. Carolyn Maloney, Rep. Gus Bilirakis

Bilirakis, welcoming their introduction of this thoughtful and timely bill, brought forward in the wake of official U.S. recognition of the 1915 Genocide and amid renewed efforts by Azerbaijan and Turkey to complete this crime against the Armenian nation,” remarked ANCA Chairman Raffi Hamparian.

“This federal legislation represents a responsible next-step, building upon American remembrance, alerting Americans to the ongoing threat of genocide, and ensuring that future generations benefit from the lessons of this crime. The ANCA fully supports this bill and looks forward to this measure being passed by Congress and signed into law by the President,” added the ANCA Chairman.

Building upon the 2019 passage of H.Res.296 and S.Res.150 — which specifically rejected any official U.S. association with Armenian Genocide denial — the Armenian Genocide Education Act seeks to counter discourse and propaganda that claims that Ottoman Turkey’s systematic and deliberate state-sponsored mass murder, national dispossession, cultural erasure, and exile of millions of Christians between 1915 and 1923 did not take place.



COMMUNITY NEWS

ACYOA Seniors Hold 2022 National Lenten Retreat

KANSASVILLE, Wis. — During the weekend of March 25-27, 2022, the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America (ACYOA) gathered 35 young adults from across the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, for its 2022 ACYOA Seniors National Lenten Retreat.

The participants were joined by Diocesan clergymen and laypeople for an enriching retreat focused on spiritual reflection and fellowship.

The retreat was underwritten by the ACYOA Central Council, covering all costs of the program for participants, including lodging and meals at the retreat center.

Participants arrived on Friday, March 25, happy to be reunited once again with old friends for the first time in a long time. For some of the weekend’s attendees, the last in-person ACYOA ministry that they took part in was also at the St. Iakovos Retreat Center: the ACYOA Seniors National Fall Retreat held in November 2019.

Bishop Daniel Findikyan, who spent the entire weekend with the ACYOA Seniors, was overjoyed by the smiles and emotions expressed by the participants as they all re-connected.

The retreat kicked off Friday evening with a series of icebreakers and fun team-building exercises led by ACYOA Central Council Ministries and Outreach co-coordinators Melissa Fanizza and Ani Misirliyan. Participants were then asked to reflect upon their Lenten season journeys, filling the walls of the St. Iakovos Retreat Center with notes on what Great Lent meant to them.

The evening concluded with a Vespers service and reflection led by Fr. Mesrop Parsamyan, the Diocesan Director of Ministries, setting the tone for a weekend retreat focused on disconnecting from the outside



35 young adults from across the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, for the 2022 ACYOA Seniors National Lenten Retreat.

world and being present in their spirituality.

Saturday morning, retreat participants kicked off a full day of workshops with a Matins service led by Fr. Guregh Hambarzumyan of St. John the Baptist Church (Greenfield, WI). Kathryn Ashbahian, Program Administrator of the Eastern Diocese’s Department of Youth & Young Adult Ministries, led the first session of the day entitled “To Whom Do I Belong?” In a current world where human attention is constantly divided, this session offered participants the chance to reflect upon the distractions they encounter on a daily basis and relate that to a passage from Henri J. M. Nouwen’s book, *The Return of the Prodigal Son*.

Kalayjian of St. Mesrob Church (Racine, WI), led a session titled “Holy Week at a Glance.” Kalayjian spoke about the intricacies of Holy Week services and gave participants the opportunity to dive deeper into various moments of Holy Week by tying together how those moments are depicted through iconography, hymns, and the Holy Bible.

A key component of the season of Lent, and one of five circles of the ACYOA, is service. Coming into the weekend, retreat participants were asked to bring socks for donation to two homeless shelters serving hundreds of men, women and children in Wisconsin and Illinois. Following dinner on Saturday evening, the participants spent time writing heartfelt messages on cards to tie to the pairs of socks. The hundreds of pairs were then collected and delivered by Fr. Andreas Garabedian of St. Gregory the Illuminator Church (Chicago, IL) and Fr. Yeprem Kelegian.

Saturday evening’s Vespers service was celebrated by Fr. Garabedian. The powerful service combined various forms of prayer used in the Armenian Apostolic Church, helping to convey the importance of continual prayer in a distracted world and the power of taking in God’s light and passing said light on to others in our communities. Saturday evening concluded with a campfire filled with treats, music, games and laughs amongst all of the participants.

On Sunday morning, the group wrapped up the retreat by participating in the Divine Liturgy, celebrated by Fr. Mesrop Parsamyan, with the sermon offered by Bishop Daniel. After a closing brunch and session reflecting on the retreat at large, the group departed St. Iakovos Retreat Center with a renewed energy and light to share with their families, friends and peers. The ACYOA Central Council sends its heartfelt gratitude to all of our Diocesan clergy who dedicated their time over the weekend to help deliver a wonderful retreat experience.

Saturday’s second session was led by Bishop Daniel and entitled “Building up the Body of Christ: In Living Color.” The session was marked by an engaging, back-and-forth discussion between Bishop Daniel and the retreat participants as they dissected a unique icon of Mary and Jesus, at the time of Jesus’ birth.

Service to Others

Following lunch, participants were introduced via Zoom to Sarah Stites, development officer of Ayo!, the Fund for Armenia Relief (FAR) fundraising platform driving local solutions to local challenges across Armenia. Sarah shared her life story as a diasporan living in Armenia and gave updates on Ayo!’s impactful projects. ACYOA Seniors participating in this summer’s Armenia Service Program will have the opportunity to volunteer in a community project with Ayo!

Later on Saturday afternoon, Fr. Avedis

UCLA’s New Space Medicine Fellowship Program Welcomes First Inaugural

MEDICINE, from page 6

Most emergency medicine residents enter professional practice after completing their four years, Lundberg said. However, like Aintablian, some choose to enter fellowships to pursue specific interests or to find jobs in specific fields.

Dr. Gregory Hendey, chair of the Department of Emergency Medicine, said that Aintablian first approached him about starting the space medicine fellowship.

“He saw the rapid increase in an interest in private space exploration and the need for medical expertise to accompany that increased interest and the shortage of people who really know much about space medicine,” he said.

Space medicine, unlike medicine on Earth, involves looking not only at new diseases unique to space conditions but also how illnesses on Earth, such as kidney stones or appendicitis, might present differently in space, Aintablian said.

For example, astronauts outside of the earth’s protective atmosphere are exposed to higher levels of radiation than people on Earth, Hendey said.

As more people go into space for longer periods of time, doctors and researchers will need to develop criteria to diagnose both new and existing diseases in space, Aintablian said. Training courses such as a planned Mars analog, which would simulate the geography and technological constraints of a Mars expedition, would allow doctors to practice medicine in those unique conditions.

Space medicine also poses challenges

because of the limited resources available. Aintablian said that he hopes the engineering training included in the fellowship will allow space physicians to develop medical devices that are both lightweight and easy to use.

However, Lundberg said regularly working with limitations qualifies emergency physicians for such a position, which is why they are so sought out by enterprises such as SpaceX.



“One of the really important skills that emergency physicians have to acquire is the ability to sort of improvise to handle unexpected situations to make do with say, less than ideal equipment or less than ideal situations,” he said.

For now, Aintablian said he looks forward to merging two of his greatest passions. Though he aims to become a flight surgeon, he also plans to continue working part time in the ER. If given the chance to go to space, he added, some of his research interests would include examining how people age in space and how the human species might evolve if people live in space or on other planets for extended periods of time.

As for the fellowship, it will continue evolving year by year, depending on Aintablian’s experiences as well as whether or not interest grows, Hendey added.

Aintablian encourages students interested in space medicine or other seemingly niche topics to continue pursuing their passions.

“This isn’t like the Wright Brothers’ first flight anymore,” Aintablian said. “People are starting to take off, people are starting to fly.”



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Sunday April 24, 2022 at 1:30 p.m.

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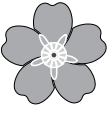
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309 Main Street, Fort Lee, NJ 07024
Sponsored by ANC of NJ



COMMUNITY NEWS

Akçam Appointed to UCLA Armenian Genocide Research Program within Promise Armenian Institute

APPOINTMENT, from page 1

Akçam will be leaving his position as Ka-loosdian Mugar Professor in Modern Armenian History and Genocide at the Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies of Clark University, in Worcester, Mass., and assuming his new post on May 1 of this year.

Promise Armenian Institute

The Promise Armenian Institute (PAI) was established in late 2019 as part of the UCLA International Institute through a \$20-million bequest from the estate of Kirk Kerkorian. Dr. Ann R. Karagozian was appointed as its inaugural director in 2020, and Hasmik Baghdasaryan began working as fulltime deputy director in July of that year. Karagozian, a faculty member at UCLA for almost 40 years, is a distinguished professor of mechanical and aerospace engineering in the UCLA Samueli School of Engineering, but also has held a number of administrative and leadership roles, including as chair of the UCLA Academic Senate and interim vice chancellor for research for the entirety of UCLA. The experience, connections and awareness of university life she acquired as a consequence of these roles is an asset she puts to use in her new position.

Karagozian explained that while in the past she tended to keep her family and Armenian community life separate to an extent from her professional activity, she had taken the first step to break down this barrier over a decade ago, when she began to serve as a University of California (UC) representative on the board of trustees for

also individual scholars who work on Armenian-related topics, such as sociologist Victor Agadjanian.

Karagozian noted that there are a number of ethnic Turks and Kurds at UCLA who are very passionate about exploring the history of the Armenian Genocide.

The PAI added an Armenian Studies Center to these existing chairs and programs in 2020. Its inaugural director is Sebouh Aslanian, chairholder of the aforementioned Armenian history position.

Karagozian went on to observe that the PAI is not just involved in the social sciences and the humanities. There are a number of existing programs and centers within the within the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA and the Fielding School of Public Health with ties to Armenia and Armenians. The UCLA Vatche & Tamar Manoukian Division of Digestive Diseases hosts the Familial Mediterranean Fever (FMF) Clinic, researching a disease to which Armenians, along with other Middle Eastern nationalities are prone. The PAI added to all this with separate new funding to create Operation Armenia, an interdisciplinary team providing medical disaster relief and long-term support to Artsakh and Armenia.

One can add to this list a sister institute to the PAI, the Promise Institute for Human Rights at the UCLA School of Law. Founded in 2017 with a focus on human rights and law, it occasionally has held programs pertaining to the Armenian Genocide as well as refugee rights, including those of ethnic Armenians.

In sum, Karagozian said, “When the Promise Armenian Institute was created, it was designed not to be only Armenian studies. It was designed to be an all-encompassing entity, a scholarly entity involving research and teaching, but also interdisciplinary research across our campus, and outreach and connections between the USA and the Republic of Armenia and even Armenian entities in the diaspora.”

Armenian Genocide Research Program

In this far-reaching constellation of activities and structures that comprises the PAI, one thing that was missing was Armenian Genocide research and documentation, but this was already in the works. Karagozian said, “When we decided to establish this research program, we did a full search as per UCLA’s requirements, and Taner [Akçam] was selected to be the inaugural director. This will be an entity that certainly will be related to Armenian studies, and there certainly will be overlapping interests with the Armenian Studies Center, but it is going to be a separate program within the Promise Armenian Institute.”

Akçam declared, “The reason why they make this an administrative position, but not a faculty position, in my understanding, is that this is the easiest way to establish such a position. A faculty position would have to go through different boards, meetings and departments and it would have taken maybe 3-4 years because it is a state university.”

Akçam is leaving his tenured chair at Clark University permanently. He acknowledged that this move is a little risky, as the position must be renewed every year. He said, “There is a risk, but I thought I should take this risk because it is worth it.”

Karagozian was very positive about the program, declaring: “I am confident that the Armenian Genocide program will continue. If it is successful – and I have every reason to believe it will be entirely successful – we are hopeful that it will eventually become

an endowed chair associated with this program.”

Akçam stated that his work at UCLA will be academic and primarily research oriented. As inaugural director, he has been asked to develop the program.

He said, “One of my main goals is to train young scholars.” The Armenian Genocide program will have at least one or two post-doctoral positions. In addition, Akçam said that he will be ready to serve as an adviser for doctoral students studying with a concentration in genocide studies in various departments like History Political Science, or Sociology.

Akçam also wants to teach students through coursework and is planning to teach one course per semester. Ideally, he would prepare one advanced course on genocide in general and one course specifically on the Armenian Genocide. He said that he will have to decide which courses he will teach based on the needs of the various departments and Armenian-related programs.

However, he does not want to teach too many courses, he declared, “because the ultimate goal of this program is research, and I would like to develop a systematic genocide research program.” He bewailed the fact that up until now, not a single Armenian Genocide research institute or program in a university setting has been created, while there are around 250 Holocaust and Genocide research institutes and programs in North America.

As part of his plan to develop further his field, he explained that the UCLA Armenian Genocide Research Program would direct funding to needed areas. He said, “Normally, individuals come up with ideas and approach institutions for funding. I will change this to the opposite manner. We will develop a plan of which areas need to be researched and what are the necessities of the field. I will organize this research and find individuals to conduct the necessary projects.”

He gave the example of a serious study of Russian archival materials on the Armenian Genocide as one area he would like to pursue in this manner. He would have to get in touch with scholars in Moscow, study the archival materials, discuss the situation with experts, and develop an idea of what must be done. Then, most likely, he said, he would hire a young scholar for a three- or four-year project, and an edited volume will result from his work.

Akçam exclaimed, “I would love to hear everyone’s suggestions! I can make a list of the areas that must be seriously researched but I am sure that people have other useful ideas.” He added that another aspect of his job as program director will be to raise funding for these kinds of projects.

Finally, as part of his new job, Akçam said he will organize small lectures, workshops, and conferences.

Broader Vision

Akçam said that he needs to work out the vision of the Armenian Genocide Program in the PAI, and sees three layers to it. First, he said, is an understanding of where genocide studies as a general field is going. He said, “In this regard, we have to take part in new debates and tendencies of the field. One such new aspect is to include natural catastrophes and environmental destruction, including global warming, in the field as part of human destructiveness.”

“Secondly,” he stressed, “what I really want to develop is a systematic coordination between the studies of different genocides

within the Ottoman Empire in the Middle East. It was the same Ottoman government that exterminated, oppressed, or deported Kurds, Greeks and Assyrians, and we have to incorporate these different mass atrocities within the Armenian Genocide Program. Armenian Genocide studies, more advanced than those of the cases just mentioned, should play a role similar to what Holocaust Studies has played in broader genocide studies – it should lead and help in the development of studies of other genocides.”

Third is the advancement of Armenian Genocide studies itself, he continued. New areas should be explored. Gender studies, he said, is not developed sufficiently, nor post-genocide studies. The role of religion must be further explored.

Continuing Projects

While initiating all of the aforementioned projects, Akçam said that his first priority will be to continue with the work that he already has begun. One example is the transliteration and translation into English of the materials in the collection of Fr. Krikor Guerguerian. Much of the Ottoman language materials are first being transliterated into modern Turkish. Many reports of Armenians surviving the Armenian Genocide and sent to the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople were written in difficult handwriting so these must be electronically typed before translation. Akçam said, “Getting Krikor Guerguerian’s materials into English will be a huge contribution to Armenian Genocide research. Nobody could use them before because they were still in their original languages.”

He will continue work on the fate of confiscated or plundered Armenian properties during the early period of the Turkish Republic, an oral history project on the 1938 Dersim Genocide, Ottoman press coverage of the Genocide, and the impact of the Armenian Genocide on the foundation of the Turkish Republic.

Turning Point

Akçam declared that the UCLA program is a historic turning point because until now, Armenian Genocide research had been based on the tenacious work of individuals like Dr. Vahakn Dadrian or Richard Hovannisian, but this is the first time that institutionalization of the field has begun.

Karagozian in turn had nothing but good words about Akçam, describing him as the ideal inaugural director for the program. She stated: “We are very excited about Taner joining us at UCLA. He is truly a world-class historian and one of the world’s leading experts – if not the foremost expert, on the Armenian Genocide and its documentation, so we are very happy he has agreed to continue his research activities here at UCLA.”

Akçam concluded, “This is really a dream job for me, a dream come true. Do you know why? In 1993, I returned to Turkey after 17 years in exile, to establish a center for documentation and research on the last period of the Ottoman Empire. I had the funding for it but the Turkish government got wind of my activities. Bilgi University was ready to house such a documentation and research center, but the Turkish state secret service sent a kind of threatening dossier, a letter with information against me, to the directors of the university, the trustees and the university professors. They got scared and I had to leave Turkey again. So this is now for me the realization of a long-held dream.”



Dr. Ann Karagozian

the American University of Armenia, which operates under UC auspices. When the PAI position was offered to her, she said, “I felt that this might be exactly the right thing to be doing in this stage in my career, where I could contribute still to my profession but also contribute the experience that I have acquired in leadership at UCLA to the creation of an entity that is designed to be interdisciplinary.”

The PAI brings together a number of seemingly disparate parts. There are the two longstanding chairs of Armenian studies: the Narekatsi Chair in Armenian Studies, established 1969, in the Department of Near Eastern Studies and Languages, with its own Program in Armenian Language and Culture, and the Richard Hovannisian Endowed Chair in Modern Armenian History, established in 1987. There is a research program for Armenian archaeology established in 2012 by Zaruhi Sara Chitjian, together with an archival collection and an Armenian Lab dedicated to Armenian archaeology and early history, and an Armenian Music Program, established in 2013 at the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music under the auspices of Prof. Movses Pogossian. There are



COMMUNITY NEWS



NAASR to Present ‘A Look Back, A Look Ahead: A Conversation with Taner Akcam’

BELMONT, Mass. — The National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) will present a webinar with Taner Akcam, “A Look Back, A Look Ahead,” on Tuesday, April 12, 2022, at 7:30 p.m. (Eastern) / 4:30 p.m. (Pacific). The webinar will be accessible live on Zoom (registration required) and on NAASR’s YouTube Channel.

Thirty years ago, Taner Akcam published his first book dealing with the Armenian Genocide — *Türk Ulusal Kimliği ve Ermeni Sorunu* (Turkish National Identity and the Armenian Question). This 30-year period coincides with the advancement of Armenian Genocide Studies from a state of relative immaturity to where it stands today as a robust and vital field.

As he prepares to depart from his position as Kaloosdian-Mugar Chair in Armenian Genocide Studies at Clark University to become the inaugural director of the Armenian Genocide Research Program within the Promise Armenian Institute at UCLA, Akcam will engage in a conversation with NAASR Academic Director Marc A. Mamigonian that will touch on such topics as the evolution of Akcam’s work, the history and development of Armenian Genocide Studies, the challenges facing the field, and his plans for the future in his new role.

Akcam holds the Robert Aram and Marianne Kaloosdian and Stephen and Marianne Mugar Chairholder in Armenian Genocide Studies at Clark University. His book publications include *A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility*, *The Young Turks’ Crime Against Humanity: The Armenian Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing in the Ottoman Empire*, and *Killing Orders: Talat Pasha’s Telegrams and the Armenian Genocide*.

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

Asya Darbinyan to Serve as Visiting Professor in Armenian Genocide Studies at Clark University

WORCESTER — Clark University’s Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies has announced that Dr. Asya Darbinyan will serve as visiting professor in Armenian Genocide Studies at the Strassler Center for the coming academic year. Having completed her PhD under the direction of Taner Akcam in 2019, she is currently a postdoctoral scholar at the Martin-Springer Institute, Department of Comparative Cultural Studies at Northern Arizona University.

Prior to this position, she was a Fellow in Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Stockton University (2019-2020).

Her research and teaching expertise sit at the intersection of Armenian history, the history of the Russian Empire, genocide, refugees, and humanitarian interventions, with a focus on the agency and actions of refugees in addressing their suffering and plight. Previously, Dr. Darbinyan worked at the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute, Yerevan, as a Senior Researcher and the Deputy Director of the museum (2008-2013). She holds M.A. and B.A. degrees in International Relations from Yerevan State University.



Dr. Asya Darbinyan

Richard Melik Simonian Charitable Trust Scholarship

The Scholarship Committee for the Richard M. Simonian Scholarship is pleased to announce the establishment of this scholarship, open to students of Armenian descent living in or attending school in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Awards may be used towards college, graduate school, or higher educational programs.

Application deadline is April 15, 2022. Awards will be determined on or about May 23, 2022.

Requests for applications may be made to Christopher Mitchell at (508) 792-2800 or Cmitchell@chwmlaw.com.

OBITUARY

Margaret ‘Margie’ (Kalajian) Glikas

WATERTOWN — Margaret ‘Margie’ (Kalajian) Glikas of Watertown, formerly of Billerica, died on April 3, 2022.

She was the wife of Stephen Glikas; sister of Kenneth Kalajian and his wife Esther and Gary Kalajian and his wife Regina; aunt of Charles Kalajian and his wife Lisa, and Hope, John and Alex Kalajian; great-aunt of Haley Mae Kalajian. She was the daughter of the late Nora (Seferian) Kalalajian and the late Charles “Chuck” Kalajian. She is also survived by many nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

Funeral service were held at Saint James Armenian Church, Watertown, on Thursday, April 7

At the request of the family, cemetery services were private.

Arrangements were made by the Bedrosian Funeral Home.



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COMMUNITY NEWS

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Ukraine Quagmire Spills Over into Armenian Security

EDUCATION, from page 6

in the polarization between the West and Russia, but looking out for their own interests while attempting a balancing act; and this includes Turkey, Azerbaijan, and — surprisingly, according to Cheterian — Georgia, which did not take “harsh” actions against Russia.

Next to speak was Kopalyan, whose work focuses on World Political Systems. Kopalyan agreed that the failure of Russia’s total invasion had taken Putin by surprise and that he was seemingly retreating while absorbing the Donbas region in the west.

Kopalyan noted that the cleavage between the West and Russia places Armenia “in an almost impossible position,” and that the situation “puts enormous pressure on their ability to not fall into the trap of choosing sides.”

Instead, Armenia is engaging in what’s known in political science literature as “strategic shirking.” Kopalyan differentiated this from “strategic silence.” Armenia has not been silent; rather they have made it known that they will refrain from any entanglements, despite various attempts by Azerbaijan, Turkey, and even Ukraine to pull the country into the conflict.

“Strategic shirking,” said Kopalyan, is precisely the position that Russia assumed (at a lower risk level to them) during the 2020 Karabakh War, at least until its conclusion. Russia was not silent — they spoke about the Karabakh conflict being decided in other platforms, they engaged in vague rhetoric, and they discussed reconciliation. But they engaged in “shirking,” as Kopalyan and avoided direct involvement in the conflict.

Neutrality is extraordinarily difficult, said Kopalyan. Thus, Armenia takes a pragmatic, but vague posture; they discuss reconciliation without getting involved in the actual conflict.

What has become obvious, said Kopalyan, is that Russia’s takeover of Eastern Ukraine will place Armenia in a difficult position vis-a-vis international platforms. Azerbaijan will try to use this to frame Armenia as a pro-Russian pariah and try to pain it with guilt by association. Meanwhile, Russia may actually try to force Armenia to recognize the independence of the Donetsk Republic (the ethnic Russian breakaway state in Western Ukraine), which Armenia will not want to do, to avoid becoming a pariah to the West. Russia may also propose that the breakaway regions of Ukraine become member states of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and other Russian-led international groups.

Due to these factors, and with the intensification of the rift between the West and Russia, the avoidance of entanglement becomes exceedingly difficult, said Kopalyan. Diplomatic pressure from the West will increase, and the European Union (EU) will become less tolerant of Armenia’s siding with Russia in European forums. This has already been happening as the EU has put pressure on Armenia for siding with Russia in the Council of Europe. Meanwhile, Russia will continue to pressure Armenia to take their side. This won’t happen only to Armenia, but all countries that Russia considers a part of its sphere of influence. From a diplomatic perspective, therefore, the biggest impact of the war is a greater concern over diplomatic polarization.

Kopalyan also discussed the issue of security in Armenia and Artsakh. He and other analysts, using projection modeling, said they expect a broader incursion by Azerbaijan in April. According to the analysts,

Azerbaijan appears to be preparing for a new assault, exhibiting behaviors consonant with readiness for such an action.

This behavior of Azerbaijan, Kopalyan said, could be attributed to two factors. One is the weakening of Russian power. The war in Ukraine appears to have the effect of weakening Russia, at least in relative terms, more than strengthening it.

Secondly, again due to the war, Russia’s military resources are being depleted. Since Armenia buys 90 percent of its arms from Russia, this could limit Armenia’s ability to buy arms and maintain military preparedness, he said. Kopalyan suggested that negotiating with France, India, and China could be a way for Armenia to increase its military hardware.

Ohanyan drew attention to various changes that are taking place in world politics, some of which actually preceded the war, but were exacerbated by it. Some of these include, great power rivalry, multipolarity (within which Russia has sabotaged its own role), the weakening of the international rules-based rule order (which softens the idea of “territorial integrity” that is key in the Karabakh conflict), and militarization and coercive diplomacy as a negotiation strategy. The fragmentation of the global economy, due to Covid especially, is another major issue.

Ohanyan noted that the West’s response to the Ukraine crisis amounts to an economic containment of Russia, an unprecedented attempt to excise Russia from the global economy. The economic fallout for Armenia is hugely significant, she said, adding that the volatility of world politics is going to be the new norm, and not only Armenia but many other developing countries.

With the Ukraine war, Ohanyan stated, Russia abrogated its institutionalized engagement with China to bring about Eurasian integration and connectivity. Such connectivity is in China’s interest and is a part of their agenda; Armenia’s previous foreign policy choices made sense in this context. But now that Russia is globally isolated, it has become unreliable in advancing such Eurasian integration. This dictates a rethink of Armenia’s security infrastructure but also its development in general.

Ohanyan noted that it was too early to predict just what sort of Russia would emerge from the war, whether vindictive or remorseful. Ohanyan noted that Russian media and messages issuing from the Kremlin are already talking about the need to encourage business, which has been affected by the sanctions. The “social contract” between Putin and his people is threatened if there is an economic downturn, and so Russia may try to connect with the global economy through post-Soviet periphery countries like Armenia, she added.

Ohanyan seems to think that “the West is not going to emerge victorious” despite the strong show of unity against Russia, and that there will be a host of problems such as food crises in developing countries, global recession, and electoral backlash in Western countries because of the rise in the price of gas. She also noted that several traditional Western allies such as India, Israel, Turkey and the Gulf States are on the fence in regard to the war.

One change now, she explained is that Russia is becoming more authoritarian and power is becoming more centralized, meaning the state’s institutional capacity to navigate their way out of the crisis has lessened. This is particularly true consider-

ing that green energy looks ready to overtake oil in the next 20 years, and oil rich economies like Russia are under pressure to modernize.

Looking at whether a “new cold war” would emerge and how Armenia would be impacted, Ohanyan mentioned the economic impact, labor migration, remittances, and food security, in addition to the fact that with the sanctions placed on the Russian commodities market, transportation corridors through Armenia may become an option for Moscow. Conversely, some financial analysts are even arguing that the South Caucasus is emerging as an alternative route from China to Europe.

Ohanyan noted that though Russia is a pariah for now, ultimately the West will still need Russia to solve major issues like the standoffs with North Korea and Iran, as well as the climate change crisis; and the Nagorno Karabakh issue might be an opportunity for Russia and the West to come together in a conflict resolution project.

Ohanyan concluded that “Armenia is on track with deepening its state capacities as long as those states that derive legitimacy from the public are better positioned to push back against the polarization” which derives from world politics and the “new cold war” which most developing countries do not want.

During the question-and-answer period, Cheterian opined that Armenia is entering period of instability. Cheterian argued that since the late 1990s, the country has relied too much on Russia, and has not invested enough in solving its problems, such as the Karabakh issue or relations with Turkey. A weakened Russia helps Armenia, he continued, pointing out that whenever Russia is powerful, the more neutral it becomes, and the more it views Armenia as a pawn to advance its own interests, but when Russia is relatively weak, it acts in a more pro-Armenia manner, more like an “older brother.”

In response to another question on diplomatic ties between Armenia and Russia, Ohanyan stated she doesn’t think any country can rely on any single country for security and that Armenia needs to diversify its diplomatic presence. Armenia-Turkey diplomacy, she said, needs to be looked at with great care because it links Armenia to European markets. Security is a multilevel product, she added. That which needs to be done for the security of Artsakh is one thing; the broader security of Armenia as a whole, however, depends in Ohanyan’s mind on Armenia’s joining international organizations.

Cheterian agreed that Armenia needs to look to other partners to diversify their security, naming France, Greece, China, and India as possibilities. He also pointed out that Azerbaijan manages to diversify its security (i.e., close relations with both Russia and Turkey), so why can’t Armenia depend not only on Russia but also other countries for its security.

To questions about the continued efficacy of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group tasked with solving the impasse of Karabakh, Ohanyan mentioned that the outcome of the 44-day war was “illegal and coercive,” and that the placement of the Russian peacekeepers was also not a part of the Minsk Group format. Therefore, both Azerbaijan and Russia ignored the peace process. Ohanyan called the West’s ignoring of the war, “a canary in a coal mine,” showing the failures of the Western project to advance democracy. She argued that although the West professes to be spreading

democracy, they seem to think it should be a top-down process, a sort of geopolitical game, and they are more concerned with siding with whoever is in NATO rather than encouraging democratic processes like the Minsk Group, which, if implemented, actually would help spread democracy.

Kopalyan stated that the issue with Minsk Group is that Azerbaijan has a “schizophrenic” posture toward it. On the one hand they deny the relevance of the Minsk Group and say that the issue has “been resolved.” On the other hand, they do participate in the negotiations. They are trying to change the mandate of the Minsk Group — they want to use it to help broker a broader Azerbaijan-Armenia treaty (which is not what it was created for) and lump Karabakh into that, he explained.

Cheterian reminded the audience that Ukraine has developed military cooperation with Turkey in the last few years and supported Azerbaijan. But he also pointed out the similarities between Armenia and Ukraine, both being “fragile countries struggling to move away from their Soviet totalitarian heritage and experiment with revolutions and democratization. Cheterian also noted that there is a longstanding Armenian diaspora community in Ukraine, including many migrants from present Armenia, who need our help and attention.

Kopalyan was more cynical regarding the Ukraine-Armenia connection, pointing out that Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelenskyy’s administration made a decision to prioritize Azerbaijan over Armenia, and views the occupation of Crimea, for instance, as similar to Armenia’s “occupation” of Artsakh. Azerbaijan has sided with Ukraine a parallel narrative about “territorial integrity” has been advanced by both sides. Furthermore, Zelenskyy has taken the attitude that “if you aren’t for Ukraine, you’re against us,” even recalling the ambassador to Georgia because that country didn’t sufficiently support Ukraine. The anti-Russian sentiment is so aggressive, and understandably so, said Kopalyan, that “guilt by association discourse is resonating more than what the reality is.”

Finally, the panelists agreed that the world responded differently to Artsakh than Ukraine, not only because Armenia and Azerbaijan are countries many don’t know, but because the world is primarily responding to the Ukraine invasion due to fear of Russia rather than any particular knowledge of Ukraine itself. Cheterian in particular, blamed the West for not making it clear that Ukraine would never be allowed into NATO or the EU. He states that Ukraine’s interest in joining the western alliances, and the West’s negligence to make it clear that this would be impossible, only angered Russia, yet when Russia invaded, the Western countries didn’t really protect Ukraine.

Kopalyan expressed the opinion that Ukraine “is being given up as a sacrificial lamb” by the West to get Russia in a Vietnam-like quagmire, which will weaken Russia. He also mentioned that Azerbaijan got some sympathetic ears in the West because they based their argument on territorial integrity, and claimed that when negotiations failed, they had to invade “their territory.”

Finally, Ohanyan stated that the war in Ukraine is “more anti-systemic” while the Karabakh conflict results from “the tyranny of territorial integrity,” bringing up the conflict in the Tigray region of Ethiopia as a similar case, and finally concluding that “as a human being it upsets me that we haven’t developed an anti-war movement.”

COMMUNITY NEWS

Top Lawmakers Demand Investigation of Corruption In Armenian Genocide Victim Payments

By Matt Hamilton and Harriet Ryan

LOS ANGELES (*Los Angeles Times*) — Four influential California lawmakers called this week for an investigation into a \$17.5-million class-action settlement on behalf of Armenian genocide victims that a *Times* investigation found had been marred by fraud, diverted funds and a rejection rate of 92 percent.

U.S. Representatives Jackie Speier (D-Hillsborough) and Anna Eshoo (D-Menlo Park), the only Armenian Americans in Congress, along with Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Burbank) and state Sen. Anthony Portantino (D-La Cañada Flintridge), chair

of the Senate Appropriations Committee, said they were disgusted by misconduct *The Times* detailed in a report last week. “I am deeply concerned and outraged by the issues raised,” Portantino said in a statement. “The Armenian Genocide was a horrendous historical atrocity and descendants of those murdered should not be victimized or be denied their rightful settlements.”

Three Armenian American attorneys from Los Angeles, including prominent lawyers Mark Geragos and Brian Kabateck, secured the settlement with the French insurance company AXA a decade and a half ago. The funds were supposed to compensate the families of genocide victims with unpaid insurance policies and support Armenian charities selected by a French nonprofit.

The *Times* investigation found that that the French nonprofit was never established; some of the money was sent to the pet charities of lawyers involved in the case, including their alma mater; and hundreds of thousands of dollars were directed to sham claimants. Less than 8 percent of claims submitted by Armenians around the world were approved, despite what in many cases was overwhelming evidence that the applicants were rightful heirs.

“It’s clear by the dismal claims approval rate and finger-pointing that something is rotten in Denmark, or Glendale, or France as the case may be,” said Speier, the co-chair of the Congressional Armenian Caucus, in a statement.

parties — the Armenian Ministry of Justice, claimants, a lead attorney in the case and a court-appointed French settlement board — voiced concerns to Snyder about the handling of claims and settlement funds over a period of years.

Among the irregularities was the award of some \$575,000 to a Syrian man who had never applied for compensation, and payments totaling \$400,000 to an Iraqi man whose existence could not be verified. Some of those funds were converted to cashier’s checks in Southern California. Additionally, at least \$750,000 that was supposed to go to religious organizations never arrived, church officials told *The Times*.

Snyder greenlit some investigative efforts to uncover misconduct, but repeatedly denied a complete audit of the settlement.

“The court’s refusal to grant an independent audit is equally puzzling,” Speier said in the statement.

Snyder previously told *The Times* that the judicial code of conduct barred her from speaking about the settlement. She formally closed the case in 2016. Geragos and Kabateck, both descendants of genocide survivors, denied any wrongdoing in statements from representatives.

They have blamed others for the problems in the claims process, including other lawyers and a claims administrator, and pointed out that millions of dollars did go to Armenian charitable causes. Kabateck’s representative noted that money they sent to his and Geragos’ alma mater, Loyola Law School, was used to establish a genocide law center. Both noted that, despite complaints about the settlement to the State Bar of California, which polices the legal profession, and law enforcement agencies, there have been no criminal charges against the two lawyers or findings of misconduct on their part.

The Times’ investigation relied on newly unsealed records, emails among attorneys and confidential settlement records. Authorities previously took action against three other lawyers in connection with the settlement. A Beverly Hills attorney, Berj Boyajian, pleaded no contest in Superior Court to a felony and a misdemeanor charge in connection with making false claims to the State Bar and ultimately served no jail

time. He later resigned his law license.

The bar moved against the law licenses of Vartkes Yeghiayan, a Glendale attorney who worked on the cases with Geragos and Kabateck, and his wife for allegedly misappropriating charity money. The case against her was thrown out. Yeghiayan died before trial.

Some Armenians in France and the U.S. have campaigned to hold accountable additional figures in the settlement. As recently as last year, a member of the court-appointed French settlement board urged the L.A. County District Attorney to launch a new probe and similar requests have been made in recent years to the State Bar. There is no statute of limitations for investigations initiated by the bar into potential attorney misconduct.

Speier, the Bay Area congresswoman, raised the possibility of an investigation by the state auditor or state insurance commissioner.

Portantino said he wanted “continued investigation and transparency until the rightful recipients are justly compensated and any and all actions of potential wrongdoing are exposed and properly dealt with.”

The settlement and a preceding case against the insurer New York Life were lauded by Armenians in the mid-2000s. At the time, the community was still fighting for the U.S. government and others to recognize the 1915 genocide as a historical fact. President Biden finally recognized the genocide last year.

In 2018, the Armenian Bar Assn. — a professional organization for Armenian American lawyers — feted Snyder at its annual banquet with Kabateck, one of the attorneys in the AXA case, proclaiming, “Every judge should take lessons from the Honorable Christina Snyder.”

In the wake of *The Times* investigation, the Armenian Bar Assn. expressed “profound sadness and concern” over the involvement of Armenian American lawyers in the improprieties.

“If true, these allegations not only violate the ethical aspirations of the Armenian Bar Assn.’s membership, but they represent a grave breach of our organization’s core values,” the group’s board said in a statement.



Rep. Jackie Speier (PBS Newshour photo), Rep. Anna Eshoo

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Schiff, who represents Glendale, home to a sizable Armenian community, and is chair of the powerful House Intelligence Committee, said he was concerned by the “ordeal” faced by descendants of the genocide.

“I think all of us who read these stories have been horrified that some of the survivors and their families may have been victimized again,” Schiff said in a statement. “I fully support an investigation to ensure all such survivors get the compensation they deserve.”

Eshoo agreed that “a full investigation” was “absolutely warranted,” adding: “It is shameful that fraudsters are profiting from the pain of the Armenian community.”

The settlement in U.S. District Court in Los Angeles was overseen by Judge Christina A. Snyder from shortly after its filing in 1999. The *Times* described how various

Kabateck Invites Armenian Bar Association to Investigate AXA Armenian Genocide Insurance Litigation in Response to LA Times Article

LOS ANGELES — Brian S. Kabateck, Class Counsel in Armenian Genocide insurance litigation in 1999 and 2005, on April 4 offered an open invitation to the Armenian Bar Association to conduct a thorough investigation into the handling of the AXA French insurance company claims settlement by Kabateck LLP, the firm of which he is founder and managing partner.

Kabateck sent a letter to the Armenian Bar Association that addresses the March 23, 2022 *Los Angeles Times* article “A ‘Blood Money’ Betrayal: How Corruption Spoiled Reparations for Armenian Genocide Victims.” This article, according to Kabateck, recycles decade-old “baseless insinuations” and is “patently untrue.”

“I have always been troubled and saddened by the deplorable actions of the criminals who conspired to steal mon-

ey from the Armenian community and the rightful heirs of those who perished during the Genocide,” wrote Kabateck. “That’s why I worked so hard to uncover the crimes committed by Vartkes Yeghiayan, who died while being prosecuted by the State Bar; Rita Mahdessian, a convicted criminal with multiple suspensions of her license to practice law; and Berj Boyajian, who was ultimately convicted for his actions which I assisted in bringing to light.”

The letter claims the lack of any new revelations in the *Los Angeles Times* article, which, a pr release of the same date from Kabateck’s law firm purported, “entailed speaking with associates of Mr. Yeghiayan, who are seeking to avenge his deservedly sullied reputation.”

Kabateck’s letter states that the various allegations against him and his firm had been investigated and rejected in the past

by the United States District Court, the State Bar of California, and various prosecutorial authorities. It also rejected the accusation that he actively denied claims to the insurance money, stating that he was not involved in the claims process.

The letter reveals that the firm offered to allow an independent accountant hired by the *LA Times* to review both the firm’s and Kabateck’s finances and offered to share the cost of a law firm selected by the newspaper to investigate whether there was any legal or ethical misconduct by Kabateck LLP. However, it states that the newspaper refused both offers and did not disclose them publicly.

After providing this information, Kabateck in his letter suggests the Armenian Bar Association consider investigating “any motives the *LA Times* may have had for publishing a story which is patently untrue.”

The release from Kabateck’s firm also notes the potentially divisive effect on Armenians of the *LA Times* story, proclaiming, “It is sad that this misinformation campaign deliberately aimed at fomenting division among the largest Armenian diaspora community in the world is being circulated just weeks before Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day.”

Kabateck’s firm made available a copy of Kabateck, LLP’s response to over 60 questions submitted by the *LA Times* prior to the publication of its article but not published therein (https://drive.google.com/file/d/1OMo8r9a9uHo_m5Y_qkH-1GVfXZ2xuPPRe/view?usp=sharing), the full text of Kabateck’s abovementioned letter (https://drive.google.com/file/d/19WJiA_8DFfx7S-Ivt4wIKcDv-jqf_K3Vd/view), and a 2011 court status report.



Arts & Culture

Vic Gerami's 'Motherland' Production Team Gets Support of Two Prominent Community Members

LOS ANGELES — Two prominent leaders in the Armenian-American community, Dr. Armen Vartany and Oshin Harootonian, have teamed up with the acclaimed producers of “Motherland,” a feature-length documentary film that’s expected to blow the lid off of Azerbaijan’s concerted campaign of violence, deception and burgeoning genocide against the Armenian civilians of Artsakh.

Dr. Armen Vartany, who, in addition to his new role as a development producer, is a board-certified plastic surgeon and the founder of the Plastic Surgery and Laser Center in Burbank, is supporting the production of filmmaker-journalist and Los Angeles-based national radio host, Vic Gerami’s investigation into the global community’s tepid response to war crimes being committed on a daily basis by Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev’s military as enabled and augmented by a cadre of regional allies led by Turkish forces under the control of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

“The 44-day war was an attempt by a corrupt dictator to squash the desire of a people to live free from oppression, persecution, and ethnic cleansing,” says Dr. Vartany. “A corrupt and wealthy dictator with the



Dr. Armen Vartany

direct assistance of Turkey and tacit approval of Russia was intent on destroying the tiny self-proclaimed Republic of Artsakh. The imbalance of power and injustice was overwhelming.”

Like many Armenians glued to the TV for news and advocating on social media, Dr. Vartany and his wife, Alina, mobilized during the 44-day attack. In addition to donating money to various humanitarian causes, they sponsored several refugee families who’d been left unhoused after Azerbaijan’s invasion and occupation of Artsakh.

see SUPPORT, page 17



A CONVERSATION WITH....

Haig Avakian

‘Today, the Diaspora Is Obsessed With Great Narratives’

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN / CAIRO - Haig Avakian born in 1964, Cairo, is a musicologist, pianist, vocal coach, chorus master, publicist and philologist. He studied at the Noubarian Armenian School, Heliopolis, Cairo. In 1983, he received a certificate from the Cairo State Conservatory’s piano department.

In 1988, he graduated from the piano and musicology departments of the Yerevan Komitas State Conservatory, then continued his post-graduate studies in 1988-1990. Since the age of 14 he contributed to Egyptian-Armenian and Arabic periodicals. As a concert pianist, he gave recitals and performed with orchestra in Cairo and Alexandria. He gave the first Egyptian performances of some works of Western composers and world premieres of Armenian and Egyptian composers’ works. In one of his recitals, he performed for the first time the complete solo piano works of the famous Egyptian composer Aziz Al-Shawan. From 1992 to 2001, he was the vocal coach at the Cairo Opera House. From 1992 to 2007, he worked as assistant and principal conductor for the Cairo Opera House Chorus. Between 2006 and 2010, he was the conductor and the artistic director of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina Chorus and the Bibliotheca Alexandrina Children’s Chorus.

Avakian edited, annotated and published 23 scores by Armenian composers (published by the Cairo AGBU branch), mostly based on original manuscripts. From 2001 to 2008 he published in Cairo the *Dzidzernag* musical quarterly (director: Mardiros Balyan), dedicated exclusively to Armenian music (29 issues). There he published music studies, and record, book and concert reviews. He translated into Armenian Egyptian researchers’ articles about Armenian music. Also published works by Armenian composers, as well as works by foreign musicians with Armenian themes. Since 2016, he has published series of supplements of Cairo-based *Tchahagir* weekly (48 volumes so far, most of them authored and compiled by him), that are available online.

Haig, I can talk to you about everything, considering your wide interests and well-awareness of the Armenian world and culture. Let’s start with music. What is the current state of classical music in Egypt?

In Egypt, classical music is not tied to traditional institutions. Undoubtedly, the Cairo Music Conservatory and the Musical Pedagogical Institution, as well as the Opera Theater, are important centers of education and culture. But their capacity in the area of 100 million people is quite limited. I am interested in the publication of classical Egyptian composers’ works. In 1997, I succeeded in preparing the critical edition of complete works of the first Egyptian classical composer Youssef Greiss (1899-1961)

see AVAKIAN, page 15

Tribute to the Armenian Heritage Park As It Celebrates Its First Decade

BOSTON (*Art New England*) — Something beautiful and powerful emerged from the Big Dig, Boston’s largest and most expensive, urban renewal project of the 20th century — the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway, a gorgeous greenspace where the ghastly Central Artery and Interstate 93 once loomed. Stretching one-and-one-half miles, The Greenway is speckled with lush flora and fauna, fountains, installations of public art, food trucks, carousel, and the Armenian Heritage Park with its outdoor sculpture and labyrinth.

The year 2022 marks the 10th anniversary of the park. After numerous discussions with former Boston Mayor Thomas Menino, state officials, and the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority, the Armenian Heritage Foundation, who raised the funds for the construction of the park, was granted parcel 13 on The Greenway.

The prestigious architectural firm, Tellalian Associates Architects & Planners, was commissioned to layout the space. Don Tellalian, AIA, assembled a Design Concept Committee, including an attorney, an architect, a student, a health-care professional, and representatives from the Armenian-American community of Boston.

Tellalian, renowned in the region, was the principal architect, and designed Abstract Sculpture in the Park as a split rhomboid dodecahedron (solid geometry). In geometry, a dodecahedron is any polyhedron with 12 faces. When asked why he chose geometric art, Tellalian explained, via email, “As an architect, one might say that geometry is our language. But for the park, the geometric figures had to have meaning and engage all ages.” The sculpture is dedicated to those who lost their lives in the Armenian Genocide from 1915 to 1923.

Each spring, Abstract Sculpture is given a new look. A crane pulls it apart and once its core is exposed, Tellalian, referring to the manual he wrote for the process, rearranges the sculpture into various designs depending on the year.

Each page of the manual carries a date, for example, Abstract Sculpture Year 11-2022, along with instructions and diagrams showing how to pull apart the work and reshape it into a stacked configuration. Next year, Year 12-2023, it will be a different stacked formation; Year 13-2024, a leaning arrangement; and so forth, until 2036 when the design reverts back to 2012.

The Abstract Sculpture sits on top of a Reflecting Pool, water washes over the sides representing the tears of genocide victims. The water is recycled to a spray fountain in the middle of the Labyrinth (plane

see CELEBRATION, page 15

Books

“The Power of the Human Spirit”: Narine Abgaryan’s *Three Apples Fell from the Sky*

By Arpi Sarafian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

In *Three Apples Fell from the Sky* (One-world, 2020), author Narine Abgaryan takes us to the heart of Maran, a village perched on a cliff in the Armenian highlands, at the farthest end of Manish-Kar.

Abgaryan brings this isolated mountain village to life with her vivid, often hilariously funny, details and playful images. With painstaking detail, she describes the “tangy scent of tiny, delicately blushing apples with dark raspberry-colored seeds and little pink blotches on the cut edge,” or a pig “that particularly astounded the Maranians because it was as clean and neat as a round turnip that had been thoroughly washed under running water.”

We walk through the village roads and climb the perilous mountain path, rejoicing in the winter snow, the pale blue alpine violets, and the pink and white almond and cherry blossoms. Abgaryan allows us to participate in the ways of the villagers, as they gather over strong tea with thyme, tend their kitchen gardens, and help one another cook, babysit and care for the ill.

The book opens with the 58-year-old Anatolia, the youngest inhabitant in Maran, waiting to die. “If only I could hurry up and die,” she moans as she lies in bed soaking in blood from a sudden onslaught of her menstrual cycle. The final image of the novel is not of the finality of death, however. Anatolia gives birth to Voske (miracles are taken for granted in Maran), a baby girl born of her second marriage to the caring Vasily, with “the village of old people” happily sharing in the responsibility of raising a new child. Voske may know nothing of “the big wide world,” but she had her own tiny world over which “stretched an endless summer’s night that told stories about the power of the human spirit, about devotion and nobility,” writes

Abgaryan.

“The Maranians were a rational people who nevertheless believed in dreams and signs,” we are told. They believe, for example, that dreams dreamt “on Wednesday mornings, between the rooster’s first and second crows” have a hidden meaning. Indeed, because of a prophetic meaning attached to the dreams of Akop, an inhabitant known for his ability to foresee misfortunes, the villagers construct a stone barrier between the peak and the houses to the east, which actually prevents the mudslide from reaching the village and tumbling it into the valley below. In this fantastical tale of superstitions and unusual occurrences, the magical and the real mix seamlessly. The cesspit overflows, spills over, and floods part of Anatolia’s yard when the packages of expired yeast, which hadn’t lost its strength, are thrown into the cesspool.

The remote rural setting of the novel suggests the simplicity and the innocence of a world of “endless summer nights” and “many wonderful things.” This world is, nonetheless, also a world where life’s hardships never ease. Famine, war, and earthquakes are constant occurrences. Death is a fact of life in Maran. When war breaks out and Maran’s men are drafted, the village is “reduced by half,” and plunged into “pitch-black darkness, hunger and cold.” Over the years, all the children are lost to famine. Indeed, the solitary village, with only twenty-three inhabited homes, may be “meekly living out its last years as if condemned, Anatolia along with it.” “The young people had gone and the old ones would depart without even leaving behind memories.”

While it is true that a work cannot be disengaged from its historical and social context, one couldn’t say that *Three Apples Fell from The Sky* is immersed in a specific historical moment. There are passing references to historical truths, such as the mas-



sacre (Armenian?), in which Vano’s grandfather had died, or Vano’s mother having picked up “enough ideas about equality and brotherhood (not to mention various suffragette inclinations)” during her years of study at an institute for noblewomen. Yet, at no point does one get a sense of the villagers yearning for a different time or place. I see the remote setting, where the entire community come together and sustain one another, more as the recreation of a reality where things are just the way they “are supposed to be, so that’s how they’ll stay.” The villagers never grieve about the way things are. There is no rage over the fact that “nobody dared contradict a man.” Nothing overwhelms the Maranians for, as Anatolia well knows, “there was no point in worrying.”

When things are the way they “are supposed to be,” there is no need to mask or to change them. The cycle of wars, of famine and of illnesses will continue, but it will all be survived. Life unquestionably prevails. The world of *Three Apples Fell from The Sky* may not be a paradise but it is not a desperate world either. “That’s just the way it is,” is “the old people’s favorite phrase.”

Abgaryan “delivers the world to us in its human dimension,” to borrow the words of the celebrated French writer and philosopher Simone de Beauvoir (“What Can Literature Do?”). She creates a humane community where ails and misfortunes are redeemed by friendships and communication. We share in the Maranians’ unconditional connection to their fellow human beings. Even the fact that the gypsies, who occasionally came from the valley, spoke

other languages and wore different clothing “held no significance whatsoever. In the end, the sky is always identically blue, and the wind blows exactly the same way wherever you were lucky enough to have been born,” writes Abgaryan. This focus on our common humanity might just be the balm to save us from despair at a time when we no longer find it possible to make sense of the greed that has taken over our lives. In fact, when many hope for doomsday, our sense of community is something we cannot afford to lose.

The world Abgaryan recreates is neither a retreat into a legendary past nor is it a flight into fantasy. *Three Apples Fell from The Sky* reasserts the validity of the human endeavor. Abgaryan’s tale of miracles reminds us that it is possible to find meaning amidst the discomfiting truths of our lives when human connection has not been lost. Despite the troubles and the cares of real life that these stories reflect, the world of the novel remains a good-natured world. The three apples of the old Armenian legend, which the title invokes, have been dropped “to earth from the sky: one apple for the one who saw, another for the one who told the story, and a third for the one who listened and believed in what is good.”

Abgaryan’s delightful tale is an accomplishment worthy of the prestigious Leo Tolstoy Yasnaya Polyana Award and Russia’s National Bestseller Prize, which it has won. The book was originally published in Russian in 2015, but has recently been translated into English by Lisa C. Hayden, herself an award-winning translator.



ԹԵՔԵԱՆ Մշակութային Միություն
Մեծագույն Նիւ Եորքի Մասնաճիւղ

TEKEYAN CULTURAL ASSOCIATION
GREATER NEW YORK CHAPTER

Save the Date

Celebrating 75 years of cultural excellence

*The Diamond
Anniversary Gala*

Saturday, October 15, 2022

Details to follow



ARTS & CULTURE

Haig Avakian: ‘Today, the Diaspora Is Obsessed with Great Narratives’

AVAKIAN, from page 13

in 12 volumes with detailed notes in Arabic (available online). The manuscripts of famous Egyptian composer of Armenian descent Fouad al-Zaheri (Garabed Panosian) are under my hand, the publication of which (by Armenian funding) remains a dream.

The series of supplements of *Tchahagir* weekly is a gift for the Diaspora, where 48 volumes with limited print run are disseminated for free. Most of them apply to the history and culture of Egyptian Armenians, giving new life to the unpublished manuscripts and stuff lost in the old press. Whose initiative was this, and to what extent does it reach the reader?

The initiative was mine. The reason was the inner requirement of publishing collected materials and thoughts. It has been funded by *Tchahagir*, thanks to the encouragement of its editor and director Mardiros Balayan. As to the eternal question to reach the reader, I do not think about it anymore. The printed and online books have been sent to the libraries of Armenia (there always have enthusiastically accepted them, asking also for extra copies).

You are one of the few publicists of the Diaspora well aware of the developments of Armenian life, both in our country and abroad, and always raising painful issues. How did the field of musicology expand for you to become a publicist - moreover, a political analyst?

In the beginning it was only music. I felt comfortable in my “professional” milieu. Afterwards, the professional ghettoization did not satisfy me. In 2014, I wrote a series of articles entitled “The Professional,” criticizing those specialists, who stay only in their “professional” level. I suggested not erasing the professional niche, but to take a step forward, toward intellectual liberation, which I called post-professionalism, one of foundations of which is involvement. Politics, among other things, is a part of this involvement. For example, in *Tchahagir* I tried to draw attention to activist movements in Armenia as a healthy process revealing the internal layers of society. There are quotations from Facebook, that are not recorded nowhere. In 2016 I wrote largely about the rebellion of Sasna Tsrer; since 2018 I have consistently followed up the issue of Amulsar; in 2020 I wrote about the protection of Firdus district of Yerevan. All these are taboos for the mainstream diaspora. While the diaspora celebrated wealthy people, it also artificially made them culture fans, and *Tchahagir* published two large criticisms, trying to introduce the real motivation of benevolent rich men, not sparing criticism of idolized names.

Reading of *Das Kapital* by Karl Marx, provoked me to interpret COVID-19 in the sphere of periodic crisis of capitalistic economy, putting the crisis before the virus — crisis as the main source of the virus and not the opposite. I tried to observe also the Armenian Genocide through reading of anarchism and classical Marxism (not of Soviet communism, which is a different thing). We are afraid that the genocidal understanding will be eliminated by Marxism, but in reality, in the case of authentic reading of Marxian writings, the very opposite takes place. At least, Marxism (not necessarily Marx himself) is aware of the mechanisms that can ban genocide generally. And today we want to ban the genocides by using the same tools in capitalistic world, which have been the cause of genocides and will continue to be.

Collecting lots of information about the



Haig Avakian

territory of Artsakh and especially on new weapons obtained by Azerbaijan, I wrote in 2015 that “The Karabakh issue takes a new and dangerous look.” The 44-day war of 2020 proved the truth of this sentence. And many other similar things.

The language of post-professionalism is a consistent with reality. By being involved you can eliminate national exceptionalism (quite common and mandatory today) and enter the world of national experience, related to the lived life.

In your opinion, what do Armenians need today, both in the diaspora and Armenia?

The question is general, and I must avoid to observe diaspora and Armenia as one field. But I will try to make brief observations. Your question unites Armenia and Diaspora; therefore, it assumes also the relationship between the two. The main part of the diaspora is interested in the fermentations among Armenian authorities, according to the diaspora’s group interests, but the internal layers and thoughts of the society, the internal cultural directions are mainly left without response.

On the other hand, Armenia is not interested in its diaspora. The diaspora is almost absent in Armenia, in terms of consistency and especially involvement. There are individuals interested in diaspora and its internal features, one of which is you. Concerning diasporan issues, *Tchahagir* always writes on them with radical approaches. Which one can be chosen here? For example, the renunciation of modernity under the name of preservation of traditions. A question: can we say that the modern musical talents of Tigran Mansuryan or Arthur Avanesov have erased or weakened the Armenianness in Armenia? After all, they (and those similar to them in other fields) have strengthened Armenian culture. Why the works of modern Diaspora musician like Alicia Terzian are not involved in mainstream Diapora? Although her name is always remembered as an Armenian who succeeded in non-Armenian circles.

Finally, there is the eternal narrative on preservation of Armenianness (*hayababanoum*). Preservation or development of the Armenianness? By preserving, nothing is being preserved. In cultural terms the diaspora knows very little about itself. Huge productions remain unknown, or maximally turned into an encyclopedic entry. The 150th anniversary of Yervand Odian was not commemorated three years ago. Vahan Tekeyan remains in the circle of his “innocent” poems, while his articles and publicism reveal a rebellious and intelligent personality.

Penyamin Tashian’s great translations of novels remain in the press scattered and unfamiliar; Shahan Berberian’s writings about aesthetics) have rarely surpassed academic summaries. In music, the works of Edgar Manas, Vagharshak Srvandzians, Onnig Berberian, Ashot Patmagrian and many others, who have been worked in and for Diaspora, are almost absent from our stages. The literature of Vahe Oshagan is being criticized, if someone decides to remember him. Etcetera, etcetera...

Today, the Diaspora is obsessed with great narratives, forgetting itself. Great narratives are important. They unify. The great narration narrative, being importance for the pan-Diaspora, harms the realization of the Diaspora’s particularities. Each Diaspora, forgetting its own particularity, being not interested in its internal conceptual productions, literature and culture — for enhancing life, not a subject of “textbook” transmission — ceases to be a Diaspora unit.

Since the diaspora took the way of self-alienation, I do not find it surprising that an international foundation considered Western Armenian as an endangered language. I did not find surprising that an

influential part of diaspora Armenian elite representatives, praising the great narratives and especially making it an ideology, does not speak Armenian. Great Armenianness — without the Armenian language.

And in the end, with what new projects will Haig Avakian make us happy in our unhappy times?

The answer will be on a purely individual level, on a self-advertising platform. The supplements of *Tchahagir* will be continued. There is inexhaustible material and thoughts accumulated. Articles will continue. The history of the formation of the Hunchak Party in Egypt is in the process of preparation for publishing, the archives of which I have. I also am preparing for publishing the diaries of Archbishop Mambré Sirunian, the leader of the Armenian Church in Egypt, composer Dikran Tchouhadjian’s annotated bibliography, discography of recordings of Armenian classical soloists from the beginning of the 20th century to 2010.

Almost all of my publications can be downloaded and read here: <https://archive.org/details/@hav64?tab=uploads&sort=-date>

Tribute to the Armenian Heritage Park As It Celebrates Its First Decade

CELEBRATION, from page 13

geometry) that is emblematic of hope.

The inscription on the Reflecting Pool reads: “Boston and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts have offered hope and refuge for immigrants looking to begin new lives. This park is a gift to the people of the Commonwealth and the City of Boston from the Armenian American community of Massachusetts. This sculpture is offered in honor of the one and one-half million victims of the Armenian Genocide of 1915-1923. May it serve in remembrance of all genocides that have followed, and celebrate the diversity of the communities that have re-formed in the safety of these shores.”

The Friends group of the Armenian Heritage Park, in reaching out to communities, arranged a curriculum, Geometry as Public Art: Telling a Story, for fourth grade students in Boston schools. On field trips to the Park, guides explain how the geometric features, the Labyrinth and Abstract Sculpture convey a story. The lessons encourage students to learn how their own ancestors immigrated to America and to feel more comfortable sharing their own immigration experience.



The configuration of the Abstract Sculpture of the park in 2015

According to fourth grade teachers from Boston’s Eliot K-8 Innovation School, the curriculum has been a wonderful success: “(It’s) an exciting and engaging way for students to learn more about their family heritage and reflect on the American immigration experience. The curriculum is a wonderful way for teachers to learn about and better understand their students and for the students to learn about one another.”

Could there be a more important moment in time to reflect upon the unifying message of this sculpture? And to walk the Labyrinth, contemplating how we may take steps in our own lives to end divisiveness and celebrate diversity.



ARTS & CULTURE

Recipe Corner



by Christine Vartanian



Armenian Cuisine's Zadigi Kahke (Easter Cookies)

In April 2012, co-authors Aline Kamakian and Barbara Drieskens wrapped up a month-long, AGBU-coordinated tour across the US and Canada to promote their widely acclaimed publication *Armenian Cuisine*. Equal parts cookbook, photo essay, and oral history, the released hardcover quickly found, and is still finding, its place on kitchen counters and coffee tables in homes around the world.

The book's concept was developed by Aline, who is the Lebanese-Armenian chef and owner of the renowned Beirut restaurant Mayrig. She hoped to resolve her clients' questions about why the Armenian foods listed on the menu were known by Turkish names, and record her mother Vardui's cherished family recipes along the way. Aline's quest took her to the ancestral Armenian land of Cilicia in present day southeastern Turkey. Knowing her talents lay more in cooking than writing, she forged a collaboration with Drieskens, a trained anthropologist. The two embarked on an emotional three-week journey across almost 2,000 miles. The result is a striking volume filled with 139 classic recipes and hundreds of

photographs of landscapes and natural foods that have made it a 2012 New York Photo Festival contender.

"Cook with Aline" is Aline's popular YouTube channel. "It tells my story, my struggle and my love and pride for the Armenian heritage. With over 300 episodes filmed and edited, these episodes are an extremely powerful tool to reach out to food enthusiasts and introduce them to our wide culinary heritage. We teach how to

Barbara Drieskens and Aline Kamakian demonstrate a recipe from their acclaimed cookbook, *Armenian Cuisine*

prepare the best Armenian dishes. It's a step-by-step guide through our history, through our mothers' cooking and our holiday feasts. For me, this is more than a cooking show, it's my heart, mind and soul, put all in one place, spreading the Armenian culinary heritage around the world map."

For Aline's cooking videos and information, go to: <https://www.youtube.com/c/AlineKamakian/featured> or <https://www.youtube.com/c/AlineKamakian/videos> or <https://www.alinekamakian.com/>

"Armenian Cuisine by the founders and chefs at the Mayrig restaurant in Beirut have brought to market a stunning cookery book which would be a wonderful coffee table book in itself, but for the fact it will get quickly stained by food through overuse. The chapters are typically divided by ingredient but more interestingly, throughout the book are interviews regarding the cuisine in different region of historic Armenia and their specialties such as Urfa, Musa Ler and Cilicia, bringing together in one book dishes that remind me of my Lebanese-Armenian grandmother but also my Cypriot-Armenian grandmother and their cooking traditions. Like the best of these women, all the measurements are in cups and you can easily end up cooking for 20 people with one recipe--the only way for us," wrote Arda Eghian, from the Armenian Institute in London.

Robyn Kalajian at The Armenian Kitchen food blog (<https://thearmeniankitchen.com/>) says, "When Armenians prepare for Easter or this time of year, chorag is always on the menu. This is also a time for baking delicious Easter cookies

like Zadigi Kahke." Robyn contacted Barbara Drieskens since she had a question about the amount of flour listed in the recipe. "Barbara told me there was an error in the printed recipe — the cookbook said to use 2 and 2/3 cups flour, when in fact, it should be 6 cups of flour."

Here's Robyn's updated version of the Zadigi Kahke recipe from *Armenian Cuisine*:

Equipment: Stand mixer with paddle attachment or a hand mixer.

INGREDIENTS:

6 cups all-purpose flour (sifted)
2 cups farina (sifted)
1 cup unsalted butter (melted)
1/2 cup sunflower oil (safflower oil may be substituted)
1/2 cup all vegetable shortening (melted)
11/2 cups sugar
1 cup milk (a bit warm)
1 teaspoon mahlab (freshly ground)
11/2 teaspoons ground nutmeg
1 tablespoon yeast
1 egg
1 teaspoon cinnamon
11/2 teaspoons ground cloves
1 pinch salt

Glaze and garnish:

1 egg
2 tablespoons milk
1 tablespoon raw sesame seeds
1 tablespoon black cumin seeds

PREPARATION:

Preheat oven to 350F degrees.

In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, blend together 1 1/2 cups of the flour, 1/2 cup of the farina, and the rest of the cookie ingredients. Little by little, add the remaining flour and farina. Knead by hand until a workable dough is achieved.

Roll the dough into balls and place them in a large bowl. Cover with parchment paper and a soft, clean towel. Let the dough rest for two hours.

Roll the balls of dough into fine sausage shapes that can be formed into twists, twisted rings, or braids. Place each shaped piece on parchment-lined baking pans. Brush the tops with egg glaze, made by whisking equal amounts of egg and milk. Garnish with sesame seeds or black cumin seeds. Bake the cookies for 20 minutes or until golden brown.

Makes about 50 cookies, depending on size.

For this recipe, go to: <https://thearmeniankitchen.com/its-zadigi-kahke-easter-cookie-time/>

To order *Armenian Cuisine*, go to <https://www.alinekamakian.com/cookbooks>

The Aurora Humanitarian Initiative

Aline Kamakian is a 2022 Aurora Humanitarian Initiative honoree, whose full biography can be read on the group's website. She says she believes that the easiest way to interest a foreigner in your nation is to offer a delicious meal. "This method is nothing new. My restaurants are an attempt to show people that Armenians not only survived the Armenian Genocide, but retained the ability to enjoy life."

The names of the 2022 Aurora Humanitarians will be revealed on April 24, 2022, and the 2022 Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity will be awarded on behalf of the survivors of Armenian Genocide and in gratitude to their saviors later in 2022.

The story is verified by the 100 LIVES Research Team.

For information, go to <https://aurorapize.com/en/aline-kamakian>

"Putting Armenian cuisine on the culinary map was my father's dream and my realization," says Aline.

Connect at:

<http://www.mayrigbeirut.com/arm>
<https://www.facebook.com/alinekamakian/>
<https://www.instagram.com/alinekamakian/?hl=en>
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<https://www.tasteatlas.com/mayrig>
<https://www.peterfisk.com/gamechanger/mayrig/>
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCflv8I73001B12glDTw_rFg

For more news articles about Aline Kamakian, go to: <https://www.hospitalitynewsmag.com/?s=kamakian>

For the 2012 Interview at AGBU Headquarters with the co-authors of *Armenian Cuisine*, go to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gIixPFRw-NU>

Also see: The Armenian Kitchen's adapted version of Aline Kamakian's Olive and Nut Salad, go to:

<https://thearmeniankitchen.com/olive-and-nut-salad-tzitedoughi-yev/>



Aline Kamakian and her team cooking for those affected by the horrific explosion in Beirut in 2020



ARTS & CULTURE

Vic Gerami's 'Motherland' Production Team Gets Support of Two Prominent Community Members

SUPPORT, from page 13

He added, "This attack was waged against the Armenians when the world was preoccupied with a pandemic and the US presidential elections. The world must know about this grave injustice, and that's why my wife and I decided to join Vic Gerami and the team behind 'Motherland,' an important documentary film that will educate people who are still in the dark."

Vartany shares positive feelings about doing his part to help the current situation in Artsakh. Newly minted Motherland associate producer, Oshin Harootonian, is similarly enthused about the cinematic education effort.

Harootonian, who is the CEO of Primex Clinical Laboratories, Inc., a leading clinical diagnostic testing services, will assume the role of associate producer for the film. Mr. Harootonian's legacy of philanthropy and community service, especially his emphasis on education, makes him a uniquely qualified and energetic new member of the Motherland team.

"Motherland is in the last stages of post-production, and we can't wait for the world to see it. We are racing with time as Azerbaijan's campaign of ethnic cleansing Armenians from their ancestral Motherland continues. With daily indiscriminate shelling of Armenian villages, depriving water supplies, and cutting off gas (heat) and power (electricity) to Artsakh's 110,000 population, Aliyev's brutal regime is determined to kill or drive out Artsakh's Armenian population," says the director and producer, Vic Gerami.

"I'm excited for Dr. Armen Vartany and Oshin Harootonian joining our team. The involvement of two more changemakers makes 'Motherland' even more meaningful and impactful," Gerami said.

According to 'Motherland's' producers, even more compelling than the film's list of high-profile supporters, participants, and willing interviewees — among them

Congressman Adam Schiff (D-California), Sen. Bob Mendez (D-New Jersey), and Rep. Frank Pallone Jr. (D-New Jersey) — the real attraction that draws to it passionate support is the desperate need for sunlight to reveal the scale and the savagery of murders being committed in Artsakh by oil- and gas-wealthy Azerbaijan, as well as ever-present Turkey and both countries' regional and strategic allies.

"Education can play a key role in preventing genocide by providing a forum to address past violence while promoting the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that can help prevent current group-targeted violence," said Harootonian.

He added, "'Motherland' challenges stakeholders to learn the facts, probe disinformation and propaganda, become responsible and active global citizens who value human dignity and respect for all, reject Armenophobia, racism, and other forms of prejudice that can lead to violence and genocide."

"The importance of teaching about this most recent chapter in Azerbaijan and Turkey's ongoing massacres and campaigns to ethnically cleanse Armenians from the historic homeland of millennia is crucial in preventing another genocide. Education is a means to raise awareness about the causes, dynamics, and consequences of atrocity crimes," continued Harootonian.

A Southern California 'Who's Who' List of Filmmakers Goes National with New Producers

Adding national visibility, Dr. Armen Vartany and Oshin Harootonian are now in league with the criminal defense attorney Mark Geragos, California State Commissioner Sam Khushy, Dr. Nishan Odabashian, Lilit Dolkarian Odabashian, Judy Saryan, Jacob Bournazian, and Professor John Dennem as "Motherland" producers.

Previously, Los Angeles City Councilman Mitch O'Farrell, who secured a sym-

bolically important grant from the City of Los Angeles for the film, congratulated Gerami, Geragos, and Motherland's entire production team on recruiting Commissioner Khushy.

"We are racing against time to bring

much-needed attention to this humanitarian catastrophe and the imminent threat it poses to millions of innocent people," said Gerami.

For more information, visit the film's website, MotherlandDoc.com.

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 5.30 p.m., 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.armenian-assembly.org/>

CONNECTICUT

APRIL 23 — The Armenian Genocide Commemoration Committee of Connecticut will hold its annual program, on the 107th anniversary of the Genocide, on Saturday, at 10:30 am. Armenian Church of the Holy Resurrection, 1910 Stanley Street, New Britain as an in person event but will also be livestreamed Reception to follow. Livestream link: bit.ly/34VhGbH. The program will begin with the Martyrs' Service. Clergy from Armenian Churches in Connecticut will participate in the service. The keynote speaker will be 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. Photos and memories of Der Dajad Davidian, who set Winslow on his road to Armenia. Northeastern's Blackman Auditorium, Ell Hall, 342 Huntington Ave, Boston, 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 available on-line at: <http://www.wewaitforyourreturn.com>

MAY 7 — In Celebration of the 10th Anniversary of Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Celebrate Public Art! Saturday, 1 p.m., World 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 19 — The Armenian Assembly of America Honor Gail Talanian 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.armenian-assembly.org/>

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.

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 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


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 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 p.m. 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 Armenian churches and organizations. Stepan Piligian is the guest speaker. All are welcome.



Tekeyan Cultural Association Metro Los Angeles Chapter


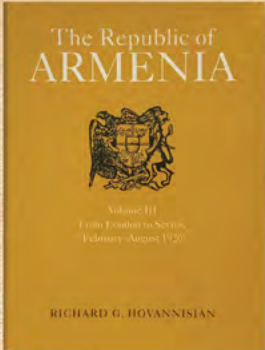
ARMS FOR ARMENIA: THE MATTER OF AIRPLANES

The attempted purchase of surplus British Royal Air Force fighter planes for the First Republic of Armenia by the Constitutional Ramgavar Party of Egypt

Keynote speaker



DR. RICHARD G. HOVANNISIAN

Past Holder of the
Armenian Educational Foundation Chair in Modern Armenian History at
UCLA and Presidential Fellow at Chapman University

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TCA Beshgeturian Center
1901 N. Allen Avenue
Altadena, CA 91001
info@tekeyanla.org

 facebook.com/TekeyanLA
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COMMENTARY

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EDITOR

Alin K. Gregorian

MANAGING EDITOR

Aram Arkun

ART DIRECTOR

Mark (Mgrditchian) McKertich

SENIOR EDITORIAL COLUMNIST

Edmond Y. Azadian

STAFF WRITER

Harry Kezelian III

CONTRIBUTORS

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

REGIONAL

CORRESPONDENTS

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

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Jirair Hovsepian, Ken Martin

VIDEO CORRESPONDENT

Haykaram Nahapetyan

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FAX: 617-924-2887

www.mirrorspectator.com

E-Mail: editor@mirrorspectator.com

For advertising: mirrorads@aol.com

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EDITORIAL

Karabakh Is Not the Endgame, Yet



By Edmond Y.
Azadian

The forthcoming Armenia-Azerbaijan negotiations are the extension of the Armenian-Turkish talks, which started with the assurances that there will be no preconditions. Ankara moved the negotiations to a related field, where preconditions emerged. While Turkey was insisting on no preconditions, in the meantime, it stated that it was coordinating those talks with Azerbaijan.

After two rounds of Turkish-Armenian talks, from which “positive signs” emerged, it looks like these talks are temporarily suspended, pending the outcome of talks between Nikol Pashinyan and Ilham Aliyev in Brussels on April 6 (after press time). This way, Turkish leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan is off the hook vis-à-vis the Biden administration, which initially had asked Mr. Erdogan to normalize its strained relations with Armenia. Should the Pashinyan-Aliyev talks fail to produce any concrete results, Turkey will have ample opportunity to blame the Armenian side.

In preparation for the April 6 summit, Pashinyan made an extensive presentation before Armenia’s Security Council, where he outlined the major issues. He revealed that the country faces a tough situation, as Baku has sent a five-point peace plan, with a warning that if a peace treaty is not signed immediately, the next step would be war.

Yet many outstanding issues between the two countries have not been resolved and conditions set by the November 9, 2020 tripartite declaration have not been met: the refugees have not been resettled, the Armenian POWs have not been released, and Azerbaijani forces have not been moved

out of Armenia’s Sev Lij region and other border areas, among others.

Yerevan has agreed to the negotiations, even though one of the five points in the Azerbaijani proposal is the mutual agreement to the territorial integrity of both countries.

This signifies that Armenia will have to agree to the premise that Karabakh is part of Azerbaijan. In short, the destiny of the Karabakh people is on the chopping block.

Turkey and Azerbaijan are making haste to create irreversible wins on the ground, now that Armenia is in a weak position after its defeat and Russia and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) are fully engaged in the Ukrainian crisis.

Recently, a British military delegation reportedly visited Azerbaijan, which may signal the latter has a free hand to possibly open a second front against Russia by attacking Artsakh and Armenia in yet another case of a global powerplay.

With the background of a pointed reprimand from the US State Department to Baku, blaming the latter for border conflict escalations, and despite the US’s critical position on Azerbaijan’s cultural genocide in the occupied territories, the recent waiver of Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act should not be construed as an anti-Armenian political move because that reflects America’s overall strategy of containing Russia. Armenia is simply part of the collateral damage.

The US or the Western powers do not have the wherewithal to neutralize or to push Russia out of the Caucasus. That role has been relegated to Turkey, which has become the necessary evil for both opposing camps. That is why all its transgressions are forgiven; for example, after blaming Russian for its aggression in Ukraine and voting against Russia for the annexation of Crimea, Erdogan has the guts to refuse to abide by the sanctions imposed on Russia by the West.

Turkey operates in a space of impunity it has created for itself. Therefore, to pin hopes on any major country to help Armenia against Turkish and Azerbaijani aggression is unrealistic.

We have to admit grudgingly that Pashinyan’s trip to Brus-

sels can amount to nothing but signing off on another document of capitulation, similar to the November 9, 2020 declaration.

The only guarantee to preserve Armenia’s — and by extension Karabakh’s — security and sovereignty was the armed forces, not necessarily by winning a war but by deterring one.

During the last war, the Armenian armed forces fought valiantly for 44 days, despite spy networks, defections and the malfunctioning of its Iskandar missiles. Since the war, four chiefs of staff and three ministers of defense have been charged, which does not bode well.

Turkey and Azerbaijan have chosen Brussels for the April 6 summit to spite Moscow, that city being home to NATO headquarters. That is why President Putin has been frantically calling President Aliyev and Prime Minister Pashinyan. Even after calls to each party, Putin called Pashinyan again, certainly to warn him not to cross certain red lines.

Incidentally, the war in Ukraine is a double-edged sword against Armenia; if Russia wins an overwhelming victory, the

chances are that the prospect of a “union state” will have a new lease on life and Armenia will become a candidate for membership. If, on the other hand, Russia is humiliated there, the West will push it out of the Caucasus. In that scenario, Armenia’s security guarantor will not be the West directly, but its surrogate in the region, Turkey. That should certainly send a shiver down our spines.

It is apropos to quote here French Senator Valerie Boyer, who, commenting on a statement in the newspaper *Figaro*, stated this week, “During the 202 large-scale aggression, Azerbaijan, with the support of Turkey, massacred the Armenians of Artsakh though Turkish bombs, white phosphorus and drones. The genocidal

spirit has awakened in them. And the world is silently watching without lifting a finger. Encroachments continue in an atmosphere of indifference.”

Armenia’s Foreign Ministry establishment has made a practice of forfeiting its assets before sitting at the negotiation table. That happened before the Armenian-Turkish negotiations and it is happening now, in preparation for the April 6 summit. Turkey Caucasus editor at Eurasianet, Joshua Kucera, writes, “Conceding sovereignty over Karabakh would represent a dramatic turn for Yerevan. The Armenian government is effectively conceding that the Armenians will not be able to retain control of Nagorno Karabakh, paving the way for Azerbaijan to regain full control of sovereignty over the territory and boding an uncertain future for the area’s current ethnic Armenian residents. The concession has not been made explicitly but rather via a conspicuous shift in official rhetoric from Yerevan.”

To corroborate his statement, Kucera quotes Armenia’s Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan: “For us, the Nagorno Karabakh conflict is not a territorial issue, but a matter of rights.”

This is setting the stage to give up Karabakh, when there are other options to explore; one such option is the principle of “Remedial Secession,” which was successfully used in the case of Kosovo, South Sudan and East Timor to attain independence. Karabakh is a perfect case given Azerbaijan’s genocidal policies.

“Rights” are pretty vague formulations, wherein the OSCE can easily situate certain cultural rights after placing the head of the Karabakh people under Ramil Safarov’s axe. Of course, the latter case is a symbolic one, dating back to 2004, in Budapest, when Safarov beheaded an Armenian soldier, Gurgen Margaryan, a fellow participant in a NATO-sponsored program. Safarov was arrested but repatriated to Azerbaijan, where the Hungarian government was assured he would head straight to prison. Instead, he received a hero’s welcome, a full pardon and a promotion.

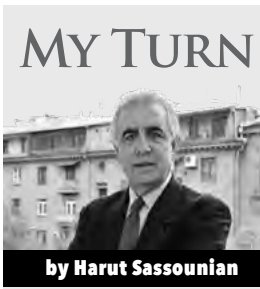
When confronted with a resolute international community, Aliyev can even buy the principle of rights.

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COMMENTARY



MY TURN

Paranoid Ottoman Sultans Murdered Their Brothers To Secure Their Thrones

by Harut Sassounian

We all know that the Ottoman army invaded many countries with utter savagery. We also know that the Ottoman Empire committed mass killings and genocide against millions of Armenians, Assyrians, Greeks and Kurds. But, not everyone knows that the Ottoman sultans routinely murdered their own family members.

I recently saw an incredible YouTube video that documented the barbaric behavior of the Ottoman sultans. According to the 13-minute-long video, Ottoman leaders were engaged in “dark and messed-up practices.” The video is titled: “Creepy things that were ‘normal’ in the Ottoman Empire.” YouTube shows that the video was posted on October 15, 2021, and in less than six months, 640,975 people viewed the video of which 10,000 checked “like.” This means that more than 640,000 people are now aware of the brutalities of the Ottoman Sultans.

Here is a partial transcript of the video:

“When [Sultan] Mehmed the Conqueror besieged Constantinople, his own uncle was fighting against him from the walls. In typical Ottoman fashion, Mehmed dealt with his uncle offering no mercy, and after he took the throne, he had a message for future generations of Ottomans. He began rounding up all of his male relatives and executed them. His ruthlessness didn’t even have an exception for his younger brother who was just an infant in the crib. Mehmet had him asphyxiated without batting an eye. Once Mehmet was done disposing all his possible competitors for the throne, he proclaimed: ‘Whomsoever of my sons the Sultanate shall pass, it is fitting that for the order of the world he shall kill his brothers. Most of the Ulema [high-ranking religious leaders] allow this. So let them act on this.’

“Thus began a series of generational civil wars where every next sultan, successor of the Ottoman Empire, had to soak their hands in their own brothers,’ cousins,’ and uncles’ blood to secure the throne for themselves. It is said that another Mehmet, Mehmed III, was so heartbroken that he tore his beard off in agony as his younger brother begged for mercy and swore, again and again, to never raise a weapon against him. Yet, bound by the family traditions, Mehmed III turned away without speaking a word and the loyalists killed the

young boy along with the rest of the 18 brothers of Mehmed III. Bodies of all 19 siblings were out on the streets of Istanbul and it is said that the whole city cried for the souls that night. Mind you, the murders would not just stop after the new Sultan would secure the throne. The hunt for all of the Royal family’s relatives would be carried on relentlessly.

“Even Suleiman the Magnificent’s hands weren’t clean as he had his son asphyxiated on the streets with a bowstring just because his popularity had become a matter of paranoia for the most acclaimed Sultan of the Ottomans. However, when Ahmed the First abruptly died in 1617, a general agreement was struck between the relatives and the family he left behind. Instead of drenching the streets of Istanbul with royal blood this time, the clergy quietly established the practice of primogeniture [the firstborn son’s right of succession] and announced his younger brother Mustafa the First as the new sultan, because Ahmed’s sons were too young to rule. Mustafa himself was spared by his brother Ahmed the First as the 12-year-old and his 13-year-old brothers were too close to order death toward one another.

“Since then, the policy of killing relatives changed to incarcerating them. Potential heirs to the throne would be confined in the Topkapi Palace. In Istanbul, these special apartments would be referred to as the ‘kafes,’ however, in English this translates to the ‘cages.’ A prince of the Ottoman Empire would have to possibly spend his whole life imprisoned in the ‘kafes’ while being monitored day and night by guards. These princes were given all sorts of luxury and they were able to live a lavish lifestyle fit for royal kin, but the restrictions of house arrest were enforced strictly. This caused many of the princes to go mad from boredom or become heavily debauched. When a new Sultan would be taken to the [palace’s] Gate of Felicity to receive the allegiance of the viziers (Ministers), that very well would be the first time for him to be outside in decades! Not an ideal preparation for a man who is about to become the ruler, was it? And even though the ritualistic civil wars were put to an end, the royal relatives would still live their lives in constant fear of losing their heads at any second.”

The second half of the video describes the isolated life of the Sultan in his palace with his many concubines in the harem, overseen by the Sultan’s mother. We know that some of these women were young Armenian girls. The unnamed author of the video also described the beheadings in the palace and the two pillars on which the severed heads would hang.

From now on if anyone tells you that the Ottoman Empire was tolerant and civilized, you can send them a copy of this article or refer them to the above referenced YouTube video. That should shut them up.

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Confusion and desperation are spreading amongst the population of Karabakh. Officially, 117,000 Armenians live in that enclave. Their tenacity is amazing: despite all odds, they are taking care of their land. Every citizen in Karabakh is a vote for the survival of that self-declared republic. There are still 22,000 Karabakh refugees in Armenia who are willing to return to that devastated land and defend it. Instead of helping them, Armenia’s government is distributing funds to political parties outside the parliament for buying influence. Again, domestic petty politics take priority over the very existence of Karabakh.

There is uncertainty in and around Karabakh. President Arayik Harutyunyan of Karabakh has appealed to Moscow to increase the number of its peacekeepers there to enhance security. As Ossetia prepares to join Russia in the Union State, that initiative has fueled the imagination of some Karabakh politicians. Hayk Khanumyan, the Karabakh minister of local government and public infrastructure, said in an interview, “This is what is fueling calls by some Karabakh Armenians for a referendum on becoming part of Russia.”

Unfortunately, Karabakh is not the endgame in Turkey’s and Azerbaijan’s political playbook. They have been brutally honest in their plans, and arrogantly vociferous that after Karabakh, it is Zangezur, and perhaps all of Armenia itself, which Mr. Aliyev calls historic Azerbaijan. Zangezur is a precious slice of land for Azerbaijan, a gateway for Turkey to unite Central Asian republics to its Turanic empire, while for the west it is the final state of encirclement and containment of Russia.

What Could the Armenian Diaspora Learn from the Israeli Diaspora?

By Gary Gyultemiryan
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

Tensions between people in their homelands and their respective diasporas are not unusual. Israel and Armenia are no exceptions. I use Israel as an example because of its similar characteristics to Armenia. First, Armenians and Jews are ancient peoples who have survived subjugation to one empire after another, through which they have maintained their identities. Second, both nations are relatively young as independent states. Armenia gained its independence in 1991 and Israel in 1948. Lastly, both nations enjoy influential and vibrant diasporas.

What makes the Jewish diaspora unique, however, is its foundational belief that Israel must survive; its concerns are primarily related to survival. While some Jewish communities returned to Israel, others chose not to and thus joined the Jewish diaspora, assisting Israel from abroad by financially backing social, political, and economic endeavors.

Here, I want to address the financial partnership between Israel and its diaspora and how this can be a model for Armenia moving forward. For a nation like Armenia to endure, it needs a strong economy to finance and raise a formidable military. Without this, Armenia is inevitably endangering her existence.

When Israel became a state in 1948, many Eastern European Jews began the repatriation process to their newly independent homeland, doubling its population within the first five years and leading to exponential growth in subsequent decades. This vast growth resulted in a scarcity of resources for its growing population, especially in developing neighborhoods across the country.

To socially and economically improve these neighborhoods, the state of Israel initiated a national plan in conjunction with the Jewish diaspora to help build these neighborhoods into strong economic and social communities. Project Renewal was launched. This was a joint program of the government of Israel and the Jewish Agency to support financially distressed neighborhoods, targeting 82 Jewish communities in Israel for rehabilitation.

Project Renewal had basic principles all parties had to abide by. Here is a brief summary. Its projects must be joint efforts involving Israeli government ministries, municipal authorities, local residents, and Jewish communities from abroad. To partici-

pate in this program, a particular diaspora group must be matched with a particular stressed Jewish community/neighborhood. This is referred to as twinning. There must be a comprehensive approach, addressing all matters of Jewish life. The communities/neighborhoods for which the funds are allocated must take an active role in the process. Each project should have a timetable for its completion.

Such an orderly and multifaceted venture, indeed, has had a seismic economic impact on the flourishing of the state of Israel and its communities. Additionally, it has brought forth a model for the Jewish diaspora to move forward, and be active politically, socially, and economically by supporting such meaningful measures for Israel. This, and other similar programs, allowed Israel to have one of the highest GDP per capita at \$43,000 in the year 2020. To put this into perspective, during the same period, the Russian and Chinese GDP’s per capita were about \$10,000 each. Nations possessing strong and modern militaries rely on a sound economy, through which they can finance a robust military.

Can Armenia implement its own version of the Renewal Program? Unequivocally, yes! Armenia needs to reconsider the level of dependency on foreign aid and foreign remittances from family and friends as a source of economic growth.

Historically, international foreign aid has not satisfied its purported purpose for the nation that is the recipient of the foreign aid. A cursory reading of the literature on foreign aid demonstrates its inability to generate meaningful economic progress.

Moving toward a working economic model should be the focus of Armenia and its diaspora. Current economic revitalization attempts have proved to be futile and/or sluggish. At present, there are no such programs to help Armenia in any strategic and coordinated manner. If we wish to see an economically thriving and secure Armenia, a variation of the Renewal Project should be seriously considered. Incentivize the venture, so all parties, diaspora and the local Armenian communities have a stake in seeing the mission through.

Gary Gyultemiryan resides in Glendale, California. He has a philosophy degree from the University of Biola and is currently teaching history at iQ Academy.

As Another Genocide Looms, Western Virtue-Signaling Won’t Cut It

By Michael Rubin

The West failed to prevent the atrocities in Ukraine by dithering in the weeks before the Russian invasion.

“Every year, politicians repeat ‘Never again.’ And now, we see that these words are simply worthless.” So said Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky last month.

The images of Ukrainians, bound, beaten, and raped before their execution by retreating Russian forces in the Kyiv suburb of Bucha, give his words new resonance.

U.S. politicians have affirmed his frustration. “It’s crucial to all of us who are committed to living up to the maxim of ‘Never again’ ... to spot the signs of the worst atrocities [so] we’re empowered to prevent them,” Secretary of State Antony Blinken declared at the Holocaust Museum just two weeks ago.

Virtue-signaling is a placebo, not a remedy. It’s increasingly clear that the Biden administration has not learned any lessons from its mistakes.

Just over 18 months ago, Nagorno-Karabakh exploded into war. Azerbaijan,

backed by Turkish Special Forces and equipped with Israeli drones, launched a surprise attack on the centenary of the Ottoman Turkish invasion on newly independent Armenia. Azerbaijani dictator Ilham Aliyev’s eliminationist rhetoric left little doubt that the 44-day war was motivated less by territorial dispute and more by ethnic and religious supremacism. To underscore the point, Azeri forces systematical-

The 2020 war ended with a shaky ceasefire secured by Russian peacekeepers. In recent days, as the Kremlin withdrew many of these forces to support its languishing campaign in Ukraine, Azerbaijan has gone on the offensive, pushing into Armenian villages and targeting Armenians with drones. Minsk Group monitors have found Azerbaijan to be the aggressor, although Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan

the offensive, Blinken not only responds with moral equivalence but also appears ready to finance Azerbaijan’s war machine by waiving again Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act. It appears that Blinken wants to let Azerbaijan off the hook in the hope that it might assist Washington’s policies in Ukraine and Iran. This approach ignores both the letter of Section 907 and the fact that Azerbaijan, like Turkey, plays both sides of the issue.

In essence, the Biden administration is repeating the same mistakes it did in the run-up to Russian aggression against Ukraine: It telegraphs indecisiveness, if not impotence, in the face of an aggressor’s genocidal rhetoric and refuses to apply sanctions while they might save lives. Blinken and members of Congress might say “never again,” but increasingly, when it comes to caviar diplomacy, it appears they mean, “Well, maybe one more time.”

Michael Rubin (@mrubin1971) is a contributor to the Washington Examiner’s Beltway Confidential. He is a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute. This commentary originally appeared in the April 4 edition of the Washington Examiner.

THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION IS REPEATING THE SAME MISTAKES IT DID IN THE RUN-UP TO RUSSIAN AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE: IT TELEGRAPHS INDECISIVENESS, IF NOT IMPOTENCE, IN THE FACE OF AN AGGRESSOR’S GENOCIDAL RHETORIC AND REFUSES TO APPLY SANCTIONS WHILE THEY MIGHT SAVE LIVES.

ly desecrated and destroyed centuries-old Armenian Christian sites in a territory predominantly populated by Armenians (but assigned by Josef Stalin to Azerbaijan). To support his aggression, Aliyev has said Armenians “have psychological disorders,” called them “a depraved tribe,” and compared them to dogs.

gives Aliyev cover in the same way he once did after the International Criminal Court indicted Sudanese dictator Omar al Bashir for genocide in Darfur. Then, he dismissed criticism of his embrace of Bashir by saying “no Muslim could perpetrate a genocide.”

As Azerbaijani forces once again go on

US Calls for Russia’s Suspension from UN Human Rights Council

WASHINGTON (Reuters) — The United States will ask the U.N. General Assembly to suspend Russia from the Human Rights Council, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations said on Monday, after Ukraine accused Russian troops of killing dozens of civilians in the town of Bucha.

A two-thirds majority vote by the 193-member assembly in New York can suspend a state for persistently committing gross and systematic violations of human rights.

“Russia’s participation on the Human Rights Council is a farce,” U.S. Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield said on a visit to Romania.



U.S. Ambassador to the UN Linda Thomas-Greenfield

“And it is wrong, which is why we believe it is time the UN General Assembly vote to remove them.”

Ukraine said that it will use all “available UN mechanisms” to collect evidence on Russia’s crimes in the country.

“No place for Russia on the UN Human Rights Council,” Ukraine’s Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said.

Thomas-Greenfield said she wants to have the vote this week.

Since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine began on Feb. 24, the Assembly has adopted two resolutions denouncing Russia with 140 votes in favor. Moscow says it is carrying out a “special operation” to demilitarize Ukraine.

Bucha’s deputy mayor said around 50 bodies found after Russian forces withdrew were the victims of extra-judicial killings by Russian troops.

Reuters was not able to independently verify who was responsible for killing those Bucha residents.



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