

Biden Waives Section 907 Again for Azerbaijan

WASHINGTON — Despite ongoing Azerbaijani aggression against Armenia and Artsakh, President Joe Biden has, yet again, waived Section 907 restrictions on U.S. aid to Azerbaijan, clearing the way for continued U.S. assistance to the Aliyev regime, reported the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA).

“President Biden’s decision to green-light military aid to Azerbaijan by waiving Section 907, again, emboldens President Aliyev to continue his illegal imprisonment of Armenian POWs, deadly attacks against Artsakh, and ongoing occupation of sovereign Armenian territory,” said ANCA Executive Director Aram Hamparian. “The



“PRESIDENT BIDEN’S DECISION TO GREEN-LIGHT MILITARY AID TO AZERBAIJAN BY WAIVING SECTION 907, AGAIN, EMBOLDENS PRESIDENT ALIYEV TO CONTINUE HIS ILLEGAL IMPRISONMENT OF ARMENIAN POWS, DEADLY ATTACKS AGAINST ARTSAKH, AND ONGOING OCCUPATION OF SOVEREIGN ARMENIAN TERRITORY.”

—ANCA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ARAM HAMPARIAN.

ANCA will continue to work with U.S. Senate and House leaders to zero-out U.S. military aid to Azerbaijan and restrict presidential waiver authority of Section 907.”

During his run for office, on October 14, 2020, then-candidate Biden stated that the United States must “fully implement and not waive requirements under Section 907

of the Freedom Support Act to stop the flow of military equipment to Azerbaijan.” As President, he first reversed his position on the issue on April 23, 2021 — on the eve of his historic announcement properly recognizing the Armenian Genocide. “American recognition of the Armenian Genocide comes with responsibilities, among them not arming or abetting Azerbaijan’s drive to complete this crime,” commented Hamparian at the time. “Any action by President Biden that green-lights U.S. aid to the Aliyev regime runs counter to his clear stand and, more profoundly, the spirit of his recent recognition of the Armenian Genocide.”

see 907, page 20



David Hockney Untitled (Portrait of Joan), 1991, Polaroid and Xerox collage 27” x 11” Courtesy of the Joan and Jack Quinn Family Collection

Quinn Exhibit Brings LA Cool to Armenian Museum

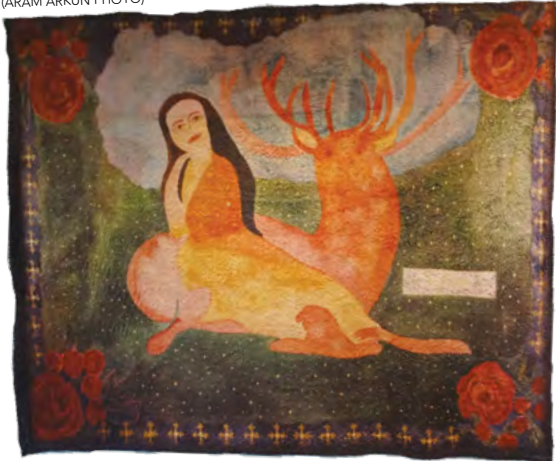
By Alin K. Gregorian
Mirror-Spectator Staff

WATERTOWN — The dual exhibits, “On the Edge: Los Angeles Art 1970s - 1990s from the Joan & Jack Quinn Family Collection” and “Discovering Takouhi: Portraits of Joan Agagianian Quinn,” currently on display at the Armenian Museum of America, merge the two facets of this woman: muse and supporter of the cool LA art scene as well as society patron in the Armenian community. It is hard to imagine anyone else able to draw a direct line connecting Andy Warhol to the Armenian International Women’s Association. Quinn does, however, and is equally at home in both worlds.

The exhibits, which will be on display through November 30, feature remarkable works of art

from some of the most notable post-modernist and Pop artists, including Ed Ruscha, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Andy Warhol and David Hockney, as well as many notable artists from Armenia, which the Quinns see EXHIBIT, page 10

(ARAM ARKUN PHOTO)



“Taquhie,” 2013, Watercolor painting on fleece, by Lenore Tolegian Hughes

Armenia’s Chief Judicial Officer Refuses to Quit Over Audio Scandal

By Naira Nalbandian, Karlen Aslanian

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — Gagik Jhangiryan, the controversial acting head of Armenia’s judicial watchdog, has dismissed calls for his resignation sparked by leaked audio in which he appeared to blackmail his predecessor at loggerheads with the government.

“I have never been forced by any political force, alliance to tender resignation,” the former senior prosecutor told Armenian Public Television in an interview aired late on Thursday, June 23.



Ruben Vartazaryan, the previous chairman of the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC), publicized on Monday a 14-minute audio clip which he secretly recorded during a dinner meeting with Jhangiryan in February 2021. The meeting took place two months before Vartazaryan was controversially suspended as SJC chairman amid rising tensions with Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan.

In the recording full of profanities uttered by him, Jhangiryan can be heard seemingly warning Vartazaryan to resign or face criminal charges. He says that he has already blocked the opening of one or two criminal cases against the latter.

Speaking to the state-controlled TV channel, Jhangiryan claimed that he was not in a position to trigger or halt any criminal proceedings and simply

SCANDAL, page 2

Glorikian’s New Book Sheds Light on Artificial Intelligence Advances in Healthcare

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

WATERTOWN — Like many of us, I usually tend to keep up with developments in technology as they reach us in dribs and drabs, without really paying attention to the overall picture. Yet according to some experts, we are in a period of transformation of all aspects of life and society as revolutionary as that of the original Industrial Revolution.

Healthcare entrepreneur and global business expert Harry Glorikian focuses our attention on how artificial intelligence (AI) and big data during this transformation affect healthcare in his new book *The Future You: How Artificial Intelligence Can Help You Get Healthier, Stress Less, and Live Longer* (Dering Harbor, New York: Brick Tower Press, 2021).

see HEALTHCARE, page 14



WASHINGTON, DC
President Biden Nominates New Ambassador to Armenia



GERMANY
The Virtuoso Fiddler of the Mediterranean



Mirror-Spectator Annual Vacation

WATERTOWN — *The Armenian Mirror-Spectator* will close for its annual two-week vacation in early July. This is last issue of the *Mirror* before the vacation. The first issue back will be that of July 23.

Enjoy a safe and healthy summer.



ARMENIA

NEWS from ARMENIA

Azerbaijan Canceled Meeting with Armenia, Pashinyan Says

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has said that Azerbaijan has canceled a meeting between Secretary of Armenia's Security Council Armen Grigoryan and Azerbaijani presidential aide Hikmet Hajiyev.

Pashinyan said on June 27 the meeting was to be held in Brussels.

According to him, Yerevan has also proposed a meeting between the Foreign Ministers but no response has been received from Baku so far. Pashinyan said Azerbaijan's claims that Armenia is allegedly delaying negotiations on a peace treaty are "strange".

Following Pashinyan's remarks, media reports from Azerbaijan cited a diplomatic source as saying that the meeting in Brussels did not take place because there were "real reasons" for that.

Parliament Majority 'Divided' on Ouster of Opposition MPs

YEREVAN (Panoarama.am) — The Armenian parliament leadership affiliated with the ruling Civil Contract party will soon discuss stripping opposition lawmakers boycotting parliament sessions of their seats, Speaker Alen Simonyan told reporters on June 28.

Meanwhile, he said the parliament majority is "divided" on the matter.

"We are going to discuss both within the faction and the board whether or not to strip opposition MPs of their seats, since the law provides such an opportunity. There are two points of view on this matter. Some believe that the opposition has already stripped itself of its mandates in one way or another. I myself do not imagine how our colleagues can return to this hall after setting the bar so high and failing," he said.

He said at least 10 opposition lawmakers may be formally accused of absenteeism.

Politician Claims Amb. Has Yet to Present Credentials In Russia

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — Armenian Ambassador to Russia Vagharshak Harutyunyan, who took office in January, has not yet presented his credentials to Russian President Vladimir Putin, public and political activist Edgar Ghazaryan said on June 28.

"Vagharshak Harutyunyan, who was appointed Armenia's Ambassador to Russia on January 5 as a reward for assisting [Prime Minister] Nikol Pashinyan in ceding the homeland to the enemy, has not yet handed over his credentials to the Russian leader. Thus, under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations his diplomatic mission in Russia has not yet officially begun," he wrote on Facebook.

The politician recalled that Nikol Pashinyan paid two visits to Russia during this period as did President Vahagn Khachaturyan in June to meet with Putin.

Media Boycotts Pashinyan's Virtual Press Conferences, Calling them 'Non-Democratic'

By Ani Avetisyan

YEREVAN (OC Media) — In two separate statements, over five dozen media organizations in Armenia condemned Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's continued holding of press conferences online, calling the format "non-democratic."

On Friday evening, the *Armenian Times* (*Haykakan Zhamanak*) newspaper, which is majority-owned by Pashinyan's mother-in-law, citing their "sources" in the government, reported that Pashinyan was about to announce a press conference — with questions to the Prime Minister read by a presenter employed by Armenia's Public Broadcaster.

On Saturday, that information was confirmed by the Prime Minister's staff. The press conference is to be held at 8 p.m. on June 27.

Shortly after *Armenian Times* published its news about the press conference, a group of editors, primarily employed by pro-opposition or opposition-leaning media outlets, issued a statement declaring a boycott of the press conference and refusing to send questions. The group included the editors of the Armenian Democratic Liberal publications *Azg* of Armenia and *Zartank* of Lebanon.

"The previous experience has proved that such 'online contacts' take place in a prepared scenario; only the questions from the pro-government media, Telegram channels, and bloggers are publicized during these events, who, apparently, agree in advance with the organizers of the event, and in the case of the questions by other media — they are either ignored, edited or distorted," the statement reads.

As of publication, over three dozen editors have added their names to the joint statement declaring the boycott.

In another statement, a small number of larger non-partisan media outlets, including Azatutyun, the Armenian service of RFE/RL, and CivilNet condemned the format of the press conference and reoccurring cases of questions that were submitted being edited or distorted.

"We deem this form of interaction with

the media by the country's ruler discriminatory, ineffective, and in contradiction with the core principles of democracy, transparency, and accountability," the statement reads.

Hakob Karapetyan, the editor-in-chief of Armenian fact-checking platform Fact Investigation Platform and one of the initiators of the statement, told OC Media one of the reasons for initiating the statement was the "leak" of the information by the *Armenian Times* and a concern that the questions sent to the prime minister would risk being edited and distorted again.

"The Prime Minister considers the democratization of the country and the transparency of his government as one of the main achievements," Karapetyan told OC Media. "We wanted to send a warning or a signal to them that such actions do not sup-

port the democratization of the country."

Pashinyan has been holding online press conferences since 2021, citing the COVID-19 pandemics as a reason for the new format instead of pre-covid and pre-war more often and open communication with the local media outlets.

However, media organizations have repeatedly complained that the questions they sent to the Prime Minister's staff were either edited and distorted or not given to Pashinyan.

Prior to the conference, several pro-Pashinyan politicians criticized the media outlets that signed the two statements. Taron Chakhoyan, the deputy head of prime minister's staff accused the pro-opposition and opposition-leaning media outlets of not being professional and serving the interest of those "seeking revanchism."

Vanetsyan Confirms Split From Opposition Coalition

By Astghik Bedevian

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — Former National Security Service (NSS) Director Artur Vanetsyan has confirmed that his Fatherland party is parting ways with other major opposition forces that have been jointly trying to topple Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan with street protests.

Vanetsyan said on Tuesday that he is resigning his parliament seat because he believes the National Assembly has "ceased to be an effective platform" for challenging the Armenian government. He also announced the breakup of Fatherland's Pativ Unem alliance with former President Serzh Sarkisian's Republican Party (HHK).

In an interview with Armenian Public Television aired hours later, Vanetsyan said he is "separating" from the HHK and the main opposition Hayastan bloc headed by another ex-president, Robert Kocharyan.

"I have my agenda and follow my agenda," he said. "There are certain differences on the ways of achieving the ultimate [opposition] goal... Let me not go into details now. You will see my further actions."

The HHK's deputy chairman, Armen Ashotyan, acknowledged "tactical" differences with Vanetsyan's party but did not elaborate on them. He stressed that the country's main opposition forces still share the same "strategic goals."

Gegham Manukyan, a lawmaker representing Hayastan, said he "respects" Vanetsyan's decision and believes their "joint struggle" against Pashinyan will continue. He also made clear that Kocharyan's bloc will not give up its 29 seats in the 107-member parliament.

Ashotyan hinted that the four lawmakers affiliated with the HHK also have no plans to resign from parliament.

Pativ Unem and Hayastan on May 1 launched daily demonstrations aimed at forcing Pashinyan to resign. In what they called a change of tactics, opposition leaders announced on June 14 that they will now hold antigovernment rallies in Yerevan on a weekly basis.

Chief Judicial Officer Refuses to Quit Over Audio Scandal

SCANDAL, from page 1

tried to trick Vartazaryan into resigning.

"Do you think that Mr. Vartazaryan would write a resignation letter if he knew that there will be cases against him and no guarantees that he will not be punished later on?" he said, adding that he simply used "psychological plays."

Opposition and civic groups are bound to brush aside this explanation. They have said that Jhangiryan must be not only sacked but also prosecuted for what they see as blackmail and illegal interference in the work of law-enforcement agencies.

One of those agencies, the Investigative Committee, reportedly interrogated Vartazaryan on Thursday in a preliminary inquiry into the audio scandal. It is not clear whether the committee will also question Jhangiryan.

Despite the uproar, the SJC has refused to even start disciplinary proceedings against its acting chairman. The powerful body, which nominates Armenian judges and can also fire them, instead formally dismissed Vartazaryan as its nominal chairman and member on Thursday.

Jhangiryan also says in the leaked record-

ing that a key motive behind his attempts to convince Vartazaryan to quit is to prevent Robert Kocharian, a former president and Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's leading political foe, from returning to power.

Jhangiryan told Public Television, however, that he was solely motivated by the need for sweeping judicial reforms in Armenia. He claimed that implementation of such reforms has been his lifetime "mission."

The 67-year-old was accused of grave human rights violations when he served as Armenia's chief military prosecutor and deputy prosecutor-general in 1997-2006 and 2006-2008 respectively. Local human rights activists say that official cover-ups of crimes committed in the armed forces were the norm during his tenure.

"I know him as a bad military prosecutor who neglected people and covered up cases," one such activist, Zhanna Aleksanian, told RFE/RL's Armenian Service. "Putting him at the helm of the judiciary was absurd."

"He should not have been appointed to such a position," said Aleksanian. "He has a very bad biography."

Jhangiryan was appointed as a member of the SJC in January 2021 by the Armenian

parliament controlled by Pashinyan's Civil Contract party. Lawmakers representing the party remained reluctant on Friday to comment on the audio scandal and the resulting calls for Jhangiryan's resignation.

Opposition leaders have portrayed the recording as further proof of their claims that Western-backed "judicial reforms" declared by Pashinyan's administration are in fact aimed at increasing government influence on Armenian courts.

In a statement issued earlier this week, the main opposition Hayastan alliance urged the US and European Union ambassadors in Yerevan to comment on the scandal and say whether they still support the stated reforms.

Taguhi Tovmasyan, the chairwoman of the Armenian parliament's human rights committee affiliated with another opposition group, said on June 24 that she has sent the transcript of the recording to international organizations for the same purpose.

She said she asked them to answer the following question: "How can the Supreme Judicial Council interfere in any criminal case for political considerations in a country that has declared itself democratic?"



ARMENIA

Despite Threats of Deportation, Residents of Aghavno Refuse to Leave

PM Nikol Pashinyan's recent statements around the Lachin corridor, particularly about the handover of Aghavno and Berdzor, have triggered an emotional outburst in the Armenian society.

By Lilit Shahverdyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

AGHAVNO, Artsakh — In the south of Artsakh Republic, within the Lachin corridor, now controlled by the Russian peace-keeping forces, lies a village with red-roofed buildings built along parallel streets. That is Aghavno, nestled along the scenic Aghavno river, the first village that welcomes visitors to Artsakh with its vibrant colors and nature. And even more attractive than the houses are the people, strong and determined, who refused to leave the village throughout the last two years, being only two kilometers far from the enemies' troops.

After the 44-Day War in 2020, the authorities of Artsakh and the Russian peacekeepers demanded that the villagers leave. As the residents resisted, the village remained Armenian, becoming a silver lining for a stronger future. However, the situation gets tense by leaps and bounds. On June 27, Armenian Prime Minister Pashinyan [announced](#) that the territories outside of the former Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast would pass to Azerbaijan, which technically implies a deportation of people from Aghavno and Berdzor.

Azerbaijan is now constructing a new road to connect Artsakh with Armenia, which can be seen from the village. During the past few months, there have been rumors that the corridor and Aghavno will ultimately be handed over to Azerbaijan, even as Armenians still live there. Aghavno's mayor, Andranik Chavushyan, said that they have no intention of leaving their homes regardless of any political agreements. Only a few of them returned when the vestiges of war were still present, but ultimately 185 people of 270 arrived back.

Anna Tadevosyan, the 42-year-old housewife, settled in Aghavno in 1993.

"Though some people were broke after the 2020 war and even carried their belongings out of the village, they still returned. It's our home and land, and we will stay loyal to it," she recalled.

During the 44-Day War, Tadevosyan baked bread in Stepanakert to serve the Armenian soldiers on the frontline. As bombs were going off in the capital city every day, she was the one to inspire hope in others with her strength and endurance.

"My colleagues were always surprised to see me smiling. And I always told them that if the sun rose again and we didn't blow up yet, then it's a reason to feel happy," she said.

The villagers perceived the commands to leave Aghavno in December 2020 differently: while some immediately packed up, others, including Tadevosyan, refused to flee. Tadevosyan encouraged the residents, as many stayed after seeing her and her mother in the village. When the Tadevosyans moved to Aghavno in 1993, there were only two other families who fled from Maragha (an village taken over by the Azerbaijani forces in April 1992). They were among the first to give a new life to Zabukh village, which later was renamed Aghavno.

"This is our home, and that's it." This is the mood in the village," said Tadevosyan. "People were hopeless after the war, but now we are returning to our pre-war routine. We are worried about our children, but overall, we are not scared. I see people planting new trees as they have hopes for the future," she added.

The new route can be seen from the Lachin corridor. It already alerts the villagers of the possibility of facing the same patterns of December 1, 2020 - a new order from on high to vacate the territory. However, the residents are seemingly determined to disobey and stand their ground. Amid constant threats, life is still flourishing in the village.

The headmaster Poghos Aghabekyan said the school saw a student overflow, but some locals left it. Before the 44-day war, 48 students, who were village resi-

Azerbaijani state road agency [published](#) the most recent photographs of asphaltting the road, which will be 32km long and will bypass Berdzor, Aghavno, and other localities. The fates of the pipeline, the high-voltage power line, and the internet channel that passes through the Lachin corridor, also remain unrevealed, the loss of which will have crucial consequences for the Armenians of Artsakh.

A day after Pashinyan's comments on the handover of the Lachin corridor, "Artsakh-

should ensure the transportation of gas, electricity, telephone, and internet routes from Armenia to Artsakh to the area of an alternative corridor."

Amid apparent threats of a handover, Chavushyan believes everything depends on the people's endurance and will to stay in their homes.

"It is not a desperate situation; we work and try to change the outcome. I see people have planted more trees this year because, in the last stage, they learned not to give up,



Aghavno village (Lilit Shahverdyan photo for Eurasianet.org)

dents, studied at Aghavno school. As of June 2022, around half of the 55 students come from Berdzor and other neighboring communities, and the other half are from Aghavno. Besides the regular school program, the students in Aghavno learn embroidery, playing the piano and guitar, and theatrical art due to [Mshakutamet](#). Mshakutamet was founded during the 2020 war and aims to send volunteer teachers to rural schools to hold classes like music, dances, sewing, and reading in interactive ways. To bolster the Armenian traditions in the village, Mshakutamet representatives in Aghavno organized a [Palm Sunday celebration](#) in April 2022.

"We believed that it's the national music and dances that elevate people's spirit. We saw that our schools failed in educating children culturally, and we decided to start with music and dances," Arusyak Mkrtchyan, the piano teacher, said.

Arusyak, Shushan, and Nairi came to Aghavno as teachers, but they built strong relationships with the schoolchildren, and the teacher-student relationship grew into deep friendships. Gathering by the river became a tradition to unite generations and is always accompanied by singing and guitar music. However, the post-war traumas resided deep inside the children's souls, and even insignificant events reopen their wounds.

"One of my students missed class because of the rain. He said the thunder sounded like an explosion, and he was scared to leave the house," recalled Mkrtchyan.

Aghavno and Berdzor are hotspots again as Azerbaijan is finishing the new route construction. According to the [trilateral agreement](#) of November 10, the new route to connect Artsakh with Armenia should be completed within the next three years. However, Azerbaijan kick-started the construction at an accelerated pace. The

gaz" [announced](#) that for technical reasons, gas will be cut off throughout the territory of Artsakh Republic from June 29 to July 5. Many connected this incident with the developments around the Lachin corridor, through which the pipelines pass.

One of the political activists, a member of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), [Nairi Hokhikyan](#), urged the Armenians to move and live in Berdzor and show support to the locals. He claimed that Azerbaijan leader Ilham Aliyev's goal is to hang the Azerbaijani flag in Berdzor, which the Armenians could prevent by populating the town and its neighborhood. He [wrote](#) that "we must achieve that the Russian peacekeepers stay in Lachin on July 1, and

to be self-confident," he said.

Chavushyan recalled that residents self-organized in the village during the 2020 war, and had a military detachment to protect Aghavno from the opponent and looters. Recalling the victory in the First Nagorno-Karabakh war, he assured that the quantity of people does not matter if they unite around one idea: protecting the land.

"Aghavni" is the word for dove in Armenia, and the name of the village derives from it.

"Doves symbolize peace and serenity, but they attack with their wings to protect their babies. And the 185 people in Aghavno live under the same motto," Chavushyan said.

Mirror-Spectator Wins Diaspora Media Award

YEREVAN (Zartong) — The annual Armenian PR Awards, held since 2015, this year took place on June 22 in Yeraz Park. The winners in the Diaspora Media category included two organs of the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (ADL), the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* of the US and *Zartong* of Lebanon. The third winner was Horizon Armenian TV of the US.

The award is based on the following research: professional inquiries in the public-private sector among public relations specialists; expert surveys

of the main media outlets operating in Armenia, and editors and journalists; in-depth interviews with independent public relations experts by the research team of the Armenian PR Awards; monitoring carried out by means of professional tools.

The results of the research are summarized by Armenian PR's independent professional committee for the award ceremony, which consists of the best communication specialists of the USA, Russia, European Union and Armenia, who are engaged in scientific research and have no conflict of interest.

THE ARMENIAN
**MIRROR
SPECTATOR**

INTERNATIONAL

Russia, Azerbaijan Sign Security Cooperation Deal

MOSCOW (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Russia and Azerbaijan on June 24 signed an agreement on cooperation in the field of security, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said, Interfax.az reports.

“This document concerns security in cyberspace,” Lavrov told a briefing in Baku on Friday following talks with Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov.

Bayramov and Lavrov noted that they also discussed topics of economic cooperation, issues of the Caspian Sea, the development of the North-South transport corridor, cooperation between the media of Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation.

Armenian, Turkish Special Envoys to meet in Vienna

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — The next meeting of the Armenian and Turkish special representatives for normalization of relations is scheduled to take place in Vienna on July 1, Foreign Ministry spokesman Vahan Hunanyan said on June 28.

Ruben Rubinyan and Serdar Kilic met for the first time in Moscow on January 14. They held their second and third rounds of talks on normalizing bilateral ties in Vienna on February 24 and May 3.

Book on Evidence of Genocide in German Archives Published in Persian

YEREVAN (News.am) — *The Armenian Genocide: Evidence from the Archives of the German Foreign Office Archives, 1915-1916*, compiled and edited by German journalist Wolfgang Gust, has been published in Persian.

As the *Tehran Times* writes, the extermination of Armenians in 1915-1916 has become the archetype of modern genocide, in which the state adopts a specific scheme to exterminate a particular group of citizens.

Official German diplomatic documents are important for understanding the Genocide, as only Germany reported the ongoing genocide in secret code day after day.

Azerbaijan's Artillery Units Conduct Live-Fire Exercises

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — The Rocket and Artillery Units of the Azerbaijani Army are conducting live-fire tactical exercises this week, Azerbaijan's Defense Ministry has said, according to local media reports.

“During the exercises, held to improve fire control skills in cooperation with other types of troops and the command staff's prompt decision-making abilities, as well as field and practical skills of military personnel, artillery units were withdrawn to assembly areas and took firing positions in designated areas,” the ministry said.

Pashinyan: ‘Baku Is Trying to Legitimize Another War’

YEREVAN (JAMnews) — “Baku wants to legitimize another war, therefore it refuses dialogue, publicly accusing Armenia [of refusing to participate in the negotiations],” the Armenian prime minister said on June 27. After a five-month break, Nikol Pashinyan held another online press conference, boycotted by a majority of media outlets. (See related story in this section.)

Speaking about the complicated relations with Azerbaijan, Pashinyan stressed that the unblocking of economic and transport communications in the region is the obligation of both countries. This is not a unilateral demand to Armenia, but a point of a joint statement signed with Azerbaijan on the cessation of hostilities in Karabakh.

“But Azerbaijan is trying to resolve the issue in a way that would leave Armenia in the blockade,” Pashinyan stressed.

According to him, the choice of routes for unblocking the region is small, a maximum of five options can be considered. But Baku is trying to politicize this technical issue, the prime minister believes:

“No one can be more interested in the issue of [unblocking] routes than we are. Because we are faced with the task of sending as much international transit as possible along these roads, which will bring income to Armenia”.

According to the prime minister, Baku wants to legitimize a new war.

It is for this reason that the Azerbaijani side refuses dialogue, Pashinyan cited a few examples. A meeting of the Secretary of the Security Council of Armenia and the Assistant to the President of Azerbaijan was scheduled for June 27 and was canceled by Baku. Armenia offered to meet at the level of foreign ministers, but has not received an official response yet.

Meanwhile, the president of Azerbaijan earlier accused Armenia of allegedly rejecting a proposal to hold a trilateral meeting in Tbilisi at the level of the foreign ministers of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. And the Armenian Foreign Ministry had to refute this information.

According to Pashinyan, Baku demonstrates the same approach in connection with the work of the commission on the delimitation of the Armenian-Azerbaijani

border. He believes that Azerbaijan is trying in this way to create the impression that Armenia is avoiding participation in the work of the commission:

“However, reality is different. During May, the Azerbaijani side canceled or postponed this meeting twice”.

According to the prime minister, preliminary discussions have already been held with Azerbaijan on the peace treaty and there are agreements to continue work. Therefore, Pashinyan considers “very strange” Baku's statements that “Armenia is dragging out negotiations on a peace agreement.”

“As a result of the discussions, it was decided that the officials of Armenia and Azerbaijan should keep in touch with each other, but we already have at least one such case when Azerbaijan boycotted the work contrary to the agreements,” Pashinyan stressed.

The provisions of the agreement and a number of other issues are yet to be discussed. The prime minister assures that there is no other document at the negotiating table, except for the one already published.

This is a five-point document from Azerbaijan on the principles on which the peace treaty should be based. The Armenian side announced that there is nothing unacceptable in it, but it does not cover the entire agenda of issues to be discussed, and added its 6 points.

During the press conference, Pashinyan also spoke about the transfer of new territories to Azerbaijan. After the completion of the construction of an alternative road to the Lachin corridor, which connects Armenia with NK, the territories outside the former Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region will come under the control of Azerbaijan. This refers to the city of Berdzor (Lachin), as well as the settlements of Agavno and Sus.

“We are solving the problems of the inhabitants of Lachin [the government of Armenia], they, of course, should be provided with apartments. In fact, families do not live in Lachin today. I think that the problems of the residents of the village of Aghavno will be resolved at the expense of the government of Nagorno-Karabakh. I can't say anything about Sus, I don't have

any information at the moment”.

According to the prime minister, the purpose of building a road bypassing Lachin is to provide a “more reliable” road connection between Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. Pashinyan has confirmed that there is a preliminary agreement on the construction of the road and the transfer of territories to Azerbaijan. But the prime minister believes that there can be no question of this happening this or next week.

According to the 2020 tripartite declaration of cessation of war, the route change should take place by agreement of the parties and after three years.

According to Pashinyan, negotiations on this topic are now in progress with Russian partners, since the new route, according to the trilateral statement, should be controlled by Russian peacekeepers.

According to Azerbaijan, 38 Armenian prisoners of war are still being held in Baku. Armenian human rights activists claim that there are many more of them. During a press conference, Pashinyan stated that all those who have reliable evidence that they were captured and can now be on the territory of Azerbaijan are considered “forcibly displaced”. Even a list of these people was compiled, but the prime minister did not say how many people were on it.

Pashinyan emphasized that more than 90 percent of the confirmed prisoners were captured after the entry of Russian peacekeepers into NK, in their zone of responsibility:

“Azerbaijan's policy of not returning prisoners is aimed at discrediting the activities of Russian peacekeepers in Nagorno-Karabakh, in the Lachin corridor”.

He believes that the Armenian side, Russia and the international community should make additional efforts to return the prisoners. The prime minister assesses their retention in Azerbaijan as a violation of the November 9, 2020 tripartite ceasefire statement: “It says that prisoners of war, hostages, and other detainees must be returned to their homeland. There are people who were captured before November 9, and there are those who were later captured. But the November 9 statement does not say that this clause does not concern them.”

An International Network of Armenian Traffickers Dismantled in France

By Julien Coquet

TOURS, France (*La Nouvelle République*) — Nearly eighteen months of investigation led to, according to our information, a wave of arrests, on Tuesday, June 14. In Tours, Blois and Romorantin in particular, a network of criminals originating from Armenia was dismantled by the police. About a dozen people are set to appear in court this Friday, June 17.

They are part of a Mafia gang trafficking young women into prostitution, as part of “sex tours” (in France and abroad), on routes organized from city to city via weekly rented apartments. “They bring them to France from Mol-

dova, Georgia, Romania or Ukraine, install them, manage several girls, ensure their safety too,” says a source. It was during a stay in Tours, scheduled to last a handful of days, that the police officers of the Departmental Police (SD) received information.

Behind the silhouette of the reported young woman, identified in the city center, initial interrogations took place. “Like every time, you ask yourself who she works for and so the wires have to be pulled,” explains one police officer.

The police have little or no knowledge about the majority of those arrested on June 14 because they learned to fly under the radar or through the use of fake papers, which facilitated their installa-

tion in France.

As evidence of the international scale of the case, the Inter-Regional Specialized Jurisdiction of Paris, which handles the most complex criminal cases, piloted the investigation. On the ground, the Central Office for the Suppression of Trafficking in Human Beings took over from SD, alongside the judicial police. The presentation before a magistrate, this Friday, of the ten people arrested at the beginning of the week could precede an indictment. The leaders of “organized gang pimping” and “association of evil doers” are targeted in particular.

(The above article has been translated from the original French.)



INTERNAYIONAL

Armenian Church Representatives Participate in Dialogue Sessions Between Orthodox and Catholic Churches

ROME — The eighteenth meeting of the International Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches took place in Rome from June 20-24, and was hosted by the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity. It was chaired jointly by Cardinal Kurt Koch, Prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Uni-

dox Syrian Church, the Armenian Apostolic Church (Catholicosate of All Armenians and Catholicosate of the Holy See of Cilicia), and the Coptic Orthodox Church. Archbishop Khajag Barsamian and Bishop Tiran Petrosyan were the representatives of the Catholicosate of All Armenians and Bishop Magar Ashkarian and Father Boghos Tinkjian were from the representatives

for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

In the evening of Monday June 20, Cardinal Koch hosted a dinner for the dialogue members in the Casina Pio IV in the Vatican gardens. On the evening of Wednesday, June 22, the members attended Vespers at the Benedictine Collegio di Sant'Anselmo at the invitation of the Rev. Gregory Polan, OSB, Abbot Primate of the Benedictine Confederation, and shared dinner with the community.

On Thursday, June 23, Pope Francis received the members of the Commission for a private audience. Bishop Kyrillos presented to the pope the completed statement of the Commission, "Sacraments in the Life of the Church," and related that the Commission begins a new phase of reflections on the Mother of God. Bishop Kyrillos then presented to Pope Francis a Coptic icon depicting St. Cyril of Alexandria and Pope Celestine of Rome in recalling the cordial relations between the Churches of Alexandria and Rome at the time of the Ecumenical Council of Ephesus.

In his address, Pope Francis emphasized that this document "will be able to mark a new step forward towards full communion." This leads him to three important dimensions of ecumenical dialogue: baptismal, pastoral and local. "It is in baptism that we find the basis of the communion between Christians and our yearning for full visible unity," the Pope said. "Secondly, ecumenism always has a

pastoral character (...) the broad consensus noted by your Commission, not only on baptism but also on the other sacraments, should encourage us to develop more fully a pastoral ecumenism". His Holiness referred to already existing pastoral agreements and asked: "Would it not possible to extend and multiply such pastoral agreements, above all in those situations in which our faithful are a minority or in the diaspora?" Finally, he highlighted that ecumenism exists already as a primary local reality. "The dialogue of life in the local, everyday relations between our Churches (...) constitute a genuine locus or source of theology."

The plenary session then began its final review of the draft of the Document "Sacraments in the Life of the Church." This process continued through the morning of Wednesday, June 22. The text received unanimous approval and was signed by the co-chairs on Thursday, June 23. After the signing, Bishop Kyrillos presented Cardinal Koch an icon of the Mother of God for the Dicastery.

In keeping with the theme, "Aspects of Mariology, The Holy Virgin Mary in the Teaching and the Life of the Church," the following papers were presented: Malpan Dr. Mathew Vellanickal, "Mary in the Biblical Tradition;" Rev. Mark Sheridan, OSB, "The Tradition of the Dormition and Assumption in the Catholic Church's Teachings;" and Bishop Kyrillos, "The Understanding of the Dormition of the Holy Virgin Mary in the Oriental Orthodox Tradition."

This study and discussion will continue at the next meeting, which will take place at the Logos Center of the Saint Bishoy Monastery, Egypt, January 31-February 4, 2023.



The discussants meeting with Pope Francis

ty, and by Bishop Kyrillos, Coptic Orthodox Auxiliary Bishop in the Diocese of Los Angeles.

Representatives came from the Catholic Church and from the following Oriental Orthodox Churches: the Antiochian Syrian Orthodox Church, the Malankara Ortho-

dox Catholicosate of Great House of Cilicia.

The two delegations met separately on the morning of June 20. Plenary sessions were held from the afternoon of June 20 through June 24, each day beginning with a brief prayer service based on material prepared

Tens of Thousands Resume Pro-EU, Anti-Government Rallies in Georgian Capital

TBILISI (RFE/RL) — Tens of thousands of Georgians have taken to the streets again to rally in front of the parliament building in Tbilisi in favor of European Union membership and against the current government.

The rally on June 24 comes a day after EU leaders deferred Tbilisi's candidacy, recognizing it as a "perspective member" but insisting that candidate status could only be granted as soon as "set priorities are met" and widespread reforms are put in place.

While deferring on Georgia, the EU at the same time formally agreed to take the "historic" step of making Ukraine and Moldova candidates for EU membership in the midst of the war in Ukraine and Moscow's bitter denunciations of the two countries' intentions.

In the Georgian capital, Tbilisi, thousands of demonstrators gathered outside the parliament building waving Georgian and EU flags and blocking traffic on the central Rustaveli Avenue.

There was no immediate estimate of the size of the crowd, but AFP on June 21 estimated 120,000 people had participated in a similar rally organized by the Shame civil rights group.

At that demonstration, Shota Digmelashvili of the Shame movement read out a manifesto and announced the launch of a new popular movement that will include opposition parties, civil society organizations, journalists, and labor unions to make demands on the government.



Protests in Tbilisi

The manifesto asserted that the country's "main obstacle on its European path is Bidzina Ivanishvili," the billionaire founder of the ruling Georgian Dream party who is widely believed to be the top decision-maker in the South Caucasus country even though he does not hold office.

Earlier this month, the European Parliament passed a nonbinding resolution call-

ing on the EU to impose sanctions against Ivanishvili for his "destructive role" in Georgia's politics and economy. Ivanishvili insists he has retired from politics.

The EU's stated conditions for granting Georgia candidate status include the end of political polarization, progress on media freedom, judiciary and electoral reforms, and what was called "de-oligarchization."

The Georgian Dream party said on June 17 that it "regretted" that the country was not recommended for EU candidate status together with Ukraine and Moldova.

The party in a statement on June 24 defended its record and accused the opposition of having "plans to overthrow the authorities by organizing anti-government rallies."



Community News

President Nominates New Ambassador to Armenia

WASHINGTON — US President Joe Biden has nominated Kristina A. Kvien as new US Ambassador to Armenia replacing Lynne Tracy who has been serving in Yerevan since 2019.

A career member of the Senior Foreign Service with the rank of Minister-Counselor, Kvien serves as Deputy Chief of Mission at U.S. Embassy Kyiv. She was previously Chargé d’Affaires ad interim from 2020-2022. Prior to that, she served as Minister-Counselor for Economic Affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Paris, France and as Economic Counselor at the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok, Thailand. In both Paris and Bangkok, she served more than one year as Acting Deputy Chief of Mission. She also served as Economic Counselor at the U.S. Embassy in London.

Earlier in her career, Kvien was detailed to the National Security Council in Washington, D.C. as Director for EU, Ukraine and Belarus affairs. Other overseas assignments include the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, Russia; the U.S. Mission to the EU in Brussels; and the U.S. Embassy in Manila, Republic of the Philippines. Domestic assignments include the Office of European and Regional Affairs, and the Office of Central European Affairs, both in the Bureau of Europe and Eurasian Affairs.

Kvien, a native of California, holds a BA from Occidental College and an MS from the U.S. Army War College. She is a recipient of multiple State Department performance awards and speaks Russian and French.



Dr. Carolann and George Najarian Continue Philanthropy In Stepanakert

Stepanakert, Artsakh — On June 20 more than 130 children in the Arpen Maternity and Child Care Center in Stepanakert, in addition to food supplies, received Armenian-made children’s clothing through the Gurgen Melikyan Multichildren Family Foundation of Kashatagh.

The Arpen Maternity and Child Care Center was founded by benefactors Dr. Carolann and George Najarian of Massachusetts in 1995. To date, more than 33,650 mothers have received medical and life supporting from the center.



Gurken Melikyan (right) and center’s director prepares clothing for distribution.



The wedding celebration of Lisa Misakian’s parents Archie and Helen Misakian included the customary “theft” of household items from the bride’s home conducted by members of the groom’s family the night before the wedding during the henna party celebrations. This photo shows groomsmen Leo Tosoonian, Peter Bedrosian and Archie’s sister-in-law Azadouhi Misakian dancing with the ironing board. Jim Malcus is dancing with a movie camera, and Eshak Mooradian has the framed portrait of the Altoonian children held aloft. The bridal party is dancing around the “thieves.” (Armeniansofwhitinsville.org)

Armenians of Whitinsville Website Unveiled at Project SAVE Webinar

By Brandon Balayan
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

WATERTOWN — On June 16, Project SAVE Armenian Photograph Archive delved into the world of Whitinsville, a small town in central Massachusetts with one of the oldest Armenian communities in the state.

Armenians of Whitinsville (armeniansofwhitinsville.org), a digital archive that documents the history of Armenians in this town, was represented by Greg Jundanian and Lisa Misakian, two of the handful of co-founders of the project.

Jundanian’s family immigrated to Whitinsville before the Armenian Genocide from Parchanj and Arabkir, towns located respectively in the Kharpert and Malatya provinces of the Armenia plateau. Misakian’s family has roots in Whitinsville since the 1880s, when her grandfather first arrived from Parchanj.

Arto Vaun, the Executive Director of Project SAVE, explained how Whitinsville is a part of the Armenian diasporan experience while Jundanian and Misakian shared their recent documentation work.

The archive developed out of conversations between Jundanian and Jeff Kalousdian in spring 2021. They proposed it to the Whitinsville community through the local Surp Asdvadzadzin Armenian Church’s electronic newsletter, which introduced Misakian to the project.

Jundanian explained the mission of the archive, declaring “It is a digital archive that pays respects to those before us. It is about the past but also about putting together something for future generations.” The project is similar to that of a *houshamadyan*, or an Armenian memory book that compatriotic societies used to publish on their places of origin after the Armenian Genocide, and it has gained further support since it first started. Its financial sponsor is the American Cultural Association of America. Although the archive project has no official affiliation with Surp Asdvadzadzin, it is also supported by the church. The church announces the project’s activities on its weekly Friday electronic bulletin using its national email list, promotes the project on Sundays when possible, provides contact information in order for the project to arrange interviews, and offers photos and articles pertaining to the church for the website’s use.

Other members of the group’s archival team include Whitinsville resident Jack Kalousdian, Mark Arslan from the Armenian Immigration Project, website designer Nick Boyajian, and Nicole Tarverdian, who helps organize the site’s recipe page. Project SAVE is a source of inspiration, and as the Whitinsville project only keeps digital copies, Jundanian advises the people the team works with to turn their original photographs over to Project SAVE once they are ready to do so. As a result, there is some overlap between the two archives.



Possibly Joe Jundanian’s high school graduation photograph (Armeniansofwhitinsville.org)

see WHITINSVILLE, page 9

COAF’s Summer Soirée Raises \$125K For Child & Family Center in Artsakh

NEW YORK — The 12th Annual COAF Summer Soirée, held on June 21, raised \$125,000 for the establishment of a Child & Family Center in Stepanakert, Artsakh, an initiative dedicated to rebuilding and transforming the post-war population of the capital where many have found refuge from regions of Artsakh under Azerbaijani control.

The event’s contributions will build upon the \$150,000 donated earlier this year by benefactors Victor Zarougian and Judith Saryan of Cambridge, Mass. The Child and Family Center will aim to confront barriers to mental and social care in Artsakh, where, notably, early childhood development and social support are generally lacking.

COAF has always emphasized the importance of providing psychosocial support as well as early childhood education as a critical component of its rural development efforts. Over the past 16 years, COAF’s Child & Family Services have offered psychological, social, and speech therapy services and child development pro-



COAF supporters Mimi Demirdjian and Razmig Aslanian

grams to over 6,500 children in 20+ overlooked rural communities across Armenia. Since the opening of its inaugural Child & Family Center in the village of Hatsik (Armavir Province) in 2021, COAF has been providing access to life-changing resources needed to meet the needs of rural populations, thereby improving the quality of their lives. The Hatsik Center has so far served more than 150 individuals in Hatsik and surrounding communities. COAF’s expansion into Artsakh will allow children and families suffering from displacement, PTSD, and other war-related afflictions to receive the support necessary to build better, more sustainable futures.

“By promoting children’s mental and educational development, COAF aims to have a lasting, positive impact on the personal growth and academic trajectory of an entire generation of Armenians,” says COAF Managing Director, Korioun Khatchadourian. “Thanks to generous participation at this year’s Soirée, we will be able to replicate the success achieved in Armavir, leveraging our resources and expertise to confront the developmental challenges of 250+ children and adults in Artsakh.”

see COAF, page 8



St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School Holds Graduation Ceremonies

WATERTOWN — St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School (SSAES) successfully completed its 38th academic year.

The Graduation Ceremonies were held on June 16 (Kindergarten) and June 17 (Elementary). Both groups of students presented poems, songs and an Armenian Dance. In addition, the fifth graders read their farewells.

In her remarks, Principal Houry Boyamian announced that in addition to completing fully the curriculum in each grade, the school was able to conduct many extra-curricular activities. She stated, that the pandemic did not stop the school in celebrating or commemorating traditional holidays, such as Armenian Cultural Day, Vartanants Day, May 28, a commemoration of the Armenian Genocide, two Talent Shows, a Visit to the Armenian Museum of America, and a two-week Trip to Armenia for fifth graders. She concluded her remarks by expressing her profound gratitude to the Teaching and Administrative Staff, to the School Board, the Education, Health and Technology Committees, as well as to Rev. Antranig Baljian and the St. Stephen's Church Board of Trustees. She thanked the parents for their encouragement and unwavering support in another challenging year with the Pandemic.

On June 16, Baljian and Boyamian honored Nora Hackett for her 21 years of service as assistant treasurer of the school, with a Certificate of Appreciation awarded by Archbishop Anoushavan Tanielian, Prelate of the Eastern Prelacy. Hackett retired in June after being part of the St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School since it's inception. Her father, Yervant Krafian, was one of the founding members of the school. She has held roles at SSAES from the beginning starting as a volunteer, a parent, a PTO Chair, an alumni parent. Her three children are alumni of the school.

On June 16, the following students graduated from Kindergarten: Arek Babb-Mikaelian, Dalita bell, Dante Carbutari, Khoren Dennigan, Brayden Duhanyan, Aren Ekmekji, Eva Giragosian, Arev Haco-



Elementary graduates with their Principal, Teachers and members of the Clergy, including Rev. Arakel Aljalian and Rev. Avedis Boynerian

bian, Sevag Karagozian, Ani Kechicchian, Lara Kirejian, Alexander Krikorian, Levon Luarasi, Andrew Manguikian, Nicholas Ntasios, Emma Orchanian, Diana Ohanesian, Sylvie Said, Anya Savo, Sanahin Arzoumanian Schwartz, Lucine Zurabyan

On June 17, the following students graduated from our Elementary School bringing the number of graduates to 358. They are: Siran Arakelian, Aiki Arzoumanian, Olivia Dimopoulos, Lori Garbedian, Leanna Iskenderian, Josephine Keumurian, Eva Khalarian, Arda Mahserejian, Aline Mikaelian, Giselle Tarabelsi.

In his remarks, Baljian, expressed his appreciation to the administration and faculty for their dedication and effort, in providing an excellent education to all students. Then he and Boyamian presented the diplomas and the awards to the graduates.



Kindergarten graduates with Principal Boyamian, Fr. Baljian, Fr. Ajemian and Alik Arzoumanian

NY's Holy Martyrs Day School Holds 6th Grade Graduation

BAYSIDE, N.Y. — On Friday, June 17, Holy Martyrs Armenian Day School (HMADS) held its 40th commencement exercises with 6 graduates. The evening began with the procession of 6th graders and led into an opening prayer by Fr. Davit Karamyan, Vicar of St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral in Manhattan.

After a warm welcome by Principal Seta Megherian, the program of recitation, song, reflection and dance was underway. A special award, the Chenberjian/Boghossian Award for Armenian Educator, was given to Socy Nigdelian

for her 15 years of service in teaching Armenian language to our children. This well-deserved award is presented to an Armenian educator each year by Principal Emeritus Zarmine Boghossian.

A special performance and speech was given by Ani Djirdjirian Pilavdjian, class of 2006. Ani is a talented singer and performer and amazed the audience with her beautiful voice, singing Hayee Acher. The graduates then received their diplomas from Seta Megherian, Maro Jamgotchian and Socy Nigdelian. The audience cheered the proud girls for their amaz-



Members of the graduating class of HMADS



Members of the graduating class of HMADS with staff and clergy

ing accomplishments. The graduation program concluded with the emotional and encouraging words of Holy Martyrs Armenian Church pastor Fr. Abraham Malkhasyan. He expressed his gratitude to all the educators and stated that as long as our children speak and pray in Armenian, our nation will be always victorious in all the "battle" fields!

After the program guests were invited

to a celebratory banquet. The graduates showed and expressed their appreciation and gratitude to their families and siblings for giving them the opportunity to be part of the HMADS family. Congratulations to all the graduates and their families: Anayis Ciamician, Juliana Jarjokian, Araxi Kaligian, Hasmig Mouradian, Angelina Papazian and Saraphina Yaziciyan.



COMMUNITY NEWS

COAF’s Summer Soirée Raises \$125K for Child & Family Center in Artsakh



Guests at the 12th Annual COAF Summer Soiree

COAF, from page 6

The Soirée also marked COAF’s return to in-person events, following a pandemic hiatus, and successfully brought together over 225 guests from across the United States. Notably, the fundraiser received support from US-based Armenian businesses and influencers, including Tacori jewelry and the clothing brand WearArmenia, both of whom offered merchandise for sale or for raffle, with all profits donated to COAF. Guests were also able to enjoy a tasting of the fruits of Armenia’s viticulture movement, provided by Storica Wines.

The event was centered by an inspiring speech, given by 20-year-old COAF Alumna, Milena Antonyan, who traveled from the rural village of Arteni to share her story of ambition and success with a New York audience. Milena grew up with COAF from the age of seven and took part in various programs including English language



President of COAF Board Diron Jebejian, COAF beneficiary Milena Antonyan from Armenia, COAF Senior Director of Development Haig Boyadjian

classes and debate clubs offered by COAF at her local school. She went on to receive a Jack and Zarig Youredjian Scholarship and recently graduated from law school in Yerevan.

To help build life-changing Child & Family Centers across Armenia and Artsakh, visit coaf.org.

46th Annual Debutante Ball Great Success

LOS ANGELES — On June 12, 350 guests attended the 46th Annual Debutante Ball. The festivities began with a reception at the Ballroom of the Beverly Wilshire Hotel, affording families and friends the opportunity to celebrate the debutantes and escorts presented that evening.

Cindy Norian, Diocesan Ladies Chair, welcomed the guests, and stating “It is so wonderful to be finally able to present out long delayed 46th Debutante Ball and to be able to be back in the elegant Beverly Wilshire Hotel. We are especially thankful to the families who have waited through delay after delay due to the Covid Pandemic.”

Norian then introduced the Mistress of Ceremonies, Lory Tatouliau, comedian, actress and writer. She has created, written and produced 10 different installments of the popular “Big Bad Armo Show” and was featured in the new. PBS documentary. Most recently she was hired as writer for the feature animation films at Warner Brothers and Sony Pictures. She is the daughter of Archpriest Datev and Yeretzeen Araxy Tatoouliau.

Tatouliau captivated the guests with her wit and charm. She presented the 16 debutantes to Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Western Diocese.

They are all active in their respective churches and schools. They entered wearing white gowns and walked to the center of the stage and curtsied to the guests. It was an exhilarating presentation as Tatouliau invited the fathers to dance with their daughters and then to dance with their escorts.



Tekeyan Cultural Association

21st Anniversary

Sponsor a Teacher

in Armenia and Five Artsakh Villages



SINCE ITS INCEPTION IN 2001, THE TCA SPONSOR A TEACHER PROGRAM HAS RAISED \$793,560 AND REACHED OUT TO 7,163 TEACHERS AND SCHOOL STAFF IN ARMENIA AND ARTSAKH.

☐ Yes, I want to sponsor teachers in Armenia and Karabagh to continue helping them educate the children, our future leaders. I would like to have the teacher's name and address.

☐ \$200 ☐ \$400 ☐ \$600 ☐ other _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Make check payable to:
Tekeyan Cultural Association—Memo: Sponsor a Teacher

Mail your check to:
TCA Sponsor a Teacher
5326 Val Verde, Houston, TX 77056

Your donation is Tax Deductable



COMMUNITY NEWS

Armenians of Whitinsville Website Unveiled

WHITINSVILLE, from page 6

The family information section, the first of four categories of the Whitinsville website, is organized by last name, with a folder of photographs attached to each name. Sometimes documents present themselves that may surprise their owners. For instance, Jundanian found a name change record that shows how his father changed his name from Joseph Jundanian to Joe Russel Owens in 1936, then back to his original name in 1938.

Misakian recalls that she found a distant relative while translating a document. She remembers seeing the last name Misakian on the document and contacted the family to see if there was a connection, and there was.

The community section of the website documents Whitinsville's early history, church life, businesses, social life, schools,

there were farmers, artisans, businessmen and constructors.

The village was known for being well lighted at night despite its remote location in the Kharpert plain. This was due to a technique developed by pressing flaxseed and using its oil as a source for illumination. Pazmashen natives were commonly called *tsitdzakh*, or oil sellers, because they'd wandered around villages yelling "Oil, hey, oil!" and selling their products. The Armenian Genocide reduced the village's population of 4,500 - 5000 to 300 orphans and widows. However, many men from Pazmashen immigrated to the States prior to the genocide, specifically to Whitinsville.

Armenians first arrived in Whitinsville in the 1880s, seeking opportunities to work. In the early days, many of the Armenians were concentrated in New Vil-

lage's C and D streets, as well as in East Street, Willow Street, Spring Street and Elm Street. The main employer was Whitin Machine Works, one of the largest textile machinery works in the world at the time.

The first extant census that documents the number of Armenians in Whitinsville was in 1900, when 106 Armenians, of the 7,000 Americans, were registered in the town. Between 1910 and 1920, the town's population grew by almost 1,400. One-third of this growth was composed by Armenians. By the mid-1920s, Armenian social clubs and businesses were already running. Then on November 24, 1957, Surp Asdvadzadzin, named after the historic church in Pazmashen, was consecrated. Today, the town has a population of 16,000, and the archival team hopes to

catalog the experiences of many more of those who have roots in the town.

Moving Forward

Jundanian felt strongly that developing this and similar website projects are positive influences for society, declaring, "Storytelling amplifies empathy and the world can always use a little bit more of that."

Jundanian and Misakian noted that while the foundation has been set for the archive, help is always needed and welcome. If people would like to assist in the project, they recommend signing up for the newsletter, identifying your family if they are descendants from Whitinsville, volunteering translating, transcribing or interviewing, and donating if you can.

Misakian expressed how projects like these are worth all the work it takes to get involved, and credits her team, and volunteers for contributing to maintaining the archive. She hopes it can be an example for future refugee communities who want to establish their own archival projects.



Soorp Asdvadzadzin Armenian Apostolic Church of Whitinsville Consecration photos from the Whitin Spindle, 1957, Archbishop Khoren Paroyan officiating (Armeniansofwhitinsville.org).

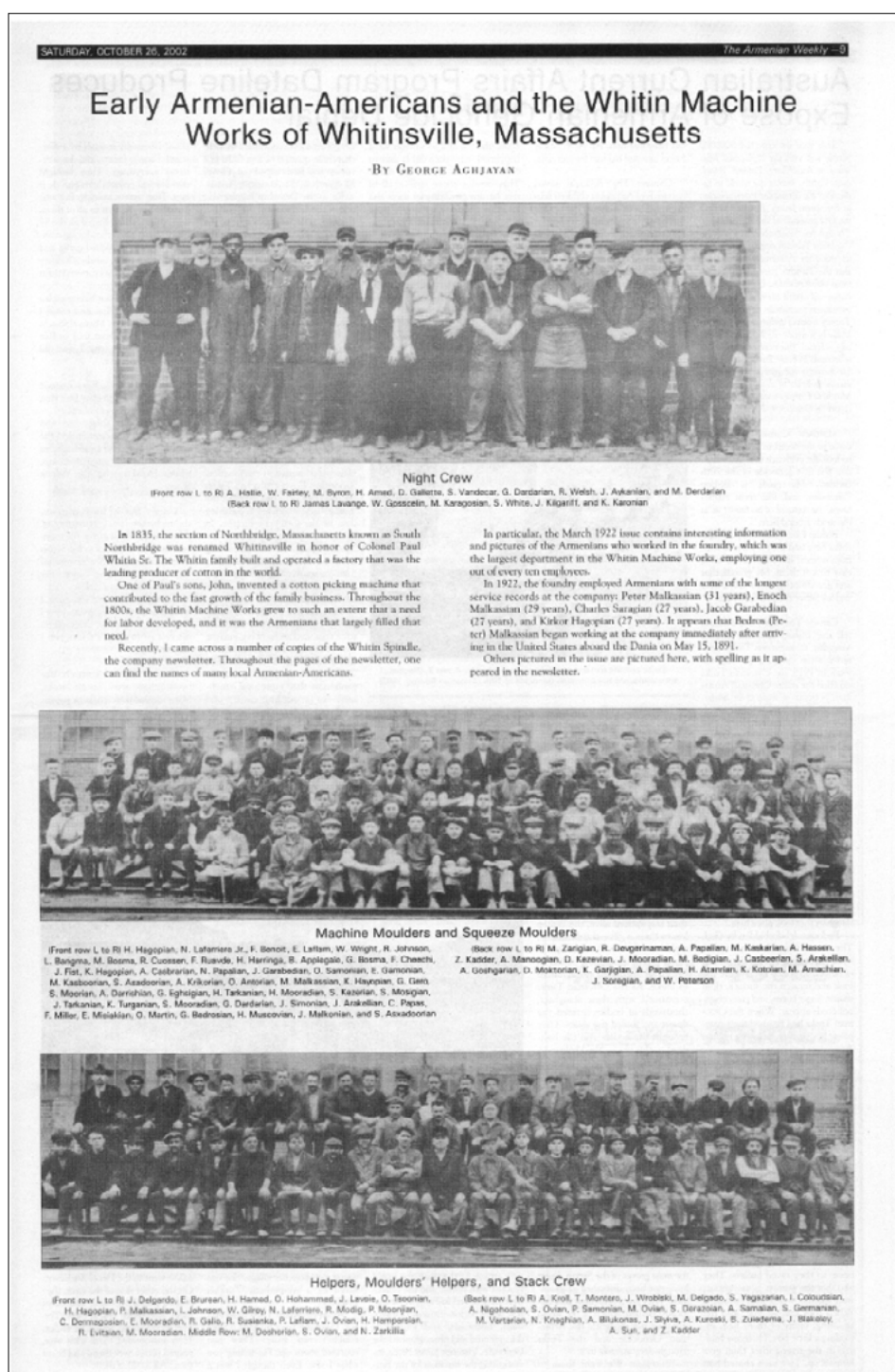
civic life, and even published books. The recipe section has about 200-300 recipes, both Armenian and other dishes, documented in the archive. A recordings section provides interviews done with family members or songs they sang. For example, Jundanian has a recording of his grandmother, Verkin, singing a song called *Anush Karoun*.

From Kharpert to Massachusetts

After an introduction of the project and its contents for the webinar, Misakian dived into the history of the town, and where its residents hail from. Like Worcester, a majority of the Armenians from Whitinsville have roots in Kharpert. However, more specifically, a majority of the Armenians from Whitinsville came from the village of Pazmashen, 9 miles west of Kharpert city. According to a chapter translated into English from the original Armenian-language book *Kharpert and Her Golden Plain*, by Vahe Haig, Pazmashen means a dwelling place with many buildings. The Armenians

Donation

Silva Karachorlu of Chicago donated \$170 to the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*.



Early Armenian-Americans at the Whitin Machine Work

DENNIS M. DEVENEY & SONS

Cemetery Monuments

Specializing in
Armenian Designs and Lettering

701 Moody St. Waltham, MA 02543
(781) 891-9876 www.NEMonuments.com

Telephone (617) 924-7400

Aram Bedrosian Funeral Home, Inc.

Continuous Service By The Bedrosian Family Since 1945

558 MOUNT AUBURN STREET
WATERTOWN, MA 02472

MARION BEDROSIAN
PAUL BEDROSIAN
LARRY BEDROSIAN

Giragosian

F UNERAL H OME

James "Jack" Giragosian, CPC
Mark J. Giragosian
Funeral Counselors

576 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown, MA 02472, TEL: 617-924-0606
www.giragosianfuneralhome.com

COMMUNITY NEWS

Quinn Brings LA Edgy Cool to Armenian Museum

EXHIBIT, from page 1

collected over the past six decades. Most would be right at home at a major metropolitan museum.

“We always called Andy [Warhol] a sponge because no matter what would come up, he would always sponge it up and use it for himself,” she said. “He was very good about making up his own persona.”)

The woman at the center of it all, Quinn, was present for the grand opening on June 16 and took part in a private tour before the official opening reception. It was uncanny to be next to the woman who was captured in myriad forms on every wall. Many of the artists have captured the colorfulness — literally and figuratively — of this delightfully bubbly muse. In person, she appears much as she does in many of the portraits surrounding her, colorful and sparkling, complete with fuchsia-tinged hair and bedecked in chunky jewelry.

Her entrée into the art world in the 1970s was through meeting Billy Al Bengston at a department store where they both worked. It was a short hop, skip and a jump to meeting Warhol and becoming the West Coast editor of his magazine, *Interview*, as well as eventual muse to and promoter of the new Pop artists of Los Angeles.

According to curator Rachel McCullah Wainwright, “This put her in a place where she could promote artists,” she said. In addition, her husband, Jack, who was a contractual attorney, helped many of the artists draw up more advantageous contracts.

The art work at AMA is dazzling, vibrant and quite frankly, ridiculously expensive now. However, when the Quinns bought those works, they were often doing it as a favor to these artists who were living hand-to-mouth.

“I was very much supporting them,” Quinn said. “The artists weren’t known. They were just starting in their studios and there was a situation where Jack and I were just starting too. Jack was a new lawyer and we had friends who were artists. We would buy pieces for \$10 or \$20 a week.”



Joan Agajanian Quinn at the museum before the official opening

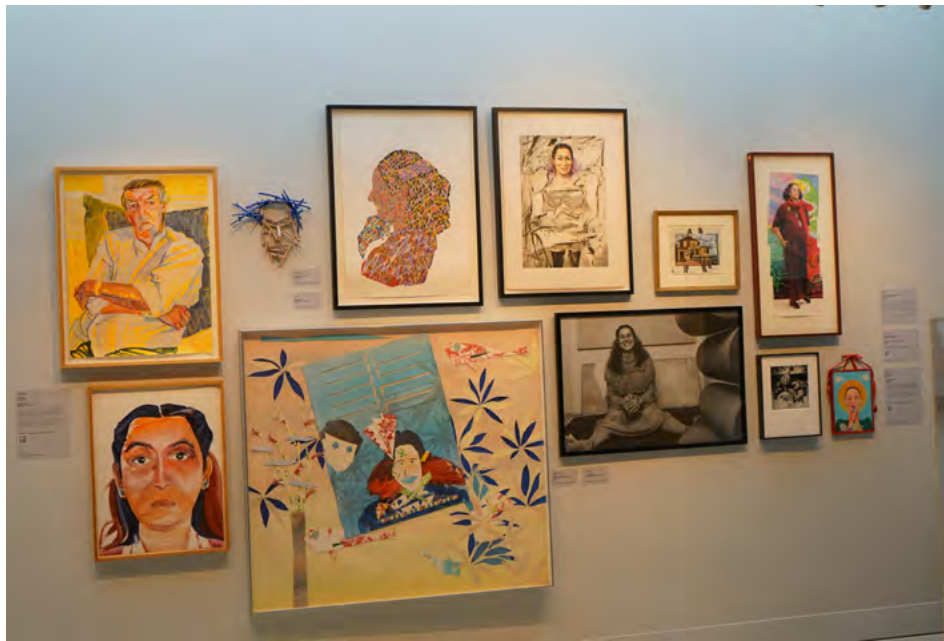
and her family, which at that point included two young children, she said she really was not aware of drugs or anything untoward happening when she would hosts them at frequent dinner parties at home. She did joke that many artists would often go to the bathroom in pairs and stay there for longer than one would expect.

She joked, “Nobody ever invited me to the bathroom.”

Quinn added that she helped spread the word about the artists and made introductions for them. “They didn’t know what publicity was. They didn’t know how to go about it,” she said.

“The collection is a manifestation of

(ARAM ARKUN PHOTO)



Some of the works at the Armenian Museum of America

“Most of the time it was a very personal collection. Once the collection started, everyone wanted to be in it too,” Quinn said.

When asked why these artists, who found inspiration in so many different ways, all had been compelled to recreate her likeness in one medium or another, she protested and replied that the artists were merely showing their points of view and saw her as “a bowl of fruit.” Of course, with Quinn, probably no oranges or apples, but persimmons, pomegranates and passionfruit.

Speaking of the friendships she had with these artists and the certainly more louche lives they were leading, compared to Quinn

friendships,” Wainwright concurred. “The collection is succinct because she was buying these pieces as the artists were making them.”

She added, “A connection has been made between Joan and Gertrude Stein,” not only in the way they served as muses for artists, but also as art promoters.

Wainwright is an independent curator who also oversaw an exhibition of the Quinns’ artwork at the recent Bakersfield Museum of Art in Bakersfield, Calif. “I witness daily the networking, making sure people are in the right room. She still plays a big role,” she said.

“This is the start of West Coast abstraction,” Wainwright added, “putting LA on the map. You see the overlapping of artists leaning into the subcultures of California, custom car culture, beatnik poetry, architecture, motorcycles” among others.

Many of these amazing works are at the Quinns’ home, while the spillover is at the corporate offices of the late Jack Quinn’s law firm in downtown Los Angeles. Jack

ing her way through the exhibits and looking at different walls, she was delighted with the result. “I am so impressed with this space. I am really blown away how beautiful it is. It matches the name: edgy.”

Quinn is proud of her Armenian heritage. She is active with the AIWA Los Angeles chapter and also serves on the Board of Trustees of the Armenian Museum.

“I love my heritage. I get confidence



Sculpture in foreground by George Herms, “Portrait of Joan Agajanian Quinn”

Quinn died in 2017.

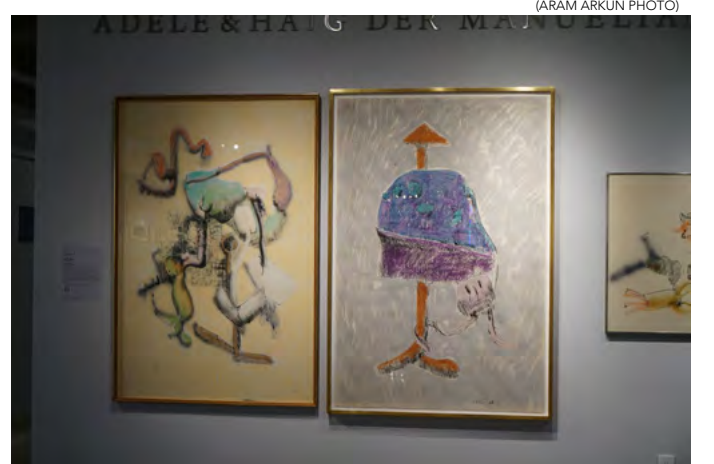
“I love them all. Each has its own personality, its own connection,” Quinn said. “It is a collection that grew, not a collection that was gathered,” Quinn said proudly.

Quinn was delighted with the work of Wainwright. “The whole goal and the whole way that she presents me is an academic approach. She made it so that people could come in and see what people were doing in the periods of years and what materials they were using. There is an academic piece to this,” Quinn said.

As Quinn was mak-

from being Armenian. It’s support, I guess. I love being Armenian,” Quinn said.

She comes from a tight-knit family and embraces throwing down roots, allowing many of the nomadic artists to get nour-



Two works by John Altoon



COMMUNITY NEWS

ishment from it. “She brought this idea of family and community to these artists,” Wainwright said.

Agajanian was born and raised in Los Angeles into an affluent family. She met and married Jack Quinn at a young age and continued meeting and making connections with more and more artists.

Sometimes the two worlds collide, including with some Armenian-American artists whose work is at the current exhibit, namely John Altoon and Charles Garabedian.

“Altoon was a great friend but he passed away so soon and Garabedian was also a great friend,” she said.

In a nod to the digital age, many of the works of art have QR codes which show Quinn interviewing the artists. Some of the codes send links to YouTube where viewers can see snippets of interviews Quinn conducted with them as part of her “Joan Quinn Profiles” or “Beverly Hills View” programs, which she has hosted for decades. In addition to working at Interview, she was society editor of Los Angeles Herald Examiner, editor at Steve Samiof’s Stuff Magazine and founding West Coast Editor of Condé Nast Traveler.

Quinn dresses boldly and accessories liberally. In fact, the day of the tour of the museum, she was wearing a chunky gold bracelet with a dangling globe. Right at that moment, those present noticed that in fact it was one of the bracelets captured in the abstract by Basquiat.

When asked what was next for her, she chuckled and said, “To live for a while!” She added later, “I want to keep doing what I am doing.”

The exhibit is divided by several different schools. One, from the noted Ferus Gallery, is significant for many reasons, but especially because it was the first gallery dedicated to artists who lived and worked in L.A. Prior to that, the works exhibited only came from the East Coast or San Francisco.

A companion exhibit to “On the Edge” is “Discovering Takouhi,” curated by Natalie Varbedian and Gina Grigorian. Both hail from LA and both expressed their gratitude for being able to curate the exhibit, which

School of Design in New York.

“I am very grateful. I learned a lot from it,” she said, though she noted she would continue in fashion.

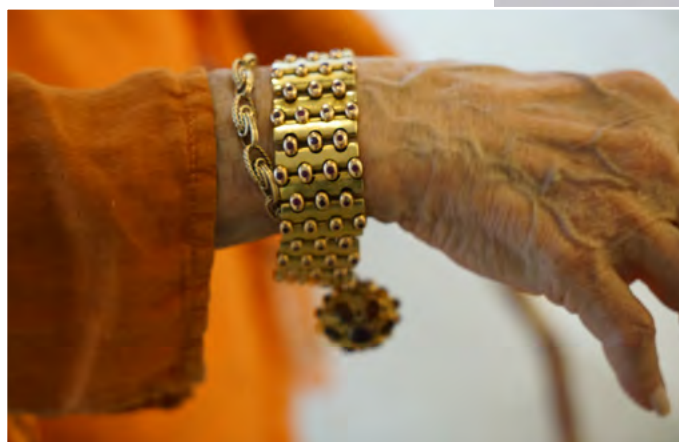
Many of the works in that exhibit were created in honor of the 2000 Venice Biennale, the first time Armenia participated in the bi-annual international exhibit, and for which Quinn was the honorary chairperson.

The “Takouhi” exhibit, in the Terja-

(ARAM ARKUN PHOTO)



Joan Agajanian Quinn at the Armenian Museum of America



A chunky bracelet that Joan Agajanian Quinn was wearing during a walk-through of the exhibit, which was also in some of the paintings on the walls (Aram Arkun photo)

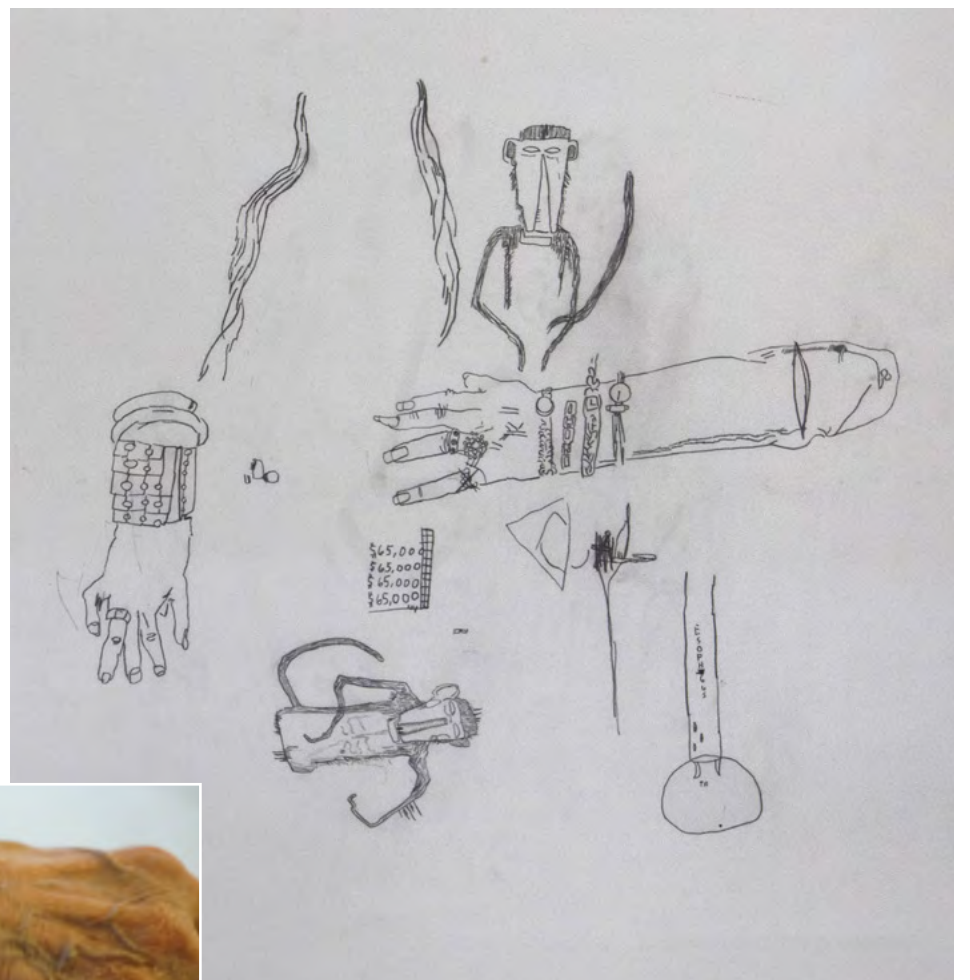
nian-Thomas Gallery, while small is dazzling, filled with portraits of Quinn in different textures and media, from watercolor and oil to charcoal, painted fleece and even one with Uchida pens (by Aram Saroyan). It is witty and engaging, capturing Quinn in many ways, including a nude with a tiny version of her in her arms. (Takouhi is Quinn’s Armenian name.)

Said Grigorian, “I would like people stepping in her to feel her personality, her vibrancy. She is very extravagant.”

Varbedian added, “She has a relationship with the artists. She promotes these Armenian artists.”

Quinn herself was delighted with the works as well as the setup. “I really love that. It is not a vanity project. I did not pose for those. It shows the styles of those artists.”

Michele Kolligian, president of the museum’s Board of Trustees, said, “‘On the Edge’ and ‘Discovering Takouhi’ bring together the largest contemporary exhibitions in the Armenian Museum of America’s 50-year history. Thanks to a generous grant from the JHM Foundation, the Adele and Haig Der Manuelian Galleries have been transformed into a modern, cutting-edge space for the museum to exhibit the extensive collection into two exhibits, which will be on display from June 16 to November 30, 2022. Our membership is at an all-time high since we launched a campaign to mark the Museum’s 50th anniversary. We are very grateful to Joan Quinn and her family for loaning this collection to the Armenian Museum as we celebrate this special milestone year, and for her vision that with these exhibits the Armenian Museum will now enter a new era for showcasing



Jean-Michel Basquiat “Joan’s Hands,” 1986, Graphite on paper. Courtesy of the Joan and Jack Quinn Family Collection

contemporary art.”

Jason Sohigian, the executive director of the museum added, “This exhibit is vast with 125 works by more than 75 artists. It is only the second time many of these pieces have been on display for the public, the first being at the Bakersfield Museum of Art last year. In addition to many of the top names from California in the world of contemporary art, the ‘On the Edge’ exhibit features two Armenian artists, John Altoon and Charles Garabedian. The ‘Discovering Takouhi’ exhibit highlights 30 portraits by 28 Armenian artists. We welcome visitors to the view the exhibits and hope everyone will encourage their family and friends to come to the Museum if they are visiting the Boston area. There are two color printed catalogues available for purchase online or in our gift shop, featuring many of the works on display, including personal commentaries by the artists, the Curator, and the Quinn family.”

For more information, visit <https://www.armenianmuseum.org/>



David Hockney and Joan Agajanian Quinn in Hockney’s Studio (1979), Courtesy of Joan Quinn Archives



Michele Kolligian and Jason Sohigian (Ken Martin photo)



The three curators, from left, Rachel McCullah Wainwright, Natalie Varbedian and Gina Grigorian

would go a long way toward helping their careers.

Varbedian noted that she had also worked on the Bakersfield exhibit.

Grigorian graduated last year from the University of California, Davis, and just received her BFA degree from the Parsons



Thomas Ammann, Joan Agajanian Quinn, and Andy Warhol at Warwick (1979)

Arts & Culture

The Virtuoso Fiddler of the Mediterranean

By Christopher Atamian
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

Imagine Frank Zappa brought back to life, but as a crazed violinist running up and down a stage playing a hundred miles an hour to adoring crowds: sexy, long dark hair flying in all directions wearing work out gear and the occasional leather short sleeve jacket. The music changes from classical (Stravinsky) to rock (Led Zeppelin) and finally to his own unique compositions. There in a nutshell you have Ara Malikian, one of the most gifted, fun musicians playing on the world stage today.

Genre-bending, eclectic, original and ferociously individualistic, Malikian started out in the most typical way: taking classical violin lessons as a child in Beirut. For Malikian, as for others caught up in the Lebanese Civil War like the poet Shahé Mankerian or the writer Vahé Berberian, childhood was cut short in 1975: “Actually I didn’t have a childhood,” explains Malikian, who was only six years old when the war broke out. The war raged on, Lebanon was destroyed: “When I was 15 I went to Germany to try to survive and earn my living playing the violin...so I missed out on all the things that a child or teenager would do during this time.”

Listening to Malikian play, Tina Guo or Ashley MacIsaac come to mind, with elements of the Charlie Daniels band perhaps when he rocks it out. But when the tenor changes to classical pieces, you could just as well be listening to Joshua Bell. Malikian admits to having changed styles and influences over the years, but in the end, he has come back to his early influences, namely Bach and Paganini. Listen to Malikian play *Stairway to Heaven* and then Vivaldi’s *Four Seasons* and you begin to get an idea of his range. Says Malikian: “There are so many ways and styles of playing. Each of them is valid if it’s made with passion and you can transmit your feelings to the listener.”

Passion isn’t something that is missing from his violin. Watching Malikian’s performances live and then on YouTube, from Lebanon and Israel to Greece, Turkey and Spain — where he now makes his home — one adjective kept coming back to mind: “Mediterranean” or “Միջերկրական.” His playing possesses a quick, hard rock tempo but also slows down into fiddler-like laments. And of course, given these stylistic propensities and his own wanderlust, a gypsy comes to mind both visually and artistically. The type of playing so beautifully portrayed in the documentary “Latcho Drom (Safe Journey),” which follows the changes in Gypsy music as director Tony Gatlif traces the Roma journey eight thousand kilometers out of India, all the way to Iberia.

Malikian agrees in this assessment: “Mediterranean is a lifestyle. All the different artforms practiced

see FIDDLER, page 13



St. Anna Summer Concert Series Held In Yerevan

YEREVAN — The H. Hovnanian Family Foundation, with the blessing of the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin, sponsored a summer concert series titled “Saint Anna Summer Concert Series 2022” was held in the plaza of St. Anna Church in Yerevan from June 10 - July 1. The concerts took place each Friday evening and featured classical and spiritual performances by the Tagharan ensemble, the Hover choir, the Komitas String Quartet and the Little Singers of Armenia choir.

The series was dedicated to the memory of the H. Hovnanian family Foundation founding president Hirair Hovnanian and his wife Anna Hovnanian.

The concerts were free of charge.

Also within the framework of the Armenian cultural heritage preservation, the Hrair Hovnanian Family Foundation has implemented numerous projects, including restoration of Saghmosavank, Dadivank and Katoghike Surb Astvatsatsin churches. Over the past few years the foundation has awarded grants to several non-profit entities active in the arts, namely Matenadaran Foundation for miniature art classes for young students, Naregatsi Art Center for singing, painting, carpet weaving and pottery classes. Theatre Workers Union of Armenia received a grant for theatrical festivals in the regions of Armenia and NVAK Inc. in support of professional mentorship of young talent in music and the arts.



Outside the St. Anna concert series in Yerevan

Arab-American Singer Reframes Music about the Crusades

By Anastasia Tsioulcas

BOSTON (NPR) — Classical singer Karim Sulayman adores Western European music from the 16th and 17th centuries. But this Lebanese-American tenor is aware that much of this music demonizes and stereotypes Arabs and Muslims. So in a new stage work called “Unholy Wars,” he reframes those stories through an Arab-American lens.

“Unholy Wars” is a singular piece. It brings together dance (with dancer Coral Dolphin), theater, visual art and, of course, music both old and new, with a cast of three singers — soprano Raha Mirzadegan and bass-baritone John Taylor Ward, along with Sulayman.

The piece opens with the Gloria Patri from Claudio Monteverdi’s “Vespers of 1610.” “It’s this echoing of two tenors, and I sing both tenor lines in it,” the Grammy Award-winning Sulayman explains.

“And it’s so melismatic,” he continues. “It almost harkens to this call to prayer of Islam. It sounds like sounds like the echoing not just of a church, of two voices in a church, but it sounds like if you’re in like a very popular souk — you hear a call to prayer and you hear all the noises of the city.”

Many of the artists who worked with Sulayman on this project also have roots in the Middle East, including composer Mary Kouyoumdjian, who wrote the new music that weaves in and out between the baroque selections.

Kouyoumdjian says she wants audiences to understand that even as a composer of today, her musical reference points extend back millennia — much older than the music of Monteverdi and Handel in “Unholy Wars,” which by comparison go back only about 300 and 400 years.

“I think this is something that comes very naturally to myself and to a lot of the cast members,” she says. “I took piano lessons and learned [Frédéric] Chopin before I learned Middle Eastern folk. But this idea of folk music has been very ingrained in us, even without our knowing. So putting these elements together felt very natural — here is European music, but also here is some music that has lived even longer. You know for thousands of years Middle Eastern folk has been a thing on our planet.”

“Unholy Wars” premiered last month at Spoleto Festival USA in Charleston, S.C. Its general director, Mena Mark Hanna, says the piece braids together not just many eras, but many ways of seeing. “What Karim is doing is extremely intelligent because he is creating a longer narrative between all of these different works,” he enthuses. “It’s like period music plus liquid movement plus graphic novel.”

The centerpiece of “Unholy Wars” is a piece by Monteverdi, *Il combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda*. Drawn

see OPERA, page 13



ARTS & CULTURE

The Virtuoso Fiddler of the Mediterranean

FIDDLER, from page 12

around the Mediterranean basin are related. Music, literature, painting, theater, dance, culinary arts etc...They all have something in common, inspired by the historical heritage and logically I feel that I am part of it."

Armenian folk music enamored Malikian from an early age, a genre he finds lends itself well to the violin: "Logically I've also played most of the works of Armenian classical composers like Komitas, Khatchaturian and Babadjanian. Malikian performed at the famed Byblos music Festival in Lebanon several years back and is planning a concert at the end of 2022 in Yerevan: "I played in Hayastan 30 years ago and have been back several times."

Like many gifted professionals, Malikian has suffered from being overly critical of his own work: "For many years, I didn't dare show anyone my compositions."

Does Malikian have a favorite piece?: "It would be difficult for me to choose one that I like most because as a composer I feel I am in constant evolution. However, if I had to choose one composition from the classical repertoire it would be Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*."

Perhaps because of his range, style and look, Malikian's reviews have ranged from the superlative to the underwhelming, in the case of one disgruntled critic from *The Sunday Times*. But the boy genius turned international star has learned over the years how to roll with the critical punches: "I am very sensitive, but I care less about



what critics write. The audience--that's what really matters." By adapting classical pieces Malikian continues to help push violin and classical music forward: "It cost me many years of searching, experiment-

ing, and making mistakes until I found my way and my personality. And now I enjoy making music more than ever."

Malikian is currently on a world tour with his latest album "Ara." So if some time in

the coming months you hear a beautiful, lone plaintive violin carrying a soulful Mediterranean melody on a breeze somewhere near you, it may just be Ara Malikian — warming up until he rocks the house out.

Arab-American Singer Reframes Music about the Crusades

OPERA, from page 12

from a text by Torquato Tasso, it depicts the fictional, Crusades-set story of Tancredi, a Christian soldier, who has fallen in love with Clorinda, a Muslim woman who has gone into battle disguised as a man. In the end, they fight each other, and Tancredi mortally wounds her. He finally raises her helmet and realizes whom he has hurt. Not only does Clorinda forgive him — in her dying moments, she asks him to baptize her as a Christian.

"Yes, there's this very strange thing that happens at the end of *Combattimento*," Sulayman observes, "where Clorinda, after this bloody fight where they — these two people — believe so strongly in their religion and their God that they are willing to die for it — which we see today all the time — at the end of it, while she's basically choking on her own blood, she is able to say, 'OK, you were right, baptize me. It's all fine.'"

"I think that Tasso was trying to make this story more palatable to his Italian Catholic readers in the 16th century," Sulayman says, "that, of course, this Muslim would ask for this baptism. But as we read it now in the modern world, we say, 'Oh, that's so messed up.' But it's still an incredible and important piece of music. So instead of never doing it again, we want to lean into the issues of it and look at it with a really critical eye."

"Unholy Wars" director Kevin Newbury says that at this moment, there's an impulse to toss such problematic material aside. But that's not what this team did.

"As artists, our job is to reflect our cultural moment and the world around us and interrogate the material that we're putting onstage or on screen," Newbury says. "It doesn't mean that we throw everything away. We're in this moment of cancel culture, where anything that's problematic is

kind of taken off the boards or off-screen, as if we just can't present that anymore. But what if we look at that material through a new lens?"

Sulayman says that he has no interest in being didactic. "You never want to be too prescriptive with these things. I clearly have a point of view, and I have a point of what I'm trying to say, but some people don't want to come to the theater for that — some people want to just enjoy really great music. And I kind of want to explore gray area anyway."

"Hopefully," Sulayman continues, "people will leave the theater talking about it, wondering about it, reading up on the Crusades, reading up on our foreign policy now in the Middle East. But some people will also come in and say, 'I've never heard 17th century Italian baroque music before, and I think it's amazing.' That's also something important and valid."

Onstage, the work is intimate and elemental. The props are simple: chairs, a rope, buckets of water and soil to suggest borders. The animated projections made by visual artist Kevork Mourad evoke Armenian manuscripts, Arabic calligraphy and the architecture of his native Aleppo, Syria.

"For me," Mourad says, "it's only natural to capture the imagery from my childhood and bring it into this piece and somehow have a communication with the Western audience. I'm continuously trying to capture and somehow document what was lost there."

The simplicity of the set works both logistically and aesthetically. For one thing, notes Newbury, it makes future stagings cost-efficient, despite the high-tech projectors and sophisticated lighting.

"I like to say the \$5 idea and the \$5 million idea have to be the same idea," New-

bury laughs. "We could tell this story out on the street with the buckets, the dirt, the rope and the water."

Mourad says that those simple elements also evoke both the family histories of several of the participants in "Unholy Wars," but also today's refugee crises.

"I want the setting to be anywhere," Mourad says. "So almost like a troubadour

or a refugee, we're carrying with us those images like a tent. We could just strike it anywhere we want."

Through all these elements, "Unholy Wars" becomes a very current contemplation on intergenerational trauma, belief and self-identity. The creative team hopes that they will soon be able to take their theatrical meditation to audiences across the U.S.

THE ARMENIAN MIRROR SPECTATOR

SINCE 1932

Paid Internship through ASA

The Armenian Mirror-Spectator is seeking an intern for a six-week program this summer (mid-July through August, though it is possible to start earlier). The intern will receive a \$150 weekly stipend provided through the Armenian Students' Association of America's Internship Program.

The intern should be in college or graduate school and does not necessarily have to be studying journalism. Internet skills are a plus. The internship may be done in person or long distance, via electronic communications. Native speaker knowledge of English is important. If interested, please email tcadirector@aol.com or mirror-spectator1975@gmail.com with your resume.



ARTS & CULTURE

Glorikian's New Book Sheds Light on Artificial Intelligence and Healthcare

HEALTHCARE, from page 1

The book several months ago was on the top ten list of Amazon.com best-sellers and comes highly recommended. For example, *New York Times* bestselling author of 14 books on nutrition and health, and a television medical correspondent, Bob Arnot, M.D., in his brief introduction in the book recommends it be turned into the centerpiece of your coffee table. He exhorts, “It can make all the difference in the quality of your life.”

It is 272 pages long, including 52 pages of references to articles, which are mostly accessible online, but in its core sections, it is a fast-moving and lively work intended for a broad audience. Artificial intelligence is the simulation of human intelligence processes by machines, or in other words the ability of a device to teach itself to learn and think. Glorikian examines its use along with “big data” and predictive analytics in healthcare and proclaims at the start of his book “There’s not a person among us who isn’t going to feel the effects of this AI revolution, and it’s going to utterly transform the healthcare system as we know it today.”

Glorikian's Expertise

At the start of the book, the Boston-area based Glorikian relates how he came into this field. His story began in 1984, when as a 19-year-old, he worked for a man in the computer education business who also invented a type of computer to help him predict winning bets on roulette and other games of chance. This was his first insight into the benefits of predictive analytics and throughout most of his career, he wrote, he would “peer down the pike and tell my employer, fellow executives, or investors which products or business model will be the next best thing in healthcare” (p. 13).

Flashing forward to 1999, Glorikian ended working for Applied Biosystems, where scientists worked on the mapping of the human genome, combining the use of biology and information technology. Meanwhile, when his sister-in-law and her husband were visiting and he was showing them around, he came up with the idea of using GPS data to provide information on touristic sites or restaurants in the vicinity of travelers but was not able to break into what then was the telecom industry.

In 2013, he began work on *Moneyball Medicine*, coauthored with award-winning medical science writer Malorye Allison Branca. This was his first book, and while it also is on how data-driven technology was affecting healthcare and the life sciences, it targeted people in these industries, not a general audience. It was published in 2017, and his second book, an even more specialized work about the business aspect of in vitro diagnostics (IVD – tests done on samples such as blood or tissue that have been taken from the human body) titled *Commercializing Novel IVDs: A Comprehensive Manual for Success*, was published

the following year.

From 2014 to 2016, he served as an Entrepreneur-In-Residence to GE Ventures – New Business Creation Group, leading to the founding of Evidation Health and



Harry Glorikian

DrawBridge Health. Today, Glorikian is a general partner at Scientia Ventures, a venture capital firm focusing on promising tech companies using AI and big data to make diagnostic devices and new therapies, so he continues to scan new technology to see what may be significant for healthcare. He also serves on the boards of various companies.

In addition to periodically giving interviews to various media outlets, Glorikian has his own podcast series called the *Harry Glorikian Show*, where he speaks to leaders in the healthcare and life sciences industries. The distribution is worldwide, so that he has listeners in many different countries, and recently the series attained the top 2.5 percent in global ranking for such shows. Glorikian said that its approach “depends on the guest, but I try to tilt it towards everybody. Once in a while it does get a little wonky — I can’t help myself sometimes.” An average show, he said, will get several thousand listens.

Glorikian holds an MBA from Boston University and a bachelor’s degree in biology from San Francisco State University.

Transformations

Glorikian begins *The Future You* by explaining basic terms. Machine learning is a subset of AI, while deep learning is in turn a specific kind of machine learning. Neural networks attempt, he writes, to mimic how the human brain works through deep learning algorithms or mathematical “sentences.” Big data refers to extremely large sets of data about everything, not only traditionally structured and easily accessible data, that may reveal various trends or associations through computational analysis.

After describing various ways in which AI and big data are involved already in our daily lives, ranging from the food we eat, the cars we drive and the things we buy, he concludes that it is leading to the Fourth Industrial Revolution, a phrase coined

by Klaus Schwab, the head of the World Economic Forum. All aspects of life will be transformed in a way analogous to the prior industrial revolutions (first the use of steam and waterpower, second the expansion of electricity and telegraph cables, and third, the digital revolution of the end of the 20th century).

At the heart of the book are the chapters in which he explains what data and AI have already accomplished for our health and what they can do in the future. The ever-expanding amount of personal data available combined with advances in AI allows for increasing accuracy of diagnoses, treatments and better sensors and software. Glorikian notes that today there are over 350,000 different healthcare apps and the mobile health market is expected to approach \$290 billion in revenue by 2025.

Glorikian employs a light, informal style of writing, with references to pop culture such as *Star Trek*. He asks the reader questions and intersperses each chapter with what he calls sidebars. They are short illustrative stories or sets of examples. For example, “AI Saved My Life: The Watch That Called 911 for a Fallen Cyclist” (p. 68) starts with a man who lost consciousness after falling off his bike, and then lists other ways current phones can save lives. Other sidebars explain basic concepts like the meaning of genes and DNA; or about gene editing with CRISPR.

Present and Future Advances

Before getting into more complex issues, Glorikian describes what he most familiar to readers: the use of AI-enabled smartphone apps which guide individuals towards optimal diets and exercising as well as allow for group activities through remote communication and virtual reali-

we (and our healthcare providers are actively using those patterns to make accurate predications about our health.” He gives the example of having an app to track migraine headaches, which can find and analyze patterns in the data (do they occur on nights when you have eaten a particular kind of food or traveled on a plane, for example). Eventually, at a more advanced stage, it might suggest you take an earlier flight or eat in a different restaurant that does not use ingredients that might be migraine triggers for you.

Healthcare will become more decentralized, Glorikian predicts, with people no longer forced to wait hours in hospital emergency rooms. Instead, some issues can be determined through phone apps and remote specialists, and others can be handled at rapid care facilities or pharmacies. Hospitals themselves will become more efficient with command centers monitoring the usage of various resources and using AI to monitor various aspects of patient health. Telerobotics will allow access to specialized surgeons located in major urban centers even if there are none in the local hospital.

In the chapter on genetics, Glorikian presents three ways in which unlocking the secrets of an individual’s genome can have practical health consequences right now. The first is the prevention of bad drug reactions through pharmacogenomics, or learning how genes affect response to drugs. Second are enhanced screening and preventative treatment for hereditary cancer syndromes. One major advancement just starting to be used more, notes Glorikian, is liquid biopsy, in which a blood sample allows identification of tumor cells as opposed to standard physical biopsies. It is less invasive and sometimes more accurate



Harry Glorikian, second from left, next to Acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, in a December 19, 2018 Yerevan meeting

ty. There are already countless AI-enabled smartphone apps and sensors allowing us to track our movements and exercise, as well as our diets, sleep and even stress levels. In the future, their approach will become more tailored to individual needs and data, including genomics, environment, lifestyle and molecular biology, with specific recommendations.

He speculates as to what innovations the near future may bring, remarking: “What isn’t clear is just how long it will take us to move from this point of collecting and finding patterns in the data, to one where

for detecting cancers prior to the appearance of symptoms. The third way is DNA sequencing at birth to screen for many disorders which are treatable when caught early. The future may see corrections of various mutations through gene editing.

He points out the various benefits in the health field of collecting large sets of data. For example, it allows the use of AI or machine learning to better read mammogram results and to better predict which patients would see benefit from various procedures like cardiac resynchronization therapy or who had greater risk for cardiovascular



ARTS & CULTURE

CALENDAR
OF EVENTS & PROGRAMS

MASSACHUSETTS

- JULY 6 — Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway. Boston. Join us for TEA & TRANQUILITY. Wednesday at 4 p.m. Meet & Greet**
- JULY 9 — First annual Arev Short Film Festival, featuring short films by talented filmmakers including Ryan Ebrahmanian, Lisa Hagopian and Eric Harabadian and Roger Hagopian. Saturday, Lexington Venue, 1794 Mass. Ave., Lexington. 12 noon to 3 p.m. General admission \$25, Students \$15. All ticket sales will benefit the TUMO Center for Creative Technologies. Organized and sponsored by local filmmaker Sharisse Zeroonian and Amaras Arts Alliance. For information, visit www.amarasonline.com or call 617-331-0426.**
- JULY 14 — Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. Join us for UNDER THE RASPBERRY MOON. Thursday at 8pm. Featuring the Hye Guys Ensemble**
- AUGUST 3 — Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. Join us for TEA & TRANQUILITY. Wednesday at 4 p.m. Meet & Greet**
- AUGUST 14 — Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. Join us for UNDER THE RASPBERRY MOON. Sunday at 7:30 p.m. Featuring the Black Sea Salsa Combo**
- SEPTEMBER 9 — Tekeyan Cultural Association Boston Chapter invites ev-**

- everyone to a cultural event honoring author, editor, philologist, educator and public figure, Jirair Tanielian from Beirut, Lebanon, for his 60 years of service and dedication to Armenian culture and the community. Friday, 7 p.m., Baikar Building, 755 Mt. Auburn, Watertown. Details to follow. For more information, please contact us at bostontca@gmail.com**
- SEPTEMBER 18 — Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. LET’S CELEBRATE THE PARK’S 10th ANNIVERSARY SUNDAY AFTERNOON AT THE PARK! Sunday at 3 p.m. Featuring the Leon Janikian Ensemble.**
- 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 JERSEY

- 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.**

disease. There is hope that this approach can help detect the start and the progression of diseases like Alzheimer’s or diabetic retinopathy. Ultimately it may even be able to predict fairly reliably when individuals would die.

At present, AI accessing sufficient data is helping identify new drugs, saving time and money by using statistical models to predict whether the new drugs will work even before trials. AI can determine which variables or dimensions to remove when making complex computations of models in order to speed up computational processes. This is important when there are large numbers of variables and vast amounts of data.

Glorikian does not miss the opportunity to use the current Covid-19 crisis as a teaching moment. In a chapter called “Solving the Pandemic Problem,” Glorikian discusses the role AI, machine learning and big data played in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic, in spotting it early on, predicting where it might travel next, sequencing its genome in days, and developing diagnostic tests, vaccines and treatments. Vaccine development, like drug development, is much faster today than even 20 years ago, thanks to computational modeling and virtual clinical trials and studies.

Potential Problems

Glorikian does not shy away from raising some of the potential problems associated with the wide use of AI in medicine, such as the threat to patient privacy and ethical questions about what machines should be allowed to do. Should genetic editing be allowed in humans for looks, intelligence or various types of talents? Should AI predictions of lifespan and dates of death be used? What types of decisions should machines be allowed to make in healthcare? And what sort of triage should be allowed in case of limited medical resources (if AI predicts one patient is for example ten times more likely to die than another despite medical intervention)? There are grave dangers if hackers access databanks or medical machines.

There are also potential operational problems with using data as a basis for AI, such as outdated information, biased data, missing data (and how it is handled), mis-

analyzed or differently analyzed data.

Despite all these issues, Glorikian is optimistic about the value of AI. He concludes, “But despite the risk, for the most part, the benefits outweigh the potential downsides...The data we willingly give up makes our lives better.”

Armenian Connection

When asked at the end of June, 2022 how Armenia compares with the US and other parts of the world in the use of AI in healthcare, he made the distinction between the Armenian healthcare system and Armenian technology that is directed at the world healthcare system.

On the one hand, he said, “I don’t know of a lot that is being incorporated into the healthcare system, although we do have a national electronic medical record system that they have really been improving on a consistent basis.” Having a call management record system throughout the country will provide data for the next step in use of AI, and that, he said “is very exciting.”

On the other hand, for technology companies involved in healthcare and biotechnology in Armenia, he said, “I would always like to see more, but there are some really interesting companies that have sprouted up over the last five years. Also, with the tech giant NVIDIA opening up a research center in Armenia, Glorikian said he hoped there will be interesting synergies since this company does invest in the healthcare area.

At the end of 2018, Glorikian met with then-Acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan to discuss launching the Armenian Genome project to expand the scope of genetic studies in the field of healthcare. He said that this undertaking was halted for reasons beyond his understanding. He said, “My lesson learned was you can move a lot faster and have significant impact by focusing on the private sector.”

Indeed, this is what he does, as an individual investor, although he finds investing as a general partner of a fund more impactful. He is also a member of the Angel Investor Club of Armenia. While the group looks at a broad range of companies, mainly technology driven, he and a few other people in it take a look at those which are involved in healthcare. In fact, he is going to California at the very end of June to learn more about a robot companion for children called Moxie, prepared by

Embodied, Inc., a company founded by veteran roboticist Paolo Pirjanian. Pirjanian, who was a guest on Glorikian’s podcast several weeks ago, lives in California, but Glorikian said that the back end of his company’s work is done in Armenia.

Glorikian added that he is always finding out about or running into Armenians in the diaspora doing work with AI.

Changes

When asked what has changed since the publication of the book last year, he replied, “Things are getting better!” While hardware does not change overnight, he said that there have been incremental improvements to software during the period of time it took to write the book and then have it published. He said, “For someone reading the book now, you are probably saying, I had no idea that this was even available. For someone like me, you already feel a little behind.”

Readers of the book have already begun

to contact Glorikian with anecdotes about what it led them to find out and do. He hopes the book will continue to reach more people. He said, “The biggest thing I get out of it is when someone says I learned this and I did something about it.” When individuals have access to more quantifiable data, not only can they manage their own health better, but they also provide their doctors with more data longitudinally that helps the doctor to be more effective. Glorikian said this should have a corollary effect of deflating healthcare costs in the long run.

One minor criticism of the book, at least of the paperback version that fell into the hands of this reviewer, is the poor quality of some of the images used. The text which is part of those illustrations is very hard to read. Otherwise, this is a very accessible read for an audience of varying backgrounds seeking basic information on the ongoing transformations in healthcare through AI.



Թեքեան Աշակութային Միութիւն
Մեծագոյն 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

Recipe Corner



by Christine Vartanian



Linda Peek's Spicy Roast Cauliflower With Chickpeas and Spinach

CANBERRA, Australia — Woolworth's supermarkets publishes a free recipe magazine each month, and I sometimes pick one up when I'm shopping. This Middle Eastern-inspired recipe with cauliflower and chickpeas really appealed to me, but when I began to make it I couldn't believe how complicated the method was. Using the same ingredients, but a completely different method, I created this version," says Linda Peek, English-born food blogger and entrepreneur. During her career as a "diplomat's spouse" in the Australian Domestic Service, Linda traveled the world and entertained movie stars, rock stars, world leaders, dignitaries, and royalty.

"We were privileged to work on five continents with postings to Tel Aviv, Kuala Lumpur, Pretoria, Santiago, Paris and Copenhagen, and with home postings to Canberra in between," says Linda.

She now shares her stories, cooking tips, and international recipes like this Spicy Roast Cauliflower with Chickpeas and Spinach at her popular Canberra food blog. "This is a dish I enjoy making for family and friends. Chickpeas are an indispensable ingredient in kitchens and restaurants around the world, especially in North Africa, Spain, and India. Cauliflower, chickpeas, and spinach are three of my favorite go-to ingredients."

Remains of chickpeas from the Middle East have been found that are roughly 7,500 years old. These remains were found in the aceramic levels of Jericho and Çayönü, Turkey, meaning that humans had been cultivating chickpeas since before they could produce pottery. In the Middle East, South Asia, Africa, and the Mediterranean, chickpeas have been a common cooking ingredient for thousands of years.

Also known as ceci beans, Indian peas, bengal grams, chana, kadale kaalu, sanaga pappu, and shimbra, over 12.1 million tons of chickpeas were produced in 2016. There are several varieties of chickpea, and many uses for them. Hummus is perhaps the most common, although they are also used in salads, soups, stews, entrees, desserts, and even pizza. "The reason chickpea is grown and consumed so heavily in those areas is because of its nutritional value," says Douglas Cook, the head of the chickpea lab at the University of California at Davis. "It's an import species, and we're a bit late to the party."

"Chickpeas are gluten-free. They can be processed into flour, or you can buy a bag of garbanzo bean flour that you can use to make batters, replace eggs and use anywhere you use other flours," says Linda. "They make a tasty snack food



Linda Peek

like *leblebi*, and a healthy meat substitute in many vegetarian and vegan dishes." (*Leblebi* is a snack made from roasted chickpeas, popular in Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Greece and Turkey, and seasoned with salt, hot spices, dried cloves, or candy coated.)

Traditional Middle Eastern Falafel

Falafel is celebrated as Middle Eastern street food (or fast food) and sold from vendors or fast-casual spots throughout Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Turkey and Israel, where it's the national dish. It is often served as part of a healthy vegan falafel wrap with chopped salad and tahini dressing, or as an appetizer or a meze. Hagay Nagar, the Israeli co-owner of the former Hoomos Asli in New York, said that falafel is now "an international food, like a hamburger."

Joan Nathan, the author of *The Foods of Israel Today*, said: "Falafel is a biblical food. The ingredients are as old as you're going to get. These are the foods of the land, and the land goes back to the Bible. There have been Jews and Arabs in the Middle East forever, and the idea that Jews stole it doesn't hold any water."

"Stores often have a white version (tannish colored), and some specialty markets offer different chickpea varieties — brown, green, black, and even red," says Linda. "I've been known to smash them up with garlic, lemon juice, spices, and some good olive oil. Just pass the pita or flat bread, and enjoy all the goodness. Another tip: "Don't throw out chickpea liquid, either from canned beans or from cooking the bean. It's called aquafaba, a thick liquid containing a mix of starch and trace amounts of protein, with emulsifying, binding, and thickening properties."

Spicy Roast Cauliflower with Chickpeas and Spinach

INGREDIENTS:

1 large head of cauliflower

Water

1 teaspoon chicken stock powder or half a stock cube*

2 tablespoons butter

2-3 tablespoons olive oil

2 tablespoons za'atar (spice mix)

2 teaspoons sumac

2 tablespoons tomato paste

1/4 cup red wine or cider vinegar

1/4 cup currants

1-2 tablespoons maple syrup, to taste

1 8 oz. can chickpeas, rinsed and drained (to taste)

2 cups fresh baby spinach

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Olive oil

*Chicken stock cubes, also sometimes called chicken bouillon

cubes, are small blocks of dried, highly concentrated chicken stock that can be rehydrated for use in recipes that call for liquid stock.

PREPARATION:

Preheat oven to 400°F.

Cut cauliflower into large florets and place these pieces in a large mixing bowl. These are the cauliflower pieces you are going to roast.

Put the remaining stalks, tiny florets, and leaves in a medium saucepan. Add enough water to barely cover and the stock cube. Bring this to a full boil, then simmer until tender. Cool for 10 minutes, and then puree in a food processor or with a stick blender, adding the butter and salt and pepper to taste. If making this ahead, scrape the puree back into the saucepan, so you can reheat it at serving time.

To the cauliflower florets add: olive oil, za'atar, sumac, salt and pepper to taste and mix well. Line a large shallow baking tray with non-stick baking paper and spread cauliflower over in one layer. Bake for 20-30 minutes or until *al dente* and starting to brown on the edges. Toss occasionally.

While cauliflower is baking in the oven, place tomato paste, vinegar, currants, maple syrup, chickpeas and half a cup of water in a frying pan and cook, stirring often for 5 minutes or until reduced and thickened. Before serving, mix in the spinach and remove from the heat.

To serve, spread puree over one large serving plate or several individual plates. Top with roasted cauliflower, then spoon over the chickpea mixture. Drizzle olive oil around the plate, if desired. Serve with fresh pita bread.

Serves 6.

Note: If you don't have za'atar or sumac, make your own spice mixture with cumin, coriander and dried thyme or oregano. If you don't have any currants, use sultanas, raisins or dried cherries.

Also see:

<https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2019/03/chick-pea-products-have-exploded-popularity-us/584956/>

<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/food-features/chickpeas-garbanzo-beans/>

<https://www.onegreenplanet.org/vegan-food/how-to-cook-chick-peas-with-global-flavors/>



THE ARMENIAN MIRROR SPECTATOR

SINCE 1932



An ADL Publication

THE FIRST ENGLISH LANGUAGE
ARMENIAN WEEKLY IN THE
UNITED STATES

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

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

Baikar Association, Inc.

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

Telephone: 617-924-4420

FAX: 617-924-2887

www.mirrorspectator.com

E-Mail: editor@mirrorspectator.com

For advertising: mirrorads@aol.com

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

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

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

ISSN 0004-234X

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

**Other than the Editorial, views
and opinions expressed in this
newspaper do not necessarily
reflect the policies of the
publisher.**

COMMENTARY

EDITORIAL

Scandal Rocks Armenia's Judicial Branch



By Edmond Y.
Azadian

When Nikol Pashinyan came to power in 2018, he brought under his control the legislative and executive branches of the government. He was able to have absolute power on the legislative front because he was able to install a rubber-stamp parliament through his ruling party, Civic Contract. The judiciary, however, remained beyond his reach, but not for long.

There is no question that the judicial system needed reform because corruption in the previous regime was rampant and the system was used as an apparatus for the government to settle scores or to prosecute perceived enemies. There were certainly some honest judges who carried out their jobs with integrity. However, Pashinyan himself and his circle decided to take a page out of the former regime's playbook rather than bring actual necessary changes in the judicial branch. Their slogan had become *loustratzia* (purge in Armenianized Russian) and to achieve that purge, they did not hesitate to use any and every method, legal and illegal.

From the beginning, Pashinyan focused on the courts. In his first days in power, he ordered the mob to block the entrance to the courts, thereby paralyzing the system.

Former President Robert Kocharyan was a prime target for the new regime. Kocharyan did not have clean hands but the methods used to embarrass him went beyond the legal parameters. He was certainly responsible for the March 1, 2008 events during which 10 persons were killed. But after the new administration embarrassed Kocharyan for a year and kept him behind bars illegally before his trial, he was acquitted because the court found that there were no articles in the constitution on which to base a prosecution of the former president. Therefore, the government decided to change the constitution to be able to go after Kocharyan.

Next in the administration's sights was Hrayr Tovmasyan, then president of the Constitutional Court. He was persecuted by the government and hounded by the loyal media. The campaign only resulted in removing him from the position of president. However, he fought tenaciously to remain on the constitutional court.

Nikol Pashinyan kept blaming the former regime, whose leaders controlled the courts and on whose watch the judges expected calls from the executive branch to get their orders regarding verdicts. Pashinyan has bragged that he has never placed a phone call to any judge. One has to believe his statement, because when he can place his cronies on the court benches, who are familiar with the administration's political agenda, they will perform accordingly and don't need reminders through phone calls.

Thus far, the actions of the ruling circles, perhaps, deserved the benefit of the doubt, that they may have acted in good faith and within legal norms. However, recent scandals divulged the entire truth about the process carried out to "reform" the judicial system. The star of the scandal is a notoriously corrupt judge who had jumped ship from the previous regime to save his skin after the Velvet Revolution. His name is Gagik Jhangiryan. After the scandal was made public, Jhangiryan confessed that he had acted with the aim of blocking the return of Robert Kocharyan to power, meaning he was commissioned by the executive to execute a political mission using the judiciary process.

Next in line for the purge was Ruben Vartazaryan, the chairman of the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC). The duty of this body is to oversee the courts and regulate the conduct of judges.

Following the signing of the November 9 capitulation, a

mob entered the parliament and attacked then Parliament Speaker Ararat Mirzoyan. Pashinyan wanted the attackers punished severely, but Vartazaryan freed the attackers and publicly claimed that there was government pressure exerted on him. This action cost him his job and in addition he himself was charged with obstruction of justice.

Vartazaryan denied the charges and stated that he was indicted because the government was planning to replace him with the aforementioned Gagik Jhangiryan. The government could have won its case in the court of public opinion had it not been for the underhanded methods implemented by Jhangiryan to try to convince Vartazaryan to submit his resignation voluntarily.

These devious methods seem to have become common practice for Pashinyan's regime; to indict people with trumped-up charges and settle scores with them.

Thus, a meeting was arranged at a restaurant between Jhangiryan and Vartazaryan. Now we find out that the latter secretly recorded their discussion and he made 14 minutes of that tape public. During their discussion, Jhangiryan made promises that he would drop the charges against Vartazaryan if he voluntarily tendered his resignation. It is not enough that he committed a crime, but the foul language he used was full of profanities out of place for a judge or even an ordinary citizen. Jhangiryan later appeared on a talk show with Petros Ghazaryan and apologized to all the women in Armenia: "Sisters, daughters, wives, the unfortunate statements were not intended for you. I apologize."

At this time, there is outrage throughout Armenian media. Even the political analysts friendly to the regime have been asking for Jhangiryan to resign from his position as the pro tem president of the Supreme Judicial Council, a position formerly held by Vartazaryan.

Despite the raging scandal, Jhangiryan had the nerve to face the public to present the verdict against Vartazaryan. In a statement

read by Jhangiryan, the SJC stated that Vartazaryan has been sacked as both chairman and member of the council as well as judge of Yerevan Court of the First Instance for "significant disciplinary violations." Sadly, the decision was backed by eight docile members of the SJC, with one dissent. Jhangiryan also resorted to a ruse of backdating the document to June 16, before the date of the tape leak.

Following the release of the tape, the public was shocked and the government stayed silent. But after some questions by the media, some members of the parliament, including from the ruling party, began justifying the scandalous bargain between the two judges as "normal course of business between two colleagues."

This scandal taints the entire process, which Pashinyan claims to be a matter of reforming the judiciary.

The former regime was using the courts to settle its political scores and now we find out that the "revolutionary" regime is no different. This tarnishes all claims that the regime is trying to democratize the system in which three branches of the government need to balance and check each other.

The use of the courts as the long hand of the regime has been manifested during local elections as well, when opposition representatives winning at the ballot box are placed behind bars with trumped-up charges, as happened in Vanadzor. There, Mamigon Aslanyan was the undisputed winner but he ended up in jail instead when the votes couldn't be changed.

As Azerbaijan's Ilham Aliyev threatens Armenia's borders with mounting threats every day, the priority of the Pashinyan government must shift from a domestic witch hunt to keeping the country safe and secure.





COMMENTARY

The Supremacy of State Interests

By Vahan Zanoian

The degradation of Armenia's national security structure (as well as the crisis of political confidence) is often attributed to the defeat in the 2020 Artsakh War; while the defeat contributed to both, it did not cause either. It exposed a problem which has much deeper roots. Almost all systemic and structural political and military weaknesses of the Republic of Armenia share a fundamental root cause, which is the chronic absence of a culture and tradition of Statehood, both in the mindset of the political leadership and in the general public. This, in turn, is rooted in the absence of a cohesive political culture in the country, where a generally apolitical public, focused primarily on individual political leaders and their record, and fixated mainly on how that record affects their personal lives, has little or no appreciation of a broader, national, issue-driven political process and purpose.

The absolutism of State interests, which is a key guiding principle for most successful sovereign states, has been absent from the political thought process of successive governments of Armenia since independence. In many countries, during the formative years of their Statehood when they lack the requisite institutional depth, it has fallen upon visionary leaders to define, articulate, and defend State interests. This top-down process never took place in Armenia.

The political leadership viewed its function more as a privileged pastime than the hard, tireless, unglamorous, and thankless work of building a State from scratch, with all the requisite institutional building blocks, security measures, diversified strategic alliances, and the necessary steps to establish defensible sovereignty. It also invariably mistook the interests of its "rule" or its power base with those of the State.

While all governments pursue their own interests, many also recognize the distinction between the interests of the State and their more parochial ones. Realpolitik is shaped by the relentless pursuit of State interests. Even some of the most corrupt governments have managed to protect their sovereignty by recognizing a critical red line of State security which they do not allow their corrupt practices to cross. When Statehood is endangered, parochial and personal interests are temporarily put on the back burner, while the danger is brought under control. In this single-minded pursuit of State interests, governments do not hesitate to circumvent or violate principles, values, ideology, even certain legal restrictions in order to protect the supreme interests of the State. That's why some of the most unlikely strategic alliances between countries which are ideologically diametrically opposed and have no shared values are established and sustained, as long as those alliances serve the interests of their respective states.

In March 2021, I published an article in which the causes, consequences and possible remedies of the absence of the culture of Statehood were discussed.

Realism vs. Defeatism

By far the worst enemy after a military defeat is defeatism. Defeatism becomes particularly deadly when it appears in the guise of "realism." The wrong and most dangerous lesson to draw from our defeat is that it was inevitable, that we could never overcome the overwhelming international acceptance of Artsakh as part of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, that we did not have the diplomatic and legal bases and resources to reverse or at least modify that perception, that 30 years were not sufficient time to make progress in that area or to strengthen and modernize our defenses, that the Armenian nation as a whole did not have the resources to consolidate and "own" its victories of the 1990s. Consequently, since the defeat was inevitable, realism dictates that we accept its outcome and all its implications.

What is realism in politics? Realism in assessing the present is relatively easy. It is based on the prevailing observable facts. A prudent and pragmatic politician can even put aside any interference from emotions and prejudices and accept facts as they are: We lost a war, we lost thousands of lives, we lost hard-captured territory, we lost considerable geopolitical and diplomatic credibility, we lost significance as a sovereign State, and we are militarily weak. In a nutshell, that's a realistic assessment of the present.

The difficult part is to realistically assess the future because realism of the future is not based on events that have just occurred, but on someone's vision of what is realistic to achieve in the future. To assume that today's realities will be the realities of tomorrow, that we have no power to shape or change them, that external circumstances either do not change, or, as they change, they do not present opportunities for changing one's circumstances, is not realistic. It is defeatist. It lacks the vision and ambition to pragmatically shape a different future than the present. No political leadership can serve the nation it leads with a static mindset, because having a realistic vision for the future and the determination to pursue that vision are prerequisites for effective political leadership.

This raises an important question: who decides what's realistic in the future? The famous quote from Otto von Bismarck, "Politics is the art of the possible," is often cited to augment the call to realism. But few ask, "possible" according to who? Or realistic according to who? Would Sardarapat have been deemed realistic a year before it was fought? Would any of today's "realists" have considered the establishment of an independent Armenian Republic realistic a year before May 1918, when the Armenian nation had suffered its biggest human and territorial losses? Who would have deemed the liberation of Shushi or the seven regions around Artsakh thirty years ago realistic?

The point is, transcending from the realism of the present to that of the future is based on vision, judgment, imagination, ambition, daring, courage and, perhaps most critically, *purpose*. And therefore, that process is not absolute. The irony is that only those who can dream can be realistic about the future. Those who cannot dream simply project the present into the future, because their mind cannot see past the present.

If the wrong lesson to draw from our defeat is that it was inevitable, what is the right lesson? Here is one realistic answer: We lost the war because successive governments did not understand, let alone value, the Supremacy of Statehood; because from the early days of independence, the Republic was, by design, built on a weak foundation, especially from the perspective of national security; because from the beginning the government dismantled whatever intelligence gathering capabilities it had inherited from the

Soviet Union instead of building on them; because in the immediate aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union we chose not to put the formidable scientific resources of Armenia in the service of national defense; because right after the victory and the Bishkek ceasefire agreement of 1994, we did not consolidate our gains through international legal measures and through intensive, deliberate and goal-oriented diplomacy to secure the status of Artsakh and reverse the prevailing international acceptance that it is an integral part of Azerbaijani territory; because we remained intoxicated with our victory far too long and failed to upgrade our military; because we spent the last 28 years in complacency and corruption, oblivious of the fact that we were constantly crossing the red line endangering the interests of Statehood; because, settled nicely in the comfort zone of the present, we did not formulate a clear and attainable vision of an economically advanced, militarily defensible, prosperous Armenia and Artsakh, nor had enough dedication to our Statehood to pursue such a vision; because Armenia's political and military leadership happily lingered in the tired assumption that Armenia could always rely on an external guarantor of its security, ignoring the ways in which the world, the region, and the circumstances of that presumed guarantor were changing; because we did not invest in our capabilities and in strengthening the country, and our political leadership throughout independence, taking the prevailing status quo for granted, was more interested in enriching itself than in building the state and populating all of the territories under Armenian control...

...and because during the war we did not act with resolution and determination to win; because the war was fought with a fraction of our true capabilities and with mind-numbing strategic mistakes; finally, because as much as the thousands of lives, Sovereign Statehood (as distinct from the survival of the regime) was intrinsically dispensable in the mindset of the government. Harsh as this assessment may sound, it is nonetheless a realistic one.

Security Through Peace

The central policy objective of the "era of peace" declared by the Armenian government is the eventual attainment of National Security. The idea is disarmingly simple: If we agree on our borders with our enemies, and sign a peace agreement with them and open the channels of communication and trade, we will eliminate the threat of future military aggression, and live and prosper in peace. What could possibly go wrong?

Of course, the problem is that's not how the world works. And that's especially how the world does not work given the nature of our enemies. Our enemies will not show good will in peace, any more than they showed magnanimity in their victory during and after the 44-day war. Security is not and has never been a consequence of peace. The reverse is much more true. A strong national security can make peace possible, but not the other way round.

The only way to attain national security is through strength in the broadest sense of the word: strong, modern, and technology-driven military, competent governance, superior intelligence, diversified and mutually beneficial strategic alliances, goal-oriented precise multilateral diplomacy, being at the forefront of the information war, and an advanced and competitive economy. National security cannot be outsourced, nor can it be relegated to the good will of the enemy, let alone an aggressive enemy with genocidal objectives.

Seeking peace as a means of achieving security, without pursuing these objectives, is the ultimate naiveté and utter neglect of realpolitik.

It is also the direct consequence of not understanding, let alone valuing, the supremacy of State interests.

Never-Ending Discourse on Engaging the Diaspora

I first visited Armenia 33 years ago, in December 1989, on the first anniversary of the devastating Gyumri earthquake, when Armenia was still part of the Soviet Union. During that visit and ever since, I've heard and participated in countless discussions about engaging the Diaspora in the development process of Armenia. "Engaging the Diaspora" has meant different things to different players; with respectable exceptions, most discussions have been little more than lip service. Not surprisingly, the progress has been lackluster at best.

There are many legitimate causes for the failure of a more meaningful engagement between the Diaspora and the Armenian government, ranging from an understandable clash of cultures to differences in visions and expectations from each other. There are also less legitimate causes, largely related to opportunistic tendencies to exploit and inadequate effort to understand.

But ultimately, it was (and is) incumbent upon the government of the Republic of Armenia to adopt a deliberate policy of engaging the vast talent and resources of the Diaspora to further the interests of the State. After all, 75-80 percent of the resources of the Armenian nation are in the Diaspora — number of people, education levels, professional qualifications, financial resources, experience in management and administration, competency in science, medicine and technology, global connections, experience in military and strategic affairs and in intelligence operations.

Any government truly interested in furthering the interests of the State would have gone to extreme measures to lure this capacity into the service of the State. But successive governments since independence have done the opposite, introducing legal and even constitutional hurdles preventing the Diaspora from serving in high offices of the government.

The resistance to engage the Diasporan resources is so ingrained that it has gone beyond legal hurdles. While internships and beginner-level positions have been encouraged, higher positions in the executive and judiciary branches are almost non-existent even if not prohibited by law.

This, too, is the direct consequence of not understanding, let alone valuing, the supremacy of State interests.

* * *

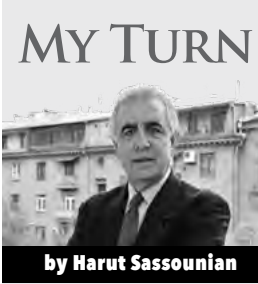
The symptoms of not being guided by the supreme interests of the State are many. The sorry state of the armed forces is one — from all indications, the capabilities, morale, and leadership structure of the armed forces have deteriorated since November 9, 2020. Any government that understood the supremacy of State interests would have made the strengthening and modernizing of the armed forces its top priority after November 9. In fact, if we believed in our Statehood, a comprehensive militarization of the country and the nation would have been our number one priority.

The utter neglect of the country's education system is another. No government

continued on next page



COMMENTARY



After a Century, Bankrupt Turkey Wasting Huge Sums to Deny the Armenian Genocide

by Harut Sassounian

The Turkish government’s denial of the Armenian Genocide is as futile as a man who repeatedly hits his head against the wall, hoping the wall would give way.

For more than a century, successive Turkish governments have done everything in their power to cover up the heinous crime of the Armenian Genocide committed by their predecessors. No Turkish leader has had the courage and honesty to admit the truth. Instead, Turkey has wasted huge sums of money to deny the undeniable. It has bribed questionable scholars and crooked politicians around the world to distort the historical facts. Ankara has published hundreds of deceptive books and made several trashy movies to cover up its crimes. Over several decades, Turkey has spent tens of millions of dollars to hire American lobbying firms to pressure the US Congress not to acknowledge the Armenian Genocide. All of these efforts failed miserably. The US House of Representatives recognized the Armenian Genocide in 1975, 1984 and 2019. The US Senate unanimously recognized it in 2019. Moreover, two US Presidents acknowledged it: Pres. Ronald Reagan in a Presidential Proclamation in 1981 and Pres. Joe Biden in his commemorative statements on April 24, 2021 and 2022. The most authoritative American acknowledgment of the Armenian Genocide took place on May 28, 1951, when the US government submitted an official report to the World Court, stating that the Armenian Genocide was one of the “outstanding examples of the crime of genocide.”

Despite all Turkish pressures, threats and bribes, over 30 countries have formally acknowledged the Armenian Genocide. This is in addition to acknowledgments by the United Nations War Crimes Commission in 1948, the UN Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities in 1985 and the European Parliament repeatedly since 1987.

Most of these acknowledgments took place at a time when the Republic of Armenia did not exist as an independent state. The Armenian Diaspora, in a David vs. Goliath battle, was able to counter the denials of the powerful Turkish government, supported by its NATO allies and scores of Islamic states.

All of these denialist efforts are based on the simple misconception that should the Turkish government acknowledge the Armenian Genocide, it would then be obligated to pay restitution to surviving Armenians. Regrettably, many Armenians have the same misconception. The fact is that the Turkish government is liable to pay reparations and return confiscated Armenian properties and territories, regardless of whether Turkish leaders acknowledge their guilt or not. Political statements by government leaders are of no value in a court of

law. Courts deal with facts and documents. No matter how many times Turkey denies the genocide, the Republic of Armenia has the right to take its demands for restitution and return of territories to the International Court of Justice (World Court), where only governments have such jurisdiction.

After an entire century of denial, the Turkish government announced last week its latest desperate attempt to counter the facts of the Armenian Genocide by forming the TEKAR Foundation (Turkish Armenian Issue Research Foundation). This is a coalition of three Turkish groups: Educational Friends Foundation, Baskent (Capital City) Strategic Research Center, and Center for Countering Fanatic Armenian Lies. The new Foundation held its inaugural assembly on June 25.

TEKAR plans to republish a Turkish denialist book written by Esat Uras (1882-1957), titled: “The Armenians in history and the Armenian question.” As a member of the Committee of Union and Progress (Young Turks), Uras played a key role in planning and executing the Armenian Genocide. His book is replete with gross misrepresentations.

The Turkish Foundation also stated that it will “print Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s views, thoughts and statements on Armenians, Armenian activities and Armenian relations.” I hope the Foundation will not forget to quote from Atatürk’s interview published by the Los Angeles Examiner on August 1, 1926, in which he said: “These leftovers from the former Young Turk Party, who should have been made to account for the lives of millions of our Christian subjects, who were ruthlessly driven en masse from their homes and massacred.... They have hitherto lived on plunder, robbery and bribery.”

The TEKAR Foundation has 23 members on its board of trustees. The chairman of the board is Mehmet Arif Demirer, a chemical engineer, not a historian! Incomprehensibly, the board is composed of six military officers, three engineers, two economists, one gastronomist, one student, and several others of miscellaneous backgrounds. It looks like the real purpose of the TEKAR Foundation is to provide jobs to Pres. Erdogan’s circle of friends. While it is a good thing that these Turks want to study the Armenian Genocide, their intention is not seeking the truth.

Turkish denialists have never understood that the more they deny the Armenian Genocide and the longer they talk about it, the more the world becomes aware of the Armenian Genocide. In other words, Turkey foolishly keeps publicizing the Armenian Genocide to new generations while trying to deny it.

The second thing that the Turkish leaders never understood is that the sooner they acknowledge the crimes of their predecessors, the sooner they will gain the respect of the international public opinion. When a Turkish leader eventually acknowledges the truth, he will be praised worldwide and may even be nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. By their denials, Turkish leaders are doing a major disservice to their own reputations, not to mention the huge sums of money they are wasting at a time when the Turkish economy is bankrupt.

from previous page

concerned with the supreme interests of the State would make the average salary of a schoolteacher more than six times lower than the average salary of a policeman, not counting the regular bonuses offered to the police force. The sorry state of the internal political discourse in Armenia is yet another. I shudder each time I peek at social media. The factions have moved beyond accusing each other of all the ills of country while denying any responsibility and accountability of their own; now their cronies have started a wave of name-calling, mudslinging, and such obscene profanities that it is truly impossible to believe that anyone involved in that chatter is genuinely concerned with Armenian Statehood.

Message to the New Generation of Leaders

There is only one short-term solution to this deep-rooted crisis. It is the emergence of a new generation of political leaders who intrinsically understand and value the supremacy of State interests. Such a generation has to have the same courage and selfless dedication as the founding fathers of some of the most unlikely states — such as Singapore, Finland, Israel, to name a few — who faced even more formidable impediments during the founding of their sovereign states than Armenia has faced. When a new generation of political leadership emerges which views its role not as a privileged pastime that comes with attractive perks and benefits, but as the truly thankless and dedicated work of building a sustainable sovereign State, then perhaps Armenia will finally be able to develop a professional cadre of civil servants, with a keen sense of civic duty, which has not existed in successive Administrations since Independence. So far, with rare but respectable exceptions, Armenia’s civil service has simply reflected the attitudes of the political leadership. Only a fundamental attitude change at the highest levels of political leadership can finally install a sense of duty, pride, and excellence in civil service.

The biggest deficits in the years since independence have been the political will, vision, faith in our Statehood, and a sense of national purpose that recognizes the supremacy of State interests, beyond empty rhetoric, and accepts the responsibility to take the countless thankless practical steps to achieve it. That is why, bolstering the Sovereignty of the State, a central tenet especially in relatively newly established States which lack institutional depth, has not been a consideration in Armenia. Unless this gap is filled, all other remedies, even when they bring noticeable marginal improvements in various aspects of the economy and governance system of the country, will remain window dressing.

The longer term and more fundamental solution is the complete overhaul of the educational system and the deliberate, methodic building of state institutions. But these cannot be done without a catalytic driver, which has to be the short-term solution described above. The combination of these short- and long-term measures could revolutionize the culture and practice of civil service, thus transforming both the structure and modus operandi of the government. Only then Armenia will have a chance to finally uproot the post-Soviet oligarchic system and replace it with an effective, functioning State.

This piece originally appeared in EVN Report on June 27.)

Oz Must Affirm Reality of Armenian Genocide

By Stephan Pechdimaldji

As a grandson of survivors of the Armenian Genocide, the Senate race in Pennsylvania between Dr. Mehmet Oz and Lt. Governor John Fetterman holds a special meaning for me, and thousands of Armenian-Americans. For years, Armenian-Americans have fought for recognition of the genocide, when more than 1.5 million Armenians were systematically exterminated by the Ottoman Turks — a crime that Turkey denies to this day.

It is also an event that Mr. Oz has not fully addressed. When asked, his campaign delivered a meaningless statement saying the candidate “opposes genocide” and “the evils of World War I should be commemorated.” These are the kinds of euphemisms and verbal gymnastics the Turkish government has long used to deflect attention from its particular crimes.

Pennsylvania voters need to know whether Mr. Oz stands with Turkey, or if he believes that families like mine were victims of the first genocide of the 20th century.

I grew up hearing stories of how my grandparents survived the Armenian Genocide. Of how at the age of 15 my grandfather, Haroutin Toufayan, hid in a haystack for more than forty days to avoid Turkish soldiers. Of how his own father and brother were taken away, never to be seen or heard from again. Of how he fled through the deserts of Syria and made his way to Aleppo, where he worked as a welder to make enough money to eventually settle in Cairo.

His story is not a lie — but Turkey has never accepted responsibility, even embarking on a decades-long campaign to pressure the U.S. government not to recognize the Armenian Genocide. And for the most part, they had been successful, by using the cover of NATO to persuade lawmakers that recognition would not be in the interests of the United States.

However, that all changed when Congress finally passed a non-binding resolution in 2019 that officially affirmed recognition, culminating with President Biden’s official recognition in his Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day

see OZ, page 20

Oz Must Affirm Reality of Armenian Genocide

OZ, from page 19

statement last year. As a Senator, Mr. Oz would be able to either uphold recognition, or roll back years of progress made by Armenian Americans and human rights advocates.

To be clear, there is nothing wrong in taking pride in the country of one’s parents’ birth. As a first generation Armenian-American, I take much pride in my own ethnicity. But even though Mr. Oz has pledged to renounce his Turkish citizenship before being sworn in as a US Senator, he has yet to do that. He has also served in the Turkish military and voted in the 2018 Turkish Presidential election — but not the 2018 American elections.

While Turkey is a NATO ally and purports to be a democracy, it is led by an authoritarian, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who has disregarded the rule of law. He has used world events, including regional military conflicts like the wars in Syria and Ukraine, to reshape Turkey’s image. He has gone so far as talking about resurrecting the Ottoman Empire, while fashioning himself as a modern-day sultan. Mr. Oz has met and dined with Mr. Erdogan on multiple occasions. He needs to answer questions about his relationship with the Erdogan regime.

Further, as a senator for Pennsylvania, Mr. Oz would represent the state where Fethullah Gulen, an 81-year-old Turkish religious and intellectual leader, has lived in exile in the Pocono Mountains for the past 20 years. Mr. Erdogan has accused Mr. Gulen of masterminding the failed coup attempt against him in 2016, and has declared Mr. Gulen’s spiritual movement a terrorist organization. Mr. Erdogan has tried to pressure the U.S. government to extradite the Islamic cleric, to no avail.

Mr. Gulen’s real crime, of course, is not treason, but daring to lead a movement with principles that conflict with Mr. Erdogan’s. Mr. Oz should address whether he would represent the interests of Mr. Erdogan or his own constituent, Mr. Gulen, in this matter of international interest.

The concerns about Mr. Oz’s suitability to represent Pennsylvania in the U.S. Senate aren’t about his Turkish heritage. They’re about his apparent connections to the country’s ruling regime and ideology. Pennsylvania voters deserve better answers from Mr. Oz than they’ve received so far.

(Stephan Pechdimaldji is a communications strategist who lives in the San Francisco Bay Area. This commentary was first published on June 21, 2022.)

Biden Waives Section 907 Again for Azerbaijan

907, from page 1

Section 907, enacted in 1992, establishes statutory restrictions on U.S. assistance to the Government of Azerbaijan “until the President determines, and so reports to the Congress, that the Government of Azerbaijan is taking demonstrable steps to cease all blockades and other offensive uses of force against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh.” Congress included a Section 907 waiver in the FY2002 Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act. U.S. presidents – Republican and Democrat – have waived Section 907

exception to bypass Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act to provide what has become annual assistance to the regime in Baku. Adding insult to injury, the administration chose to move forward with this most recent waiver despite the recent publication of a Government Accountability Office (GAO) report which confirmed the Department of State and Department of Defense have failed to meet statutory reporting requirements to Congress on the impact of U.S. assistance on the military balance between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

“As Azerbaijan continues to further oc-

“AS AZERBAIJAN CONTINUES TO FURTHER OCCUPY TERRITORY FROM ITS VIOLENT ASSAULT ON NAGORNO-KARABAKH, DURING WHICH MORE THAN 6,500 PEOPLE DIED AND MORE THAN 100,000 ETHNIC ARMENIANS WERE DISPLACED IN 2020, IT SIMPLY MAKES NO SENSE TO SAY THAT U.S. ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING HAS NOT IMPACTED ITS MILITARY BALANCE WITH ARMENIA.

–SENATOR BOB MENENDEZ

annually ever since.

The Section 907 waiver and subsequent extensions require a number of certifications, including that granting the waiver “will not undermine or hamper ongoing efforts to negotiate a peaceful settlement between Armenia and Azerbaijan or be used for offensive purposes against Armenia.”

U.S. Senator Bob Menendez (D-N.J.), Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, released an angry statement.

“I am deeply disappointed to see the Department of State once again make an

cupy territory from its violent assault on Nagorno-Karabakh, during which more than 6,500 people died and more than 100,000 ethnic Armenians were displaced in 2020, it simply makes no sense to say that U.S. assistance and training has not impacted its military balance with Armenia. I will continue to conduct rigorous oversight of any and all assistance to Azerbaijan and expect the Department of State to operate with complete transparency and provide all necessary details for Congress to assess any assistance provided to Baku.”



Our Staff is 100% Vaccinated

CARE

COMPASSION

COMMUNITY

THE ARMENIAN NURSING AND REHABILITATION CENTER

- LONG TERM
- SHORT TERM
- RESPIRE CARE
- SHORT TERM REHABILITATION

With physician coverage from Brigham and Women’s Physicians.

We’re proud to be ★★★★★ rated.

Please contact our Admissions Coordinator, Stephanie at 617.522.2600 to learn more or schedule a tour of our facility.

431 Pond Street, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

sponsored by



ARMENIAN WOMEN’S WELFARE ASSOCIATION

awwainc.org