

# Ankara Sets Preconditions: Wants Yerevan to Reach Peace Deal with Baku; Open ‘Zangezur Corridor’

YEREVAN (Azatutyun.am/PanArmenian.net) — Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Çavusoglu on Thursday, July 21, made the normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations conditional on Armenia negotiating a peace accord with Azerbaijan and opening a land corridor to Nakhichevan.

Çavusoglu complained that Yerevan has taken no “concrete steps” in that direction after four rounds of Turkish-Armenian normalization talks held this year.

“We don’t yet see clear steps from Armenia on the Zangezur [corridor] and other projects or the peace treaty,” he told Turkish state television. “Armenia’s leadership headed by Prime Minister Pashinyan should take positive steps for peace. Words alone are not enough.”

“Whether Armenia likes it or not, this is the reality,” said, pointing to the Turkish-Azerbaijani alliance. “We are one nation and two states. That is why if there is to be peace in the region, everybody needs to take steps, including Georgia and Central Asian countries. We expect concrete steps from Armenia on this issue, be it Zangezur, the comprehensive peace treaty or steps towards us.”

Çavusoglu has repeatedly made clear before that Ankara is coordinating the ongoing Turkish-Armenian dialogue with Baku. He stressed in February the importance of the Armenian-Azerbaijani peace treaty which Baku says must commit Yerevan to recognizing Azerbaijani sovereignty over Nagorno-Karabakh.

The Armenian government has said, by contrast, that it wants an unconditional normalization of relations with Turkey. Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan complained in May that Ankara is “synchronizing” the normalization process with Armenian-Azerbaijani peace talks.

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# Family of Woman Killed By Pashinyan Motorcade Car Alleges Cover-Up

By Susan Badalian

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — Close relatives of a pregnant woman who died after being hit by a police car escorting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan’s motorcade accused Armenian authorities on Thursday of destroying evidence relevant to the case.

They claimed that the law-enforcement authorities are reluctant to prosecute all officials responsible for the death of Sona Mnatsakanyan.

Mnatsakanyan, 29, was struck by a police SUV while crossing a street in the center of Yerevan on April 26. The vehicle did not stop after the collision.

Its driver, police Major Aram Navasardyan, was arrested twice by investigators but freed by courts. Navasardyan denies the accusations of reckless driving and negligence leveled against him.

Members of Mnatsakanyan’s family are unhappy with the course of the ongoing criminal investigation, saying that it amounts to a cover-up. The deceased woman’s mother, Armine Makinyan, said the authorities are hiding key facts surrounding the fatal accident.

“They’ve destroyed [recordings of] radio conversations,” charged Makinyan. “Namely, what was spoken with the [police] driver moments before the crash, what order was given, when [another] policeman who regulated traffic [near the site of the accident] got that order, when they turned on their sirens.”

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Sona Mnatsakanyan and her husband Ashot Vardanyan



Artsakh theatre group in Brussels, Belgium

# Artsakh Showing Its Endurance Through Theatre

## First European Tour

By Lilit Shahverdyan  
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

“If it be true that good wine needs no bush, ’tis true that a good play needs no epilogue,” William Shakespeare said.

The State Theatre of Artsakh didn’t need an epilogue either while touring in Europe, as the message was straightforward - Artsakh is living.

Arts have no boundaries; it is eternal — even during the worst calamities for a society. Challenges serve as a spurring force to create even when life is hanging by a thread, and theatre didn’t cease to exist and advance after the war. The Armenian communities of Europe welcomed Artsakhtsis with riotous applause and tears: for the first time in history, Artsakh Theatre toured in Europe.

June 2022 was symbolic for Artsakh theatre, as they visited five European countries to perform “Three Apples Fell from the Sky,” based on Narine Abgaryan’s novel of the same name. In a stroke of luck, the play’s director, Karine Kocharyan, arrived in Artsakh from New York. Currently, the producer of “The Voice of Armenians TVNY,” the Yerevan-born Kocharyan is an experienced actress and theatre director in

Armenia and the US. She also wrote the adaptation of the novel.

“I couldn’t find inner peace after the war. I could watch from afar what was happening in post-war Artsakh, but I instead decided to come and live there, and it was the best decision I made,” said Kocharyan.

The troupe was not in its best condition in the war aftermath; some actors left, some preferred other occupations and the rest had no one to gather and guide them. They

see THEATRE, page 6



Theatre performance in Germany.



# Eurovision Winner Maléna to Attend Coveted Berklee Program

BOSTON — Internationally recognized singer-songwriter Arpine Martoyan, known by her professional stage name Maléna, will perform in Boston this summer after receiving the Armenian Scholarship to attend a coveted Berklee summer program.

The 15-year-old emerging star will sing her hit Qami Qami, the song that won her the 2021 Junior Eurvision competition, at the Armenian Heritage Park on the Rose Kennedy Greenway on Sunday, July 31 at 4 p.m. ET.

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ARMENIA

## NEWS from ARMENIA

### Catholicos Karekin Embarks on US Visit

YEREVAN — The Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America will welcome Karekin II, the Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, for a short stay during the month of July.

The Catholicos is in the U.S. from July 18 to 29. Although there are no public events scheduled for this visit, Karekin II will hold meetings with leaders of the Diocese and Armenian organizations.

He will also spend time with Diocesan Primate Fr. Mesrop Parsamyan, who is currently hospitalized following an auto accident on July 16.

### Armenia Hiking Trail Named Among Best

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — CNN included Armenia in its 23 of the world's best hiking trails 2022 list.

Under the Armenia and the Silk Road heading, CNN writes that Armenia has some of the best walking trails in Europe.

"The 11-day Armenia and the Silk Road trip takes in some of its finest routes, connecting the UNESCO-protected monasteries of Sanahin and Haghpate, passing over limestone peaks and through verdant forests, with the opportunity to hike in the wild Geghama Mountains and climb to the top of Aragats, the country's tallest mountain."

### Kuwaiti Entrepreneur Promotes Shopping Armenian

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Kuwaiti-Armenian philanthropist and businessman Geragos Kuyumjian is again visiting Armenia and is promoting his Shop in Armenia campaign, a project aimed at encouraging inbound travelers from the diaspora to shop here. The project was launched in 2019 but the work was left unfinished due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The essence of this campaign is to encourage our compatriots to buy the products they need here in Armenia. Why does one need to bring products from abroad if there is everything here?" Kuyumjian said.

He believes this campaign would be economically beneficial for local businesses and producers if diasporan Armenians start doing most of their shopping in Armenia during every visit.

Kuyumjian says his initiative received positive reaction from government officials at the Office of the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs and Tourism Committee.

Kuyumjian is also working in the to promote Armenia in the Arab media. He said that there is a lack of information in Arab countries on the Armenian Genocide.

"In general, we've done a poor job in terms of presenting Armenian issues in the Arab world. Many don't have a complete understanding on the Armenian Genocide and other Armenian issues. And I decided to write articles and present the Armenian issues and counter the denialist positions," he said.

# Another Armenia-Azerbaijan Summit Planned

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Preparations are underway for another meeting of Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, a senior Armenian parliamentarian said on Tuesday, July 26.

"As far as I know, negotiations are in progress on another meeting of the leaders of the two countries, which should take place sometime later," Eduard Aghajanyan, the chairman of the parliament committee on foreign relations, told reporters. "I can't give any concrete dates [for the meeting.]"

"There is quite a bit of activity on the diplomatic front," added Aghajanyan.

Aliyev and Pashinyan met twice in Brussels this spring for talks hosted by European Council President Charles Michel. The latter said in May that they agreed to meet in the Belgian capital again in July or August.

Michel phoned Aliyev on July 4 to discuss "all issues on the Brussels agenda for the Azerbaijan-Armenia dialogue." He said the European Union will continue to mediate peace talks between the two conflicting sides.

Russia has denounced the EU's mediation efforts, saying that they are part of the West's attempts to hijack the Armenian-Azerbaijani peace talks and use the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in the stand-off over Ukraine. Incidentally, Pashinyan spoke with Russian President Vladimir Putin by phone on July 6.

Both Aliyev and Pashinyan held phone calls with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken late on Monday. The US State Department spokesman, Ned Price, said Blinken "encouraged" Baku and Yerevan to continue their dialogue and reaffirmed US support for their "productive EU-brokered discussions."

He also reiterated that the United States "stands ready to engage bilaterally and with like-minded partners to help Armenia and Azerbaijan find a long-term comprehensive peace," added Price.

Blinken spoke of a "historic opportunity



Belgium - European Council President Charles Michel, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev began a trilateral meeting in Brussels, April 6, 2022.

to achieve peace in the region" after holding separate phone calls with the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan on Monday.

"I commend the positive momentum resulting from bilateral talks and urge further progress towards peace and stability in the region," Blinken said in a tweet on his conversation with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev.

According to the official Armenian readout of the call, Pashinyan "reaffirmed his commitment to the peace agenda," while Blinken expressed Washington's readiness to assist in the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the opening of Armenian-Azerbaijani transport links and the release of Armenian prisoners of war remaining in Azerbaijan.

Blinken was quick to welcome unmediated talks held by the Armenian and Azerbaijani foreign ministers in Tbilisi on July 16. The ministers reported no concrete agreements after the talks. They both spoke with US Assistant Secretary of State Karen Donfried by phone on July 17.

In what may have been a related devel-

opment, CIA Director William Burns made a surprise visit to Yerevan on July 15. Pashinyan's press office said he discussed with Burns "processes taking place in the South Caucasus." Washington has not commented on the purpose of the visit.

Earlier in July, Pashinyan phoned Russian President Vladimir Putin to discuss the implementation of Armenian-Azerbaijani agreements brokered by Moscow. The Kremlin said they focused on "ensuring security on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border" and "restoring economic, transport and logistics ties in the South Caucasus."

The United States, Russia and France have for decades jointly tried to broker an Armenian-Azerbaijani peace accord in their capacity as the co-chairs of the Minsk Group. Moscow says Washington and Paris stopped working with it in that format following the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Visiting Yerevan last month, Donfried insisted that the Minsk Group remains a "very important format" for Washington. The Russian Foreign Ministry dismissed Donfried's assurances.

## Family of Woman Killed by Pashinyan Motorcade Car Alleges Cover-Up

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"All that data should have been documented and handed over to the investigator in charge of the case. But the investigator has no such things at his disposal," she said.

The indicted policeman's lawyer, Ruben Baloyan, confirmed but downplayed the absence of audio of radio conversations among security personnel that escorted Pashinyan that day. Citing the investigators, he claimed that they were not recorded due to a technical malfunction.

According to Raffi Aslanyan, the lawyer representing the victim's family, forensic tests found that the police car raced through the city at almost 109 kilometers/hour (68 miles/hour), breaching a 100-kilometer/hour speed limit set for government motorcades.

"This doesn't really matter," countered Baloyan. "He [Navasardyan] could only be subjected to disciplinary action for speeding."

The lawyer again defended his client's failure to stop his car and help Mnatsakanyan.

Makinyan pointed out that her daughter died more than an hour after being hit

by the police car. She or her unborn baby could have stayed alive had she been immediately rushed to the hospital, said the grief-stricken mother.

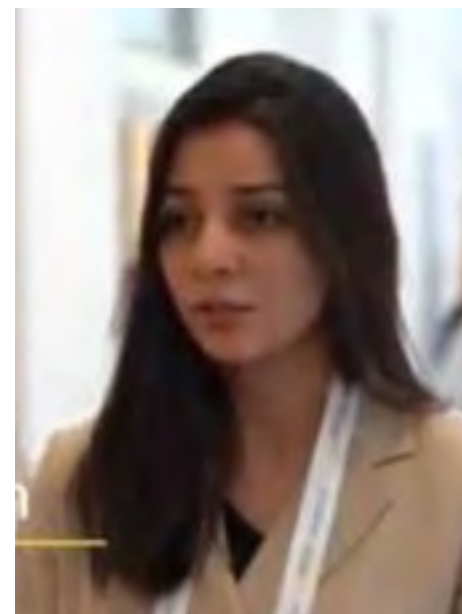
"He [the policeman] must have stopped even at the risk of losing his job," added Makinyan. "The prime minister was also obliged to stop to see what happened there."

Pashinyan's limousine and the six other cars making up his motorcade drove past the dying woman. Pashinyan has still not publicly commented on her death.

The deputy chief of his staff claimed on April 27 that the motorcade would have caused a traffic jam and made it harder for an ambulance to reach the victim had it stopped right after the crash. Opposition figures and other government critics brushed aside that explanation, blaming Pashinyan for Mnatsakanyan's death.

The probe of the accident has also prompted concern from seven members of Germany's parliament, the Bundestag. Four of them are affiliated with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz's Social Democratic Party.

In a joint letter sent on July 6, the Ger-



Sona Mnatsakanyan

man lawmakers urged Armenian parliament speaker Alen Simonyan to "closely follow the case to bring justice to Sona Mnatsakanyan and her family." They said they hope that those responsible for the young woman's death will be brought to justice "regardless of their rank and position."





## ARMENIA



## Gymnast Artur Davtyan Gets Element Named after Him

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) — The element Armenian gymnast Artur Davtyan performed at the World Cup in Cairo has been officially registered after him, the Armenian Gymnastics federation informs.

Hrant Shahinyan (pole vault), Albert Azaryan (rings), Artur Hakobyan (pole vault), Vahagn Stepanyan (pole vault), Vahagn Davtyan (rings), Houry Gebeshian (uneven bars) are the other Armenian gymnasts that have elements named after them.

## Ankara Sets Preconditions: Wants Yerevan to Reach Peace Deal with Baku; Open 'Zangezur Corridor'

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Meeting in Vienna on July 1, special envoys of the two neighboring states agreed to open the Turkish-Armenian border to citizens of third countries and to allow mutual cargo shipments by air. The Turkish and Armenian foreign ministries said this will be done "at the earliest date possible." But they set no concrete time frames.

Armenian opposition leaders have repeatedly accused Pashinyan of being ready to accept the Turkish preconditions. The prime minister's political allies have denied that.

Pashinyan's administration maintains that the possible peace accord with Azerbaijan must address the thorny issue of Karabakh's status. It has also ruled out any extraterritorial corridors passing through Armenia's internationally recognized territory and southeastern Syunik province in particular.

Syunik is the sole Armenian province bordering Iran. Tehran has repeatedly warned against attempts to strip it of the land border with Armenia.

"The Islamic Republic will not tolerate policies or plans that lead to the closing of the Iran-Armenia border," Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, tweeted on Tuesday after holding separate talks in Tehran with the presidents of Turkey and Russia.

Chairman of the Armenian parliament's Standing Committee on Foreign Relations

Eduard Aghajanyan said that Armenia's position on the Armenian-Turkish rapprochement has not been changed, and that any precondition is unacceptable for Yerevan.

Aghajanyan made the remarks Friday, July 22 at a joint press conference with and the Chairman of the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs David McAllister, who arrived in Armenia on regional visit.

Aghajanyan highlighted the meetings of the Delegation led by McAllister with Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, President of the Parliament Alen Simonyan, Vice President Ruben Rubinyan, members of the Standing Committee on Foreign Relations and the representatives of other political forces in parliament.

According to him, modern regional problems, particularly developments in the context of the Armenian-Azerbaijani, Armenian-Turkish relations, the problems combining them the ways of solutions, as well as the issues of the return of Armenian prisoners of war, the protection of historical-cultural heritage and other numerous issues.

McAllister underscored the active role of the European Parliament in the work for the solution of the regional problems and reminded that the European Parliament called on the two countries to return prisoners of war. He noted that the Council of Europe would continue to be in contact with their Armenian colleagues in any event.

## US Ready to Work with Russia On Karabakh, Envoy Insists

By Heghine Buniatian

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — The US ambassador to Armenia, Lynne Tracy, on July 26 reaffirmed Washington's stated readiness for renewed cooperation with Russia on facilitating a settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

"We have said that we are ready to use the [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe or OSCE] Minsk Group as a platform," Tracy said in an interview. "That offer remains open. We have not seen our Russian colleagues responding to that offer."

The United States, Russia and France have for decades spearheaded international efforts to end the conflict in their capacity as the Minsk Group's co-chairs. Moscow says Washington and Paris stopped working with it in that format following the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

US Assistant Secretary of State Karen Donfried denied this during a visit to Yerevan last month. She insisted that the Minsk Group remains a "very important format" for Washington.

The Russian Foreign Ministry dismissed Donfried's assurances. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov claimed later in June that "the Minsk Group stopped its activities at the initiative of the American and French co-chairs."

In the words of Tracy, the US still hopes that Russia will "re-engage in this format."

"We certainly continue to see the Minsk Group as a forum, a platform that has an international mandate to address the situation of Nagorno-Karabakh," said the ambassador. "We will continue to look for ways to use that forum. We will also work bilaterally with the parties in the region."

Washington, she went on, is coordinating its Karabakh peace efforts with the European Union, whose top official, Charles Michel, has hosted three meetings of Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev in Brussels since December.

US Secretary of State Blinken spoke with Aliyev and Pashinyan by phone on Monday. He tweeted afterwards that he sees a

"historic opportunity to achieve peace in the region." (See story in this section.)

"Some of what we are exploring with the governments of Armenia and Azerbaijan is some technical support, some technical assessments that are ultimately aimed at unblocking regional transportation connections," explained Tracy. She did not elaborate.

The Russian-brokered ceasefire that stopped the 2020 war in Nagorno-Karabakh commits Armenia to opening rail and road links between Azerbaijan and its Nakhichevan exclave. Aliyev has claimed that he calls for an extraterritorial land corridor that would pass through Syunik, a strategic Armenian province that also borders Iran. He has threatened to take military action to open the corridor.

Armenia has rejected Aliyev's demands, saying that it must retain full control over all transit links on its territory.

Iran has likewise signaled strong opposition to the idea of the "Zangezur corridor" advanced by Azerbaijan as well as Turkey. Its supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, warned last week that Tehran "will not tolerate" attempts to block the Armenian-Iranian border.

"Because of its location, Syunik has been a very strong and appropriate focus of concern for its security," Tracy said in this regard. "But at the same time I would just note, based on a number of trips that I've made, that I also see positive things happening there."

The diplomat pointed to socioeconomic development projects implemented in Syunik by the Armenian government and the provincial administration.

Asked how the US would react to a possible attack on Syunik, Tracy said. "I don't want to get into hypotheticals or speculate. I think this is why we are so focused on the diplomatic track and maintaining these direct conversations of encouraging progress on a number of fronts. peace negotiations, the [Armenian-Azerbaijani] border commission, unblocking regional transportation linkages. That is, I think, one of the best safeguards for the security of everyone in the region."

## CHW Satellite Photos Show Construction Near Armenian Church of Mataghis

NEW YORK (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Caucasus Heritage Watch is closely monitoring earthmoving near the St. Yeghishe Armenian Church of Mataghis, Nagorno-Karabakh, the research initiative said Monday, July 25.

"As of July 5, the basilica appears structurally unchanged since the 2020 war. But the proximity of earthmoving raises concern," the initiative said on Twitter.

According to the inscription engraved on the lintel of the southern entrance, the construction of the church took place in 1892-1898. The inscription says: "The Church of St. Yeghisha was built by the united people of Mataghis. It was started in 1892 and was completed in 1898".

During the visit of M. Barkhudaryants in 1894-1895, the church was still half-built and unconsecrated (Barkhudaryants 1895, 231).

The church is a three-nave basilica, built of local light brown rough and hewn stones. The dimensions of the monument are 15.07 meters long and 8.16 meters wide. It is completely plastered inwardly. The semi-circular beam is high, has two vestries, it is vaulted, and the roof is covered with earth.

The entrance is from the south, three windows open from the east, two from the south and one from the west.

Before the war the church was completely erect. Battles took place in the village of Mataghis during the Second Artsakh War



Satellite photos from Caucasian Heritage Watch

and it is not known to what extent the monument was damaged. After the war, a video was disseminated by Azerbaijanis on social media, where several men in military uniform entered the church and broke icons. The video also showed that various broken objects were scattered on the floor.



## INTERNAYIONAL

## INTERNATIONAL

## Droughts in Turkey Threaten to Dry Lake Van

ISTANBUL (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Droughts in Turkey are threatening to wipe Lake Van off the face of the Earth, Mir24 reports.

The shoreline of Turkey's largest lake has been steadily retreating and exposing islands in the middle of the water body.

According to experts, precipitation in the region are down by 10 percent, as a result of which the springs that fill the basin have dried up.

Lake Van is located in Turkey's eastern Van and Bitlis provinces (in the historic Armenian highlands).

## Three Child Workers Killed In Turkey

ISTANBUL (Bianet) — Three child workers in three different provinces were killed on the job in three days between July 23 and 25.

On Saturday, July 23, two people, including a 15-year-old identified as Furkan Kalemli, were killed when a minibus carrying agricultural workers rolled over while it was heading from Urfa to Mardin in southeastern Turkey. Seventeen people were injured in the crash.

Muhammet Ongun, 12, was killed the next day after falling from a 50-meter high cliff while he was pasturing goats in Mersin, southern Turkey. His body was recovered during search and rescue efforts that began after Ongun did not return home.

In the northeastern Samsun province, a 13-year-old child died on Monday after falling ill while they were pasturing animals in the Alaçam district.

According to the Health and Safety Labor Watch (İSİG), a group monitoring worker deaths on the job, at least 556 children died while working in the last nine years. (AÖ/VK)

## UN Security Council 'Strongly Condemns' Turkey for Attack on Iraq

NEW YORK (AP/Bianet) — The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has "strongly condemned" the bombardment of a tourist resort in the Zakho district of the Duhok province in Iraq's Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG).

The attack on July 20 killed nine civilians, including children, and wounded more than 20 others. The Iraqi government had immediately filed a complaint with the UNSC. Baghdad demanded a formal apology from Turkey and asked it to withdraw its forces from Iraq's territory.

In a written statement on July 25, the UNSC said its members "expressed their deepest sympathy and condolences to the families of the victims and to the Government of Iraq and the Iraqi Kurdistan Region, wished a speedy and full recovery to those who were injured, and expressed their support for the Iraqi authorities in their investigations."

The council urged all member states to "cooperate actively with the Government of Iraq and all other relevant authorities in support of these investigations."

## Founder's Day Is Celebrated at Calouste Gulbenkian Center in Lisbon

LISBON — Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Pontifical Legate of the Western Europe and the Representative of the Armenian Church to the Holy See, was invited by the Gulbenkian Foundation, to take part in the official ceremonies on the occasion of its Founder's Day on July 20 in Lisbon.

During his visit to the Gulbenkian Foundation on that day, Barsamian first had the opportunity to meet with one of the foundation board members, Martin Essayan (the grandson of Calouste Gulbenkian's sister Rita) and Razmig Panossian, director of the Armenian Section of the foundation.

"Indeed, it shaped his credo: What might be thought to be impossible becomes possible when human ingenuity connects with the words of the Bible.

"Calouste Gulbenkian's deep faith played a major role in his monumental accomplishments. He felt that his God-given abilities were an empowerment — at the very heart of his business successes and the foundation he established. Calouste Gulbenkian was able to overcome the hardships of being an immigrant — a stranger in a strange land — and transform that experience into the larger work of an architect who joined East to West.

wide while consistently serving as stewards of the Armenian community as well.

In the afternoon, Barsamian, together with Ambassador Garen Nazarian, the Armenian Ambassador to the Holy See and Portugal and the latter's wife Nana, visited the Arshile Gorky and Jorge Queiroz Exhibition at the Gulbenkian Museum.

This exhibition aims to bring together two artists, one modern, Arshile Gorky (Khorkom, Armenia, c. 1904– Sherman, Conn., 1948), and the other contemporary, Jorge Queiroz (Lisbon, 1966). The initial idea was simply to observe the way in which Gorky's work "speaks" to Queiroz.

And Queiroz transformed the project into an installation in which he welcomes, or receives, Gorky's visit. As the artist mentioned in an accompanying text, he "frequented Gorky to the point of incorporating him into the vision for the exhibition (...) and Gorky was there [in the exhibition, in the studio] almost always sitting in black and white, like his photograph."

Due to its long-standing relationship with Armenia, the Gulbenkian Foundation has on long-term loan 57 works by Arshile Gorky, property of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern) in New York, and another three works in its Modern Art Centre collection. It was from this group that Queiroz selected the paintings and drawings to be presented in this exhibition, all belonging to the final period

in Gorky's career, in the 1940s, unanimously regarded as his best phase, in which the artist reached full maturity and achieved a visual language that was entirely his own.

Finally, both the archbishop and ambassador and Mrs. Nazarian attended a special



Ambassador Garen Nazarian, left, and Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, with several works of Arshile Gorky on display

Then together they met the newly-elected president of the foundation, Prof. Antonio Feijo. During about half an hour meeting at the president's office, Barsamian congratulated Feijo and wished him and all the board members good health to continue the important mission of the foundation. Then they spoke about their good friend the late Vartan Gregorian. Professor Feijo met with Dr. Gregorian while he was studying at Brown University and later they became good friends. After the meeting, together they walked to the gardens of the foundation and placed flowers in front of the statue of Calouste Sarkis Gulbenkian.

On the same day there was a mass at the church Igreja de Nossa Senhora do Rosario Fatima in memory of Calouste Gulbenkian. Archbishop Barsamian was invited to be present at this celebration and at the conclusion to offer remarks and prayers. In his remark Barsamian reminded the board members and the staff of the foundation of a passage from the opening pages of the Bible, from the Book of Genesis 1:27-28: "Therefore God created humankind in His own image... God blessed them, and said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish and of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living thing.'"

The archbishop reminded everyone present that this passage from the Bible testifies of the great possibilities that God gave to mankind — right from the very beginning.

He continued, saying "today, as we remember the extraordinary life and accomplishments of Calouste Sarkis Gulbenkian, we can testify that he understood this miraculous passage from the Bible.

"Our world today needs individuals like Calouste Gulbenkian. He was very proud of his identity as an Armenian, very comfortable in expressing it. But he was also a global personality. His many international philanthropic endeavors — establishing



From left, Martin Essayan, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Antonio Feijo and Razmig Panossian, in front of a painting of Calouste Gulbenkian

schools, hospitals, and churches — made him a good steward and citizen of the whole world."

Then Barsamian expressed his appreciation to the past and present board members of the Gulbenkian Foundation who continue to promote the arts, charitable benevolence, education, and science in countless cultures and countries — empowering people world-

concert at the Concert Hall of the Gulbenkian Center. President of Portugal Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa and the president of the Gulbenkian Foundation made remarks at the beginning of the concert. Archbishop Barsamian had the opportunity to greet the president of Portugal, who thanked the archbishop for his presence at the celebration.





## INTERNAYIONAL

# Preserving Art of the Written Word

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

When Mesrob Mashtots arrived in Echmiadzin with his alphabet, he was happier (in the words of his biographer Koriwn) than was Moses descending with the holy tablets from Mount Sinai. Truly, his invention of the Armenian alphabet in 405 A.D. marked the beginning of a new era for the nation and the people. If human language is one of the characteristics that distinguishes us as a species, each written script is what identifies us as a people. And the fact that Armenians were so fortunate to have a magnificent phonetical alphabet so early contributed to development in the cultural and religious realm, in literature and music.

The growth of a rich language culture, maintained and transmitted over centuries through manuscripts and printed books, has been a crucial factor in preserving Armenian national and cultural identity through centuries, despite conflicts, conquests, expulsions and even the threat of extinction through genocide. In 1512 Armenia was one of the earliest Christian nations of the Orient to print books, a fact commemorated 500 years later by UNESCO, when it named Yerevan world book capital.

In early manuscripts of the Bible and other religious



The bookfair

it is organized and implemented by the “Für Armenien” foundation. The purpose of the initiative is to re-evaluate the role of the manuscript-book in Armenian life and it covers a variety of topics, the core of which is book art and calligraphy. Gallery 25, founded in 2001, includes 16 active members and artists, who organize exhibitions and events in the Berlin Art Hotel.

This year the events which lasted over several days, opened with an exhibition, entitled, “Archetypes”, featuring the works of Ararat Sarkissian, who is an Honored Artist of the Republic of Armenia. He created this series about three decades ago, presenting the alphabets of ancient peoples, including Assyrian, Urartian, Egyptian, Mayan, among others. Following the vernissage of the exhibition, the artist delivered a lecture-master class.

The next day, The Tale of Davit the Lad and Khandukht the Lass was presented by the author Ararat Sarkissian and poetess Roza Hovhannisyan – the translator of the epic into Carno dialect. In the course of the conversation, the artist printed images from the epic on clay boards with the help of cylind-

ders, an old technique he has maintained and developed.

On the third day of the project a master class on calligraphy and handmade postcards was held by Gyumri painter Vahan Topchyan. Those who participated were teenagers from the Gyumri and Vanadzor branches of the National Center of Aesthetics, Art School after Merkurov, and the A3 painting group of the Gyumri branch of the Fine Arts Academy. The youngsters crafted and illustrated handmade postcards, and took the opportunity to present questions to the artist.

The “Book Ode” open-air book art fair was held on the fourth day of the project. Contemporary writers from Gyumri displayed their own books, and various souvenirs related to the book and calligraphy were presented by the handcraft specialists from Yerevan and Gyumri. To con-

clude the series of events, painter and graphic artist Taron Saharyan delivered a lecture on the topic, “The Evolution of Armenian Writing in the Middle Ages,” reflecting the historical and cultural process in the transformation of writing and font formation.

## Recovering Memory through Art

The leit-motif of the initiative is that art can recover and preserve the identity embodied in language-culture, even though the civilizations and peoples concerned may have vanished from history, or been threatened with extinction. For artist Sarkissian this is the leading motivation for his extraordinarily creative efforts. “For me,” he has written, “the human experience, amassed during the course of thousands of years, is tremendously important.” (<https://araratsarkissian.wordpress.com/>). Memory, therefore, must be preserved, if identity is to survive. Certain crucial events threatening the destruction of Armenian cultural heritage had a decisive impact on him. When asked in one interview, what inspired his prints, he answered, “My main inspirations are old scripts, manuscripts and history. For example, in 2006, a whole grave of Armenian cross-stones was destroyed in Julfa. I was so sad that I couldn’t stop thinking about recreating them on paper. I sort of gave them a second life, and this is how I struggle to preserve my culture.” (<https://www.homofaber.com/en/discover/discover-ararat-sarkissian>) Another decisive event was the 1988 earthquake that devastated Gyumri, threatening to eradicate its identity.

To preserve this cultural testimony, Sarkissian explored and mastered techniques associated with the arts of the ancient world. For example, he learned to produce paper himself, as he explained in the same interview, from an artist he found in Jordan. Later he experimented with the technique, adding his own ingredients, like okra and Armenian herbs. He explained the importance of using such original techniques: “I firmly believe that the old techniques and traditions can be turned into something innovative. With my prints in various languages, maps, and cross-stones, I want to show that the old can be turned into new. We can’t read those scripts, but they can be an art piece to look at.”

Sarkissian’s work was presented at the 55th Venice Biennale, in the Armenian Pavilion which was not far from the old Armenian printmaking exhibition on Saint Lazarro island, and was the most memorable event he could cite.



The Archetypes

works, the written word soon became the object of an art form, known as calligraphy. The graceful, elegant forms shaped by Mesrop as letters in the alphabet lent themselves to transformation into objects of beauty. From the earliest manuscripts to later printed books, calligraphy and illustrations became an integral component of literature. And the Mashtots-Matenedaran Manuscript Institute in Yerevan houses thousands of magnificent examples.

## At Gallery 25 in Gyumri

In Gyumri, the cultural capital of Armenia, an important initiative is preserving this heritage. The project is called “Book Art & Calligraphy 2” and it opened on June 8 at the Berlin Art Hotel/Gallery 25. This is its second year. Financed by the Ministry of Culture and Sports of Armenia,

# First Armenian Church Inaugurated in Spain

MALAGA, Spain (PanARMENIAN.Net) — A newly-built Armenian church has been inaugurated in Malaga over the weekend, becoming the first Armenian church in Spain, Armenpress reports, citing the Pontifical Legation of the Western Europe.

The Vicar of the Pontifical Legation in Spain and Portugal, Very Rev. Father Shnorhk Sargsyan attended the event, which was presided over by Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, the Pontifical Legate of the Western Europe

and Representative of the Armenian Church to the Holy See.

At the end of the ceremony, the Holy Father addressed all those present and noted that the church should be the home of all Armenians and that everyone should take care of it and fill it with life.

The cleric also expressed his gratitude to everyone who came up with the idea of establishing the first Armenian church in Spain.





## INTERNATIONAL

# Artsakh Showing its Endurance Through Theatre

THEATRE, from page 1

returned to the stage in the summer of 2021 to perform “The Scarlet Flower,” directed by Qajik Harutyunyan, who had long-standing experience in acting but not directing. Soon, the news arrived in the theatre and gave it a second life — a new director was coming to Artsakh!

Kocharyan had no acquaintances and connections in Artsakh and starting from scratch was a challenge to herself and one presenting a heavy responsible on the theatre. She became a new friend and family to everyone surrounding her — her neighbors, sellers in big and small shops, and the theatre.

“When we had water shortages in summer, the kids from my neighborhood brought water tubes to the fifth floor for me,” recalled Kocharyan. “And in my leisure time, I sat on the bench near our building to talk to the people, and the new acquaintances grew into real friendships,” she added. But more important was building ties with the theatre and its people.

Shogher Sargsyan, 22, is the youngest actress in Artsakh State Drama Theatre, who was among the few to find the strength to get to the stage immediately after the war and give it a new start. “The Scarlet Flower” was her first performance as a theatre actress, and afterward, she followed the path with “Three Apples Fell from the Sky.”

“When I kicked off my experience in theatre, I realized that nothing could replace the stage for me,” said Sargsyan. “After the first rehearsal, we acknowledged that we’re doing everything right, and the theatre should live,” she added.

Kocharyan built a strong relationship with actors both in the work environment and outside. She perceived everyone “as the best people in the world,” and the troupe tried its best to help their special

still sore, and people sought something positive to elevate their spirits.

“When I came to Stepanakert, I realized that the wounds were too fresh; I couldn’t spot the smiles on people’s faces. I didn’t even dress up in bright colors because I was afraid it would hurt people,” said Kocharyan.

Abgaryan’s novel, *Three Apples Fell from the Sky*, was a suitable composition

story’s village, where people overcome many years of hardships until they find a glimmer of hope and get back on their feet.

The play served as motivation and encouragement for some actors to return to Stepanakert and to the theatre stage. Marut Davtyan, the main male character was about to leave theatre to get another job until Kocharyan talked to him and asked him to return. Ofelia Martirosyan, 40, who

ists took to the stage in Lyon, Brussels, Vienna, Berlin, and Cologne. The tour was to be funded by individuals who backed out in the end. Kocharyan ended up covering the costs personally with backing from local organizations in those cities.

The performance highlighted the peculiarities of rural life by using various dialects — the language was a mixture of Syunik and Artsakh dialects. They includ-



Photo montage from performances in Germany. Photo from AGBU Germany

that combined rural life, ordinary people’s destinies, and struggles. The novel is about an isolated mountainous village that was about to go extinct due to the epidemic, war, and famine, leaving only a handful of

played the main female character, lost her husband during the 44-day war and moved to Yerevan with her two kids. Post-war despair deprived her of the desire to get on the stage, but a few calls from the director changed her mind as well.

“Mrs. Karine called and explained that grief shouldn’t last forever, and that life goes on. She convinced me to return to Stepanakert, to the house my husband built, and rear my kids in their hometown,” recalled Martirosyan.

As soon as the roles were distributed, the troupe started rehearsals for a premiere in Stepanakert. From the outset, it became clear: the performance was not merely for the local viewers; it was meant for wider Armenian audiences inside and outside the country. After premiering in Stepanakert, the troupe, in a group of 13, went on its first tours throughout Armenia, and Artsakh’s voice became heard in Yerevan, Gyumri, Vanadzor, Artashat, Hrazdan and Stepanavan.

“I was carrying the idea of touring as a backup plan. When I saw that everything was going well, I decided to show the world that Artsakh is standing,” said Kocharyan. “Artsakh is not just mountains and nature; Artsakh is its people.”

Touring in Europe initially seemed an unattainable dream for the actors because they rarely had opportunities to even visit Armenia, especially during a crisis. However, aspiration and ambition made it a reality.

“I always thought that Europe is unreachable for our theatre and barely believed we would make it happen. After all, I saw that nothing is impossible when there is desire and willingness,” said Martirosyan.

In June 2022, this troupe of Artsakh art-

ed subtitles in English and French to make the text more understandable.

Besides value as powerful work of theatrical art, the performance had a more prominent message: to show Armenia and Europe the people of Artsakh, their willingness to create, and their dedication to their land. Especially for the Armenian communities of Europe, the arrival of Artsakh theatre was a chance to reconnect with their roots and history and to satisfy their longing for the homeland.

“The European-Armenians’ reaction was different from what we had experienced in Armenian cities. They laughed and cried, they were honest, and we realized that they accepted us from the moment we got on the stage. We became one with them,” recalled Shogher.

Arts and culture stimulated Armenians worldwide to stand together and with Artsakh because it’s the mutual support that gives strength to live and create inside the chaos. The European theatres were full - seeing Artsakh on the stage while undergoing uncertainties in their homeland gave courage to Armenians and strengthened their faith in a better future.

“I don’t know how much strength I gave to Artsakhtsis, but believe me, I found a lot of power within myself due to them,” said Kocharyan.

Kocharyan plans to take the play to new tour in the US and Canada next spring and also to return to Artsakh to work with Artsakh theater again.

“Artsakhtsis are strong and steadfast on their ancestral land. The most important thing is that all Armenians around the world stand with them and never accept the idea of ever losing Artsakh. If we ever accept it, we will lose it,” she added.



Three Apples Fell from the Sky” poster in Germany

guest feel safe and sound in Artsakh.

“We found out that her favorite flowers were lilacs and brought her lilacs during rehearsals,” recalled Shogher.

## Cautious Way Forward

Choosing a genre and composition for the play in a post-war society required prudence and cautiousness. The wounds were

old people expecting their demise. A spark of a romance suddenly occurs between an elderly couple, and the birth of a child alters the whole course of events.

Abgaryan’s depiction of a remote village could refer to any Armenian community, where people are interconnected and share the same emotions and pain. Kocharyan saw Artsakh as a perfect prototype for the

ADVERTISE IN THE MIRROR





# Community News

## California Armenian Legislative Caucus Foundation Announces New Member

SACRAMENTO, Calif.- The California Armenian Legislative Caucus Foundation announces a new member, Assemblymember Cottie Petrie-Norris (D-Laguna Beach).

The California Armenian Legislative Caucus Foundation includes: Senate Minority Leader Scott Wilk, Senator Bob Archuleta, Senator Andreas Borgeas, Senator Brian Dahle, Senator María Elena Durazo, Senator Bob Hertzberg, Senator Anthony Portantino, Assembly Speaker pro Tempore Kevin Mullin, Majority Leader Eloise Gómez Reyes, Assemblymember Lisa Calderon, Assemblymember Megan Dahle, Assemblymember Mike Fong, Assemblymember Vince



Assemblymember Cottie Petrie-Norris

Fong, Assemblymember Laura Friedman, Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel, Assemblymember Mike Gipson, Assemblymember Chris Holden, Assemblymember Tom Lackey, Assemblymember Adrin Nazarian, Assemblymember Cottie Petrie-Norris, Assemblymember Luz Rivas, Assemblymember Blanca Rubio, Assemblymember Miguel Santiago, Assemblymember Suzette Valladares, and Assemblymember Jim Wood.

“I am proud to partner with the Armenian-American community in my district and stand with them to acknowledge and mourn the atrocities of the Armenian Genocide. It is an honor to join Assemblymember Nazarian to recognize the strength and resilience of the Armenian people. We must be united against hate and intolerance in all forms here, on our shores, and around the world,” said Assemblymember Cottie Petrie-Norris (D-Laguna Beach).

The California Armenian Legislative Caucus serves as a forum for members from the California Senate and Assembly to identify key issues affecting Armenian Americans and develop and empower the Armenian American community throughout California.



Participants singing in the St. Hagop Chapel

## Inaugural Youth Choir Workshop Takes Place

ARMONK, N.Y. — The inaugural Yn. Diane Chevian Memorial Youth Choir Workshop took place July 7-10 at the seminary and was a great success thanks to the capable staff who led the program and the 18 eager teenagers, ages 13-17, who attended from throughout the Eastern Diocese.

The youth choir workshop was directed by Fr. Haroutiun Sabounjian, a 2018 St. Nersess graduate and pastor of the Armenian Church of the Holy Resurrection in New Britain, CT. The daily workshops were led by Fr. Mamigon Kiledjian, Eastern Diocese Instructor of Sacred Music, and Louise Yardumian, Choir Director at St. Hagop Armenian Church, Pinellas Park, FL. Emily Terjimanian and Subdeacon David Marottolo served as counselors while Yn. Lucine Sabounjian assisted as support staff.

Collectively, the participants had a sincere interest in learning the liturgical hymns of our Divine Liturgy and began the session with choral team-building activities, including forming a kazoo chorus to learn how to play popular tunes in unison; “digital bell choirs” to learn to play the hymn Soorp Asdvadz using a digital handbell app; and singing in rounds by writing new lyrics to the song Row Row Row Your Boat.

The daily workshops included learning the Yegmalian Badarak in four-part harmony; singing techniques; how to follow conductor cues; and vocal exercises. There was also a small group “Sharagan Study” during the conference on the hymn Soorp Asdvadz. “It was my great honor to participate in this inaugural Yn. Diane Chevian Choir Workshop. These children were a blessing to work with and showed great resolve in learning their music in parts,” shared Louise Yardumian. “Their attention in class showed maturity beyond their ages. They listened intently, practiced hard and happily sang during our rehearsals and Sunday Holy Badarak.”

Bishop Daniel Findikyan, former primate of the Eastern Diocese, spent a day with the teenagers and lectured on the hymn Kreesdos ee mech. He also blessed two new icons in the St. Hagop Chapel which includes the great female saints of the Armenian Church: Sts. Hripsime, Gayane, Khosrovitukht and Ashkhen. These icons were donated anonymously in memory of Yn. Diane Chevian and Yn. Zabelle Gdanian.

Each day, everyone participated in Matin and Vesper services as deacons, choir members and readers. On Sunday morning, Badarak was celebrated by Fr. Haroutiun where the participants sang as the choir members. Following Divine Liturgy, there was a special service held for Yn. Diane Chevian.

“With this being the first year of the workshop, the staff and I had no idea what to expect, but to our pleasant surprise we were greeted with a talented and passionate group of faithful liturgical musicians who were eager to dive into our rich musical

see CHOIR, page 9



Participants and staff of the inaugural Yn. Diane Chevian Memorial Youth Choir Workshop

## \$1.2 million from Kachigian Family Trust Establishes UCLA Lectureship In Armenian Studies

By Jonathan Riggs

WESTWOOD, Calif. (newsroom.ucla.edu) — The University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) Division of Humanities has received a \$1.2 million bequest from the estate of siblings George and Alice Kachigian to support the Armenian studies program in the department of Near Eastern languages and cultures. As part of the gift, the department created the Kachigian Family Lectureship in Armenian Language and Culture.

The inaugural holder of the lectureship will be Hagop Kouloujian, a UCLA scholar and instructor who specializes in Western Armenian, a



Hagop Kouloujian, UCLA's inaugural Kachigian Family Lecturer in Armenian Language and Culture (Courtesy of Hagop Kouloujian)

language that since the Armenian Genocide of the early 20th century has been spoken almost exclusively by people in the diaspora. Kouloujian was instrumental in having it designated an endangered language by UNESCO in 2010.

“We are grateful for the kindness and visionary support of the Kachigian family,” said David Schaberg, dean of humanities and senior dean of the UCLA College. “Their generosity will contribute to the vitality of this endangered language and culture.”

Los Angeles, with the largest Armenian-speaking population outside Armenia itself, and UCLA are natural settings for such scholarship. Since the launch of the Armenian studies program in 1969, UCLA has been a destination for students interested in the field, and the creation of the UCLA Promise Armenian Institute in 2019 cemented the university’s leadership role in Armenian research and public impact programs.

Kouloujian’s ongoing Language in Action project at UCLA, funded by the Portugal-based Calouse Gulbenkian Foundation, exemplifies his “creative literacy” approach, which focuses on teaching students by encouraging their own creative output. His students have produced hundreds of pieces, ranging from creative

see UCLA, page 8



## COMMUNITY NEWS

# AMAA Executive Director/CEO Visits Mission Field in Istanbul

PARAMUS, N.J. — Following the Armenian Evangelical Church's 175th Anniversary commemorative events in Armenia, Armenian Missionary Association of America Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian, along with his wife Sona, traveled to Istanbul on Friday, July 16, 2022, for a short mission field visit where they were welcomed by Rev. Kirkor Ağabaloğlu, Pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Church in Gedikpaşa.

On Sunday, July 17, Khanjian participated in the Worship Service of the Armenian Evangelical Church in Gedikpaşa, and shared a message in Armenian while Rev. Ağabaloğlu, translated to Turkish.

On Monday, July 18, the couple, accompanied by Rev. Ağabaloğlu, visited the Pa-

trarchate of Istanbul where they were received by Archbishop Sahag II Mashalian, Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople. The guests congratulated Mashalian on his election as the Patriarch of Constantinople. Mr. Khanjian spoke about the celebratory events of the 175th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church held in Yerevan and remembered with gratitude the presence of Archbishop Nathan Hovhannisian, who delivered the congratulatory message of His Holiness Karekin II Catholicos of All Armenians. Mr. Khanjian also thanked the Patriarch for his message on the same occasion.

The Patriarch once again congratulated the 175th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church. He also emphasized the need to continue living our Christian faith by following the example of our grandfathers who experienced miracles with faith.

Khanjian referred to the reconstruction project of Camp Armen in Tuzla and asked for the support of and blessing of Mashalian. The latter emphasized that the rightful owner of the institution is the Armenian Evangelical Community and, since it will be used by members of the Armenian community without religious discrimination, the work done would be of interest to the Patriarchal See and the Armenian Catholic Archdiocese. He also stated that he gave instructions for fundraising, and engagement in future plans.

Khanjian expressed his satisfaction that an inter-community understanding was formed for the realization of such a goal. He also emphasized that there

were healthy inter-church relations in Istanbul, the result of which was the book about the Basic Principles of Christianity published in Turkish, Armenian, and English languages, the like of which has never been seen before. His Eminence gave



At the Hrant Dink School

copies of these books to the guests, as well as copies of his authored book Yergu Ukh-tavor (Two Pilgrims). The guests expressed their gratitude for the hospitality and dialogue and bid farewell to Mashalian.

On the same day, Khanjian and his wife, accompanied by Ağabaloğlu, visited Archbishop Boghos Lévon Zékiyan of the Armenian Catholic Archdiocese of Istanbul at Sourp Hovannes (St. John) Voskeperan mother church in Beyoğlu, Istanbul. Joining the guests was Father Vartan Kazanjian.

Matters relating to the Armenian community in Istanbul and the region were topics of discussion. Archbishop Zékiyan expressed support for the reconstruction of Camp Armen in Tuzla and affirmed the Church's inclination to engage in the project. The guests thanked the Archbishop for welcoming them with a warm reception.

On July 18, Mr. and Mrs. Khanjian also visited the Hrant Dink School located at the Armenian Evangelical Church of Gedikpaşa in Istanbul. They interacted with the students in grades K-9 who presented a special performance of recitations and songs. It was a moving experience to see this island, a ghetto of national identity. These children and their school are equivalent to the "Youth Home of Istanbul" — children who are 'cast out' of the system, but warmly embraced by our Church in

Gedikpaşa supported by the AMAA, where they come to know, learn, and realize their national identity, origin, and Christian faith.

On July 19, his last day in Istanbul, Khanjian his wife and Ağabaloğlu, Hrant Dink School children, teachers, and staff, as well as members of the Camp Armen Building Committee, representatives of the three Armenian denominations, and representatives of the Gedikpaşa Municipal Council visited Camp Armen. A bus was provided by the Municipal Council who invited the guests to share a meal with them following the visit. At the Camp, they reminisced Camp Armen and the two Hrants — Guzelian and Dink — and pledged to realize the dream of rebuilding the Camp for the youth and young adults of the community without discrimination. Turkish newspaper and TV reporters met the guests at the Camp and interviewed them.

"It was a very rewarding experience to embrace the legacy of Camp Armen, its heroes and heroines and the promise of a new community camp which will perpetuate that legacy and bring forth the promise of a new faithful generation of youth in Istanbul. AMAA, holding hands with the Armenian Apostolic and Catholic Churches, vows to support the rebuilding of the new camp for the benefit of community youth and young adults," said Mr. Khanjian.



At the Hrant Dink School

triarchate of Istanbul where they were received by Archbishop Sahag II Mashalian, Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople.

The guests congratulated Mashalian on his election as the Patriarch of Constantinople. Mr. Khanjian spoke about the cel-

## \$1.2 million from Kachigian Family Trust Establishes UCLA Lectureship in Armenian Studies

UCLA, from page 7

works to nonfiction, with the goal of contributing to the vitality of Western Armenian language and culture.

In May 2022, for example, the department of Near Eastern languages and cultures held an event to celebrate the publication of "Girkov useloo, inchoo hos em?" ("To Say With Passion, Why Am I Here?"), a full-length volume of poetry written in Western Armenian by the late Tenny Arlen, a 2013 UCLA comparative literature graduate who learned the language and wrote most of the collection in Kouloujian's courses.

Donors George and Alice Kachigian, for whom the lectureship is named, were active members and generous supporters of the Los Angeles Armenian community. Although they moved to Oregon 30 years ago following the deaths of their parents and brother Harold, they continued to support UCLA's Armenian studies program throughout their lives, providing research funding for faculty in the divisions of so-



From left, siblings George, Alice and Harold Kachigian

cial sciences and humanities.

Alice died in 2017, and after George's death in 2019, the siblings' estate left generous funding to the Armenian studies pro-

gram and the department of neurology at UCLA.

"The Kachigian family were friends to all, donated to many causes and coun-

seled anyone who requested their help. They lived lives of goodness and kindness," said Rafe Aharonian, trustee of the Kachigian Living Trust. "George, Alice and Harold wanted to help the youth learn more about Armenian heritage, and courses like Dr. Kouloujian's encourage connections between UCLA students of Armenian heritage who might otherwise not have met."

The Kachigians' legacy will live on in all those at UCLA and elsewhere who, through the family's generosity, have developed a deep connection to and appreciation for Armenian culture and language, said Kouloujian, who will hold the lectureship for five years.

"My aspiration for this lectureship is to continue to enhance UCLA's Armenian work with forward-looking activities and community impact projects that will help invigorate the future of this language and culture," he said. "I want to share the enduring, evolving beauty and power of Armenian with as many people as possible."





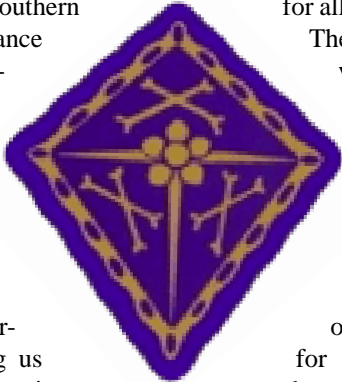
COMMUNITY NEWS

# Triple X Frat Kef Time in Southern California Returns

MONTEBELLO, Calif. — The Orange County Chapter of the Triple X Fraternity proud to present Kef Time Southern California on Saturday, September 17. This is an Armenian cultural event that is open to the public. Kef Time Southern California will be a dinner, dance and also a fundraising evening attended by many from across the nation.

It will be held at Bagramian hall. The amazing Hagopian Kef Time legacy band with the East Coast musical accompaniment of Mal Barsamian who will be joining us playing Armenian dance favorites that were brought over from historic Armenian during the diaspora and have remained a standard at many family functions, significant events and at gatherings as this.

Kef Time has its origins back to the late 1960's when world renowned musician Richard Hagopian and his band of musicians performed the music of the old country that was brought to the U.S.



by first generation Armenian immigrants. The Kef Time band played performances, weddings, picnics, banquets, dances & events throughout the country for over 50 years creating fond memories for all who have heard them play.

The Kef Time Legacy band was formed recently by Phillip and Andrew Hagopian, the grandsons of Richard Hagopian, and fellow musicians.

This event will provide an evening that our guests will remember for many years to come and perhaps one that will also yield new friendships and maybe some lifelong unions for some.

The entire community is invited to this event. To purchase tickets, visit:

<https://orange-county-trex-fraternity.ticketleap.com/oc-trex-fraternity--proudly-presents-kef-time-socal>  
<https://octriplex.org/kef-time/>  
<https://m.facebook.com/events/5182566365154615>

# Inaugural Youth Choir Workshop Takes Place

CHOIR, from page 7  
 heritage," proclaimed Fr. Haroutiun Sabounjian. "I want to thank the instructors, staff and participants of this wonderful program for sharing their enthusiasm for serving our Lord. After Sunday's Badarak, I was left with the comforting assurance that Yn. Diane would be proud of these young choir members and the program establish in her memory."

The choir workshop was funded by in lieu of flowers donations to the seminary on the occasion of the passing of Yn. Diane Chevian. She was the beloved wife of Fr. Mardiros Chevian, dean, and mother of Alexandra and Kristina. She was a dedicated choir director for many years at St. Mesrob Armenian Church in Racine, WI, as well as the primary instructor of the former St. Nersess Liturgical Music Program, which took place during several summers. Donations to the Memorial Fund are still being accepted through [www.stnersess.edu/support](http://www.stnersess.edu/support).

"It was truly inspiring to know that there are so many young people interested in learning the music of our Church," reflected Fr. Mardiros Chevian. "This program is the continuation of the work that my wife, Yn Diane, was committed to during her lifetime and the fulfillment of her dream."

Zovig Ashjian and Lauren Kayaian spearheaded the preparation of all the meals throughout the program, with the assistance of Andrew Kayaian, Robert Kayaian, Lisa Kouzoujian, and Dawn Papalian.

Plans are underway to continue this youth workshop for years to come. Participants will have the opportunity to build relationships with choir members from across the country and will have access to regular one-on-one virtual training sessions with Fr. Mamigon to reinforce their learning and progress their musicianship throughout the year. To learn more, go to [www.stnersess.edu](http://www.stnersess.edu).

# OBITUARY

## Mary (Berberian) Humber Animal Lover Dedicated to the Arts

WINCHESTER, Mass. — Mary (Berberian) Humber of Winchester passed away peacefully at home on July 19, 2022 with her husband by her side. She was 96.



Mary was born on February 8, 1926, in Somerville, to the late Harotune and Angele (Nishanian) Berberian.

She is survived by her husband, Richard F. Humber; stepson Richard W. Humber and Kimberly of Lemont, Penn., nephew Thomas Garabedian of Falmouth, Mass., niece Andrea G. Karanian and Robert of Avon, Conn., nephew Kenneth Toomajian and Gail of Reading, Mass., niece Audrey G. Urbanik and the late Edward of Wethersfield, Conn., and Patty, wife of her late nephew Steven Toomajian of Nahant, Mass. She also leaves behind many loving great-nieces and great-nephews.

The family extends thanks to Grace Naluwu and Abieyuwa Erhunmwunsee who provided loving care to Mary. She will be missed by her beloved cat Precious.

Mary was predeceased by her sisters and brothers-in-law Dora and Haige Garabedian and Emma and Sarkis Toomajian.

Mary graduated from Watertown High and Burdett College, Boston. She worked as Group Secretary at MIT Lincoln Laboratory and was promoted to senior buyer in the Purchasing Department. She retired in 1993 after 43 years of service with MIT.

Her main hobby and love was travel. She visited many countries all over the world. She loved animals and imagined a second career caring for animals.

Mary studied voice at the New England Conservatory of Music and was a devotee of opera and theater. She was a soloist and member of the St. James Armenian Church Choir and was a longtime member of the Armenian Students Association (ASA).

Mary served as a volunteer at the Wang Theater for many years and also volunteered at Children's Hospital, the Museum of Science, and the Armenian Museum of America in Watertown.

## Araxy Adalian Dedicated Mother

LOS ANGELES — Araxy Adalian, beloved mother, grandmother, sister, aunt, relative and friend passed away on Friday, July 1, 2022.

Araxy Adalian was born in Alexandretta on January 30, 1928, the second of three children (Hagop and Shake) born to the late Hapet and Helen Der Boghossian. Araxy was married to the late Paul Boghos Adalian.

She is survived by her children Rouben Adalian and wife, Alice Adalian, and their children, Dvin and Diran; Lena Sarkissian and her husband, Kourken (Greg) Sarkissian, and their children Talar, Haig and Alex; and Robert Adalian and wife, Maral Adalian, and their children Andrew and Alexa; sister Shake Kevorkian and her children Gregory and Vivian and her brother's (late Hagop Der Boghossian) children, Helen and Chris.



Funeral services, followed by interment, were held on Tuesday, July 19 at the Hollywood Hills Forest Lawn Mortuary Park, Old North Church – 6300 Forest Lawn Dr.

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# Milwaukee Armenian Festival a Beacon of Culture and Hospitality

By David Lührssen

MILWAUKEE, Wis. — Twenty-five years ago, the older members of St. John the Baptist Armenian Church in suburban Milwaukee worried that the parish’s annual summer festival would soon die for lack of young volunteers to do the work. That generation has passed, but younger generations have filled the role of their elders, making the 2022 Milwaukee Armenian Fest the most successful in its long history.

This year, on Sunday, July 17, more than 1,200 people stood in line at the festival for Armenian food and cultural displays, gathered for church tours and to watch performances of music and dance. The festival was held largely under tents on the grounds of St. John, where the audience was entertained by traditional kefti music from Mid-East Beat, an Armenian band based in Racine, Wis. STEPAN, (Fronjian) a one-man band performed contemporary Armenian songs and the Armenian Dance Company of Chicago gave several performances during the af-

ternoon of their dynamic and artful interpretation of folk dances and rhythms.

There were many things to see and do on the church grounds. Arpik Weitzer, whose stained-glass iconography adorns the windows of the church sanctuary and whose mural of the Church of Khor Virap [deep pit] with Mount Ararat in the background covers one wall on the church hall, conducted a painting workshop.

Dr. Charles Hajinian displayed his collection of ancient and medieval Armenian manuscripts, artifacts and coins.

Wine from Armenia and porcelain from the Armenian Quarter of Jerusalem were among the items sold at the culture booth.

Also on hand was a booth for Honey Acres, a Wisconsin-based, Armenian-owned producer of pure honey and chocolate.

St. John held a summer shish-kabob picnic for members, friends and the public for many years before rebranding it in the 1990s as Milwaukee Armenian Fest. Featuring live music and other attractions, the annual event quickly became a popular attraction among non-Armenians in a



Armenian Dance Company of Chicago performs at the Milwaukee Armenian Fest.

city that prides itself on hosting a diverse array of ethnic festivals. The festival has grown into a beacon of Armenian culture and hospitality in the Milwaukee area.



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## Eurovision Winner Maléna To Attend Coveted Berklee Program

MALÉNA, from page 1

Through the scholarship, Maléna gained sponsorship to this year’s Aspire: Five-Week Music Performance Intensive, a prestigious program whose alumni include Charlie Puth and Meghan Trainor, and offers one-on-one instruction with leading Berklee professors as well as college credit to up-and-coming artists.

“It’s only been two weeks, but I’ve already learned so much,” said Maléna about the Aspire program. “Not only have I sharpened my music skills by working with incredible Berklee faculty, but I’ve also learned to communicate with the different



types of students from all over the world. We communicate through music, and that allows us to connect with each other in a deep way, which is incredibly uplifting to me.”

Inspired by the late Berklee professor, jazz pianist, and composer David Azarian, as well as the excitement surrounding visits to the college from genre-bending jazz pianist Tigran Hamasyan, the Armenian Scholarship Fund at Berklee was founded in 2017 to bring more Armenian musicians to the college to highlight the abundance of musical talent and innovation prevalent in Armenian culture. Past recipients include Arman Mnatsakanyan and Davit Paronikyan, both of whom are actively touring and performing in festivals worldwide.

The Armenian Scholarship Fund is currently raising funds to sponsor their 2023 summer student.

To RSVP for Maléna’s free concert at Armenian Heritage Park on July 31 (with refreshments sponsored by Anoush’ella), email [hello@armenianheritagepark.org](mailto:hello@armenianheritagepark.org).





COMMUNITY NEWS



# Ida Krikorian Celebrates her 101st Birthday In Cambridge

By Nancy Kalajian

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — It happened not once, but twice: Ida Krikorian had two special outdoor celebrations to celebrate her 101st birthday. The first, a gathering of family and friends on June 19, was followed by a joint community birthday celebration on July 19 for five residents, ages 100 and above, also living at the Neville Center in Cambridge.

Sumbul Siddiqui, the mayor of Cambridge, presented each honoree with a framed proclamation and a huge golden key to the city of Cambridge. Longtime state Sen. Pat Jehlen was also in attendance.

Watching a slew of slides showing highlights of her active life full of wonderful memories of family and travel, and flanked by golden decorations and balloons, Ida easily conversed with guests and celebrated her latest birthday with great style and gusto with daughter Susan and son-in-law Jack by her side. Ida is grateful for living a long and happy life to the fullest.

She feels if she divulges her secrets to longevity they won't be a secret. "The best things in life are the people we love, the places we've been, and the memories we've made along the way," shared Ida with a warm smile.

Ida grew up and was a lifelong resident of Methuen before relocating to the Boston area to be closer to family. She attended St. Gregory's Armenian Church in North Andover and was a member of its Ladies Guild, Ida volunteered for decades at their annual bazaars and picnics. For many years, she worked at Raytheon Company in Andover before retirement. Looking forward to next year's 102nd!

# ACYOA Group Visits Echmiadzin

YEREVAN — At Holy Echmiadzin on July 7, Karekin II, the Catholicos of All Armenians, met with a group of 27 young adults from the Eastern Diocese. Fr. Mesrop Parsamyan, Primate of the Eastern Diocese, who was on an official visit to Armenia at the same time, joined Catholicos Karekin and the young visitors at the gathering.

The young adults were visiting the Mother See as part of this year's Armenian Church Youth Organization of America (ACYOA) Armenia Service Program (ASP), which runs from July 5 through 26. Fr. Hratch Sargsyan (pastor of St. Gregory of Narek Church in Cleveland, OH) is leading the trip, which includes young faithful from throughout the

Eastern Diocese.

As part of the ASP trip, the ACYOA group will view the sites of the homeland's ancient Christian heritage, and take part in service opportunities with the Fuller Center for Housing, Camp Aragats, the Fund for Armenian Relief, and FAR's Ayo! program.



Members of the ACYOA at Echmiadzin





# Arts & Culture

## Works by Mass. Composer Boyadjian Performed at Two European Concerts

BOSTON — Grammy Nominee Composer Hayg Boyadjian recently returned from a two concert trip to Germany and Brussels. The first concert took place in the famous Steinway Hall, the home of the Steinway piano factory, in Frankfurt, Germany. World famous pianists perform in this intimate small hall surrounded by Steinway pianos.

Armenian pianist Armen-Levon Manaseryan, who has lived in Germany for several years, gave the world premiere performance of Boyadjian’s revised composition *Variations on a Theme by Bach*. This composition was recorded about a year ago in Manheim, Germany, by pianist Manaseryan for release on CD in September by the famous label Naxos.

The Manaseryan concert in Frankfurt included also works by Chopin, Tchaikovsky, Gomidas, and as a contrast to Boyadjian’s Bach Variations,



Armen-Levon Manaseryan

he performed Beethoven’s very famous 32 *Variations on an Original Theme*.

The concert was sponsored by the Harvard Clubs of Germany with attendance at the concert mostly by Harvard alumni living in Germany.

Manasertan performed on a new Steinway concert grand piano that the world’s most famous pianist Lang Lang had not only bought but had also performed with the prior week and had signed his name on it.

Manaseryan performed the same program at a second concert the next day in Brussels, Belgium. This concert was sponsored by the Armenian Greater Benevolent Union (AGBU) of Brussels, Belgium.

More recently on June 11, 2022 three compositions of composer Boyadjian received their world premieres at the University of Rosario, Rosario, Argentina. The concert of chamber music was performed by the Ensemble Rosario with director, conductor, and composer Marisol in its 38th Symposium of Contemporary Music.

Boyadjian has participated in these concerts yearly for a number of years. Two of Boyadjian’s compositions were written for the ensemble of eight musicians, and the third composition was for violin solo, a virtuoso piece. The two chamber works were titled *Carapoda* and *Suspiros* (Sighs) and will be posted on YouTube under composer Boyadjian’s name.

At present composer Hayg Boyadjian is working on his third symphony in four movements titled *Black Lives Matter*.



The entrance to Uncle Dik’s, featuring the Armenian eternity symbol (photo Aram Arkun)

## Uncle Dik Presents Armenian And International Cuisine in Lyon, France

By Aram Arkun  
*Mirror-Spectator Staff*

LYON, France — It would be surprising indeed if there were no Armenian restaurants in the French city of Lyon that is known as the gastronomic capital of the world, especially because there is a large Armenian community in the area. In fact, there is one such well-established eatery in Lyon’s affluent sixth district (*arrondissement*), named Uncle Dik (Uncle Dik). While not in the busiest and most frequented touristic zones, it is located close to the center of the city (4, rue Bossuet) in what the French like to call a bourgeois neighborhood.

It is a family-run restaurant named after the owner, Didier Dikran Nerguisian. Dikran, in turn, was named after his paternal grandfather, whose large black-and-white picture pulling a handcart in the 1930s hangs on the wall of the restaurant. This is the first of many clear indications that Dikran is strongly connected to his roots. On the restaurant website, [oncle-dik.com/](http://oncle-dik.com/), he writes that the photo “is a tribute to all these expatriate survivors who, through their hard work, succeeded for themselves and for their future generations in successfully integrating, without denying or forgetting their origins.” He continues that he dedicates this restaurant to their memory in their honor.

The eponymous Dikran was born in Marash and came to Lyon via Aleppo and Beirut due to the Armenian Genocide. His wife was also from Marash. After some 10-15 years of hard manual labor, he earned enough money to buy a grocery store in an Armenian quarter of Lyon. He had four sons. Garabed, the father of restaurateur Dikran, became a car mechanic with his own garage, where his son Dikran worked for 20 years after obtaining his high school baccalaureate degree. After Garabed retired, his son worked briefly in the telephone business before deciding to open his own restaurant in 2006.

Dikran recalled that there was no Armenian restaurant operating at that time in Lyon. Previously, there was an Armenian eatery in Lyon called Karnig Restaurant but it closed two years prior to the opening of Uncle Dik, while a short-lived restaurant called Tamar operated in the period roughly 1978 to 1980.

Two years after Dikran opened Uncle Dik, his wife, Patricia Oustig Nerguisian, who had her own women’s and children’s clothing store, joined her husband to work in the restaurant, and after one more year, their elder son Adrien Sevag Vartan Nerguisian came on board. Finally, the youngest son, Jeremy Vahig Garabed Nerguisian, joined the rest of the family last year. Interestingly, each member of the family has a French first name combined with Armenian middle names which primarily are of ancestors.

## Perspectives From Global Art Curator

### *Processing Reality Through Art*

By Christine Soussa and Sareen Mekhitarian

Art is the expression of how we process our world. It’s not the critic who gets celebrated but the creator. Throughout history, artists and creators have helped us process the world, whether in conflict or celebration, hostility or harmony. Dr. Tamara Hovhannisyan is a global art curator and published poet who uses her talent to drive positive change.

Dr. Hovhannisyan shares her philosophy on life, art, and beauty. One of Dr. Hovhannisyan’s immediate qualities is her ability to recognize potential and appreciate what art communicates through imagery. She vividly sees that perpetual beauty surrounds. She advocates the importance of explicitly deciding to rid ourselves of distractions so we can truly appreciate its allure.

Her driving force is her desire to help humanity understand the importance of art and culture, which she does “through sharing life experiences and [being] a living example of sharing all abilities that one can have.” She knows that one doesn’t necessarily need a lifetime of knowledge and experience to be able to make an impact on society. Her years as a teacher taught her that she, too, can learn from her students. “As a former educator, I know there are hidden gems in the ones that are confused and the ones who are struggling to find their path/journey in life. In reality, these are the individuals who have a hidden force and ultimately make changes in society, good or bad. So, leaders have to find a way to create an environment where the good dominates the bad. There is a level of flexibility when someone is still finding their way and path.”

In addition to being an artist, poet, and teacher, Hovhannisyan wholeheartedly embraces her Armenianness. Having emigrated from Armenia, Hovhannisyan found it challenging to assimilate while still clinging to her Armenian identity. “There were moments of self-observation. I questioned how I survived in this new environment that adapted me in my middle-of-life journey. I came to this country without knowledge of its language, being Armenian, carrying the dowry of my ancestral land: the gifts of kindness, curiosity, manners. I had nothing, I had no money; just my heart and my hardworking hands. And somehow, I made it. Yes, being Armenian and being the daughter of my parents and a daughter of my nation made me understand my surroundings and enabled me to create my own presence in the new environment, especially where there is a huge level of competition. To be a

see CURATOR, page 13





## ARTS &amp; CULTURE

# ‘Motherland’ Documentary Feature Film Premieres with a Standing Ovation

LOS ANGELES — Vic Gerami’s “Motherland,” which HuffPost’s Thom Senzee called “Most Anticipated Documentary Film of 2022,” premiered to a standing ovation, on Thursday, July 7, at the historic Raleigh Studios Hollywood.

One hundred and forty guests included elected officials, celebrities, and other high-profile public figures. They were there to support the film that brings attention to Azerbaijan’s brutal invasion of Artsakh in 2020, the massacre of 5,000+ indigenous Armenians, and the two nations’ ongoing campaign of hate, violence, and disinformation.

Director, producer and writer Gerami opened the program with a moment of silence for the martyrs of 2020. Rep. Judy Chu spoke before the curtain and presented commendations to the filmmakers. Other elected officials included Assemblymember Adrin Nazarian, LA County Assessor Jeff Prang, Glendale Mayor Ardy Kassakhian, and Councilmember Mitch O’Farrell. Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, who could not attend, sent commendations to the filmmaking team.

Other notable guests were Shant Sahakian, executive director of the Armenian American Museum, Alex Mohajer, president of the Stonewall Democratic Club, LA Sheriff Candidate Eric Strong, actress Kat Kramer, producer Larry Kananoff, Levon P. Thorose with Knights of Vartan, and Western Regional Director of the Armenian Assembly of America Mihran Toumajan.

Sponsors of the premiere included Councilmember Mitch O’Farrell, Councilmember Paul Koretz, renowned attorney Mark Geragos, Davit, Asatryan, CA State Commissioner Sam Khushy, and Gary Shkhrumyan.



Vic Gerami with Assemblymember Adrin Nazarian

Produced and directed by Los Angeles-based Armenian-American journalist and activist Vic Gerami, “Motherland” is a new feature-length documentary film about the genocidal assault and the violent ethnic cleansing unleashed on September 27, 2020, by Azerbaijan and Turkey on the Republic of Artsakh. The 120-minute documentary focuses unwavering attention on the coordinated, systematic, and wholly unprovoked genocidal attack and ethnic cleansing against the Armenians of Artsakh, also known as Nagorno-Karabakh.

“This largely ignored crime against humanity against Russia’s neighbor was partly Putin’s dry-run and a precursor to his brutal invasion of Ukraine,” Gerami said.

Chu expressed her support on the red carpet by saying, “It is so wonderful to be able to have this documentary. I did go to Artsakh. I was able to witness what a beautiful and charming place it is. And when I heard about the attack by Azerbaijan, I was just

horrified to hear about the many thousands that died, the refugees that were created that cannot go back home, and the prisoners of war that are still there. So, we are doing what we can in Congress. But what is really disturbing is the world doesn’t know enough about this. That’s what this documentary can do. It can provide a light on what is going on in Artsakh.”

Nazarian noted, “Thank you for producing a resource that honors the memory of those who have been lost while raising awareness about the invasion and its subsequent impact on world affairs.”

Kassakhian added, “Your work elevates the voices of those fighting for human rights around the world.”

Cecile Keshishian said, “Congratulations for your beautiful ‘Motherland Documentary’... shook us to the core... Proud to have an Armenian of your talents and caliber.”

Gerami is an award-winning journalist, columnist, media commentator, and the host

of his prime-time headline news + politics radio program “The Blunt Post with Vic.” Gerami’s radio program, TBPV covers national, regional, and local headline news, politics, and current events, and he offers analysis and commentary. He also interviews a high-profile member of Congress or other high-profile public figures on each show. His recent guests include Congressman Adam Schiff, Senator Bob Menendez, Congresswoman Jackie Speier, Governor Howard Dean, Congresswoman Katie Porter, Congressman Brad Sherman, Congressman Mike Levin, Congresswoman Maxine Waters, Congresswoman Judy Chu, LA District Attorney George Gascon, among many others. They are all available online.

Gerami is also a contributor to some of the most prominent publications in the nation, including Windy City Times, Bay Area Reporter, Armenian Mirror-Spectator, The Advocate, The Immigrant Magazine, GoWeHo, Destination Luxury, OUT Traveler, The Fight, among others.



Vic Gerami with Rep. Judy Chu



Vic Gerami with actress Kat Kramer

## Perspectives from Global Art Curator: Processing Reality Through Art

CURATOR, from page 12

person of positive influence, how I conduct business with honesty and care, how I love the world, it reflects back on my destiny. But in a changing world, I was able to cash in the universal values that were part of me in order to impart good.”

Considering Armenia’s rich history and culture, she believes that Armenians have a duty to the rest of the world to share what they have learned from their troubled past. “I’ve been thinking about the hidden light that we carry as Armenians. We have sown beautiful seeds of hospitality in the way we behave and conduct ourselves. There is a national kindness, honesty, dedication to family, worldwide acceptance, and desire to be helpful and kind. I deeply love our religious literature and how we philosophize. The wealth of existential wisdom is incredible. How we forgive each other and grow from ashes is something I love. We always find a way to rejuvenate ourselves.”

After over a century of denial and Armenia’s attempt at recovery from a genocide, a new wave of disappointment crashed over Armenians worldwide as war was waged in Artsakh, starting on September 27, 2020. The combination of the pandemic along with war took its toll on the nation and those in the diaspora. “2020 was a historic year for humanity, with two aspects that mark our existential journey as a nation. We experienced the horrific 44 days of war, and we still have to deal with the aftermath of this tragedy. A loss of pride, the hope for the future we carry. What happened in general, it was a time given to us for us to be isolated for moments of self-reflection. We all started to realize how fragile we are as humans and how treasured



Tamara Hovhannisyan

our relationships are in our close circle of family and friends. We learned the connection between reality and us. We realized how easy or hard it is to surround ourselves with or without connections to others we care about.”

Hovhannisyan used this time to observe the world through a different lens, a lens of learning and growth, and she encourages us to take a step back, reflect, and absorb the beauty that surrounds us so we can build a future with the gifts of love in mind. “We have no choice but to build a relationship with nature and what God created; it’s behind the window you look through. Before, we didn’t properly enjoy the opportunities of beauty. We missed it. Start to worship and accept the offerings of nature. Environmental issues are also important because

we realize how careless we were before. What surrounds us and what value it drives. When you’re distracted and stuck in traffic while driving to work, you miss the sunset. We realize there is a block between us and the beauty that surrounds. 2020 started to change our philosophy and approach to life as it relates to relationships between society, nature, and personal relationships.”

2020 was an upheaval for all of us and, for many, that upheaval continues in 2022. It seems Armenians have additional scars to tend to. “We all suddenly aged. It’s important for us to have the opportunity to stay together and share the emotions of life together. There was a time when I was thinking about leaving everything in the US and going back to Armenia to face and see everything first hand.”

Survival is the metric many of us identify during tough times. It’s what Armenians have been doing for over a century. Those in the diaspora feel a pull toward Armenia, wanting to do whatever possible to highlight not only this issue but humanity’s general neglect of one another. For Hovhannisyan, this pull has been intensified since the war. “I realized how much 2020 affected my daily life as a businesswoman, person, and parent. No matter how close or far I am, the reality is this is part of our soul. We are always here and there, it’s a priceless division. It’s what makes me a bird with two wings. The fear for the tomorrow of my homeland is still very troubling. As a poetess, I don’t take things easy.”

Tamara speaks to the idea that war equates to lost lives as well as the loss of youth. Many don’t realize the Armenian state was founded in 190 B.C. Armenia and Artsakh represent noble people who have a

vast history, historically significant churches, and an ancient language and alphabet.

“There is no longer a sense of nobility. The whole world is going on and evolving the same way, totally ignoring the reality of pain, loss. Our destiny is shared. It’s one of mixed emotions.”

But we should not allow the hardships of this year to trickle into every aspect of our lives. We need to process the pain and learn how to carry the load in a way that builds us up instead of weighing us down. “I’m doing the best I can to deal with the hard reality, the loss. Thinking about my lost motivation of writing, who will read it? We have to do something, we have to find a way to not lose hope, I understand, but overall, education, peace, and tolerance, those are ingredients that we need to hold as treasures for the future. It’s not an easy time. We cannot be indifferent.”

As we reflect on the past year-and-a-half, let us focus on positive strengths such as resilience, unity, ability, growth, and love, using these gifts as guides on our journey from pain to peace with purpose. “My hope for the future: this lengthy isolation had some sort of a philosophical meaning. The moments of self-reflection were and are very important. We all became half human, half machine. It’s the time to realize WHO YOU ARE. You want to know how capable you are to be part of your existential journey. Are we carrying the light like we did when we were young? What can you contribute? Are you a taker or a giver? What have you learned about yourself? Nothing is easy. Nothing is given. Realize you are a part of a wealthy world. We need to embrace the existential beauty with everything that it gives, near and far.”



# Oncle Dik Presents Armenian and International Cuisine in Lyon

LYON, from page 12

The restaurant, in addition to Italian-style pizzas cooked in a wood-fired oven, offers a variety of Armenian and Middle Eastern specialties, including *lahmajun*, *chi keufte*, lamb kebab, pilaf, and mezzes, as well as food prepared in French and international fashions like hamburgers, cod, and pastas.

There is a regular chef, but in addition, periodically Patricia makes dishes like *manti*, *dolma*, or *imam bayildi*, which are not on the regular menu but announced online. After Covid, the pizzaiolo left, so Adrien temporarily took over from him

ularly. It is open for lunch Monday through Saturday, and for dinner Thursday through Saturday. There is both outdoor and indoor dining.

Dikran said that as many as 80 percent of his regular clientele are French non-Armenians. Aside from Armenians from the Lyon area, who sometimes come for birthdays or anniversaries, and even hold private parties there, Dikran noted that occasionally Armenian tourists visiting the city find the restaurant through the use of the Internet. That was, in fact, how this author came across this restaurant and was able to



From left, Jeremy, Patricia, Didier (Dikran), and Adrien in front of a large photo of the original Dikran (photo Aram Arkun)

until a new one could be found. Wines from Armenia as well as French-Armenian raki (Raki Duze) are among the Armenian drinks available.

During the most intense period of the Covid-19 pandemic, the restaurant was only open for takeout but now operates reg-

sample its tasty *lahmajun*.

Oncle Dik provides its customers with good food in a cordial environment, and like many Armenian restaurants in the diaspora, also serves as an easy introduction for non-Armenians to the Armenian people and their culture.



Owner Dikran Nerguisian emerges from the restaurant (photo Aram Arkun)



A portrait of Charles Aznavour overlooks the bar (photo Aram Arkun)



Tekeyan Cultural Association, Inc.



### Dr. Nubar Berberian 2022 Annual Awards

Dr. Nubar Berberian, intellectual, journalist, activist and editor of many ADL daily newspapers for more than 50 years passed away at the age of 94 in November 23, 2016. In his Will, Dr. Berberian directed his Trust Fund managers to appropriate awards every year to college students of Armenian descent worldwide who major in either International Law or Political Science.

#### ELIGIBILITY AND REQUIREMENTS

- 1) Eligible recipients are college students of Armenian descent who major in either International Law or Political Science.
- 2) Applicant must be enrolled in a full-time graduate program in a fully accredited college or university in the world.
- 3) Applicant must provide all of the information requested on the application form.
- 4) Applicant must submit a copy of his or her most recent college transcript.
- 5) Applicant is to include a small head and shoulders self-portrait.
- 6) Application could be received by requesting from [Tcadirector@Aol.com](mailto:Tcadirector@Aol.com).
- 7) Applicants should submit applications electronically (via email) to: [Tcadirector@Aol.com](mailto:Tcadirector@Aol.com).
- 8) The deadline of receiving the applications is **September 15, 2022**.
- 9) The administrators and managers of the fund will vote the qualified winners in **October, 2022** based on the merits of each applicant.
- 10) The winner or winners will receive their awards in **November, 2022**
- 11) Winning applicants are not eligible to apply again.
- 12) This announcement is published in Armenian, English, French and Spanish.

Watertown, MA, July 20, 2022

## Principal Administrator / Full-Time

St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School of Watertown, MA, a private preschool-Grade 5 dedicated to educational excellence in an environment rich in Armenian Culture, is seeking a full-time principal.

#### Responsibilities

Serving as chief administrator, managing day-to-day operations, keeping records, communicating and disseminating information; developing and managing after-school enrichment curricula, managing compliance with AISNE school accreditation, extensive outreach to the parental and support community, and more

#### Minimum Qualifications

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Experience in administration, as well as curriculum and instruction  
Minimum of 10 years relevant experience

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403(B) plan with match

#### How to Apply

Send cover letter and resume, Statement of educational leadership philosophy and three letters of recommendation to [Careers@ssaes.org](mailto:Careers@ssaes.org)





## ARTS &amp; CULTURE

# Ziné:

## Grafting Yezidi, Armenian And French Worlds

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN – Ziné Mamoyan is one of the most extraordinary people I have met. This Yezidi beauty was born in Ashtarak, Armenia, raised in the village and in the mountains, received her secondary and higher education in Yerevan and studied at the French department of the Brusov State Pedagogical Institute of Russian and Foreign Languages. After getting married, she moved to Paris, in her opinion, “the most beautiful city in the world.” Here she studied literature at the Sorbonne University, theater and directing at Paris 8 University. For seven years she was the president of the Auberbabel literary society in Paris. Ziné was engaged also in theater, gastronomic cooking, law, and now literature. Especially in recent years, she often visits her homeland, where she is known by many, first with her critical, often eccentric statuses and comments on Facebook, then with her novel in Armenian *hêkê dûkê* (yes, with small letters), published in 2020. French writer Jean-Michel Delacomptée, reading the French version of the book, wrote: “Ziné writes poetically, the style is exceptional and attractive. She is a great lover.”

**Ziné, you see, I read your novel twice. It is so great you wrote *hêkê dûkê*. It is a hearty conversation written with long sentences about your life, your childhood perceptions, which have remained almost the same, as a result, creating a very frank literature about everything that has been created, written with a lot of love, a lot of bittersweetness, sometimes with humor. it was in your genes, as your grandmother’s brother, Smoe Shamo, was a writer. In what language do you think and which language is the easiest for you to write?**

Armenian is very close to me, but one day I caught myself thinking in French. For twenty years, I wrote only in French, although I had not published anything. My Armenian came back when I started coming to Armenia often (in 2020 I was almost always here), also thanks to my very dear Armenian girlfriends in Paris. One day, Armenian flashed in me again and I started writing in Armenian, and I was a little sad that I was away from my favorite language. When I go home, the language of communication with my French friends and my daughter is French, and here I think in Armenian. I do speak the Kurmanji language well; it is also very close to me, but I have moved away from it a little. I did not find my colors, my style in literary Kurmanji. In any case, mine is a hybrid way of thinking, as [culturalologist] Vardan Jaloyan would say.

By the way, do you agree with Vardan Jaloyan’s opinion that *hêkê dûkê* is not an Armenian novel, it is not a Yazidi-Kurdish novel, but a French novel, because it is about a woman living in France?

I think that what Vardan said does not only refer to living in France, it has a deeper meaning. Whatever I talk about in *hêkê dûkê*, even the saddest and most tragic things, I don’t annoy others, I don’t spread my anger, I speak with restraint, with elegance in my words. If you talk even about very unfortunate things, you have no right to transmit bad energy, the most you can do is to give a nice sadness. The novel is French in this sense — in its approach and style. Maybe that’s why people like my book. No matter how much their emotions get mixed up, they don’t get worse because I don’t transmit any negative emotions.

**Many seemingly insignificant realities of childhood, it seems, should have been forgotten long ago or it would no longer be necessary to address them, but you write in detail, because the child is always within you. I don’t remember who said that a person should not be childish, but there should always be a child within a person.**

I talk about it a lot. Yes, the child within us should not be lost, that is the most important thing. On June 1, I wrote a post on International Children’s Day. “Let’s keep the child within us too. I don’t know how, but let’s keep it. Life without that child is sad, very sad! We see



sorrowful elders everywhere.” I will be one of the happiest people if I can always keep the child within me, but sometimes I cannot. Probably because there are no more children around.

**You say you are an anarchist. You probably took after your mother, didn’t you? She was not like other Yezidi women: she used to wear holiday pants, apply lipstick, and in the end she divorced your father, whom she had married against her will. What was the biggest anarchy in your life?**

Getting married and leaving Armenia changed my life drastically. And globally, I mean something else by anarchy. I live in France, where the system will work regardless of whether there is a leadership or not. For us, for the people, the leaders are freeloaders. We have a parliament, a senate, institutions that live at the expense of our taxes — they all should be rejected, which I consider anarchy.

Your friend Gerard says that there is no use in reading a fairy tale, you should turn your life into a fairy tale but right here on earth.

Gerard lives in one of the Polynesian atolls, from where he sends me pictures almost every day. His life is a fairy tale; he proves it with his work. But there are very few people like him. I cannot imagine going to Polynesia, it won’t be my fairy tale. Life in Armenia or elsewhere can be made into a fairy tale too. In a village, whether here or in France. In a wonderful, beautiful village with good nature, to have a garden near the house, animals, good neighbors who will help me, and I will help them, with solidarity among us. This will be my fairy tale!

**You say that “True questions have no answers.” What are true questions?**

Existential questions — the thousand and one questions of life and human relations. That everyone perceives life and the world in their own ways. Sometimes I say the truth is a big swearing, every person has his own perception of the truth; the truth is not black and white.

**You write you are from a good and ancient lineage, the Hassani tribe. What determines a good lineage among Yezidis?**

Nothing of the kind, it is a backward idea. I wrote it with a bit of irony. That is, they are good people, they have not killed or harmed anyone, there are no hooligans among them, they read more.

**You also say that Yezidis are either very happy or very sad. Which one are you?**

Both. My joy is very high; my sadness is very high. I live a normal daily life, but I have emotional spikes. Recently, I have been trying to bring my intense emotions to a platform. For example, I used to get angry a lot, now I am trying to eliminate my anger, to give more wisdom to my emotions.

**As a multicultural person can you say in one word: what is Yezidi, what is Armenian, and what is French in you?**

It is interesting, what a good question. The emotional peaks I just mentioned can be characterized as the typical Yezidi in me. And what is Armenian in me? (After thinking a bit more). I don’t know. Perhaps, whining. As for French... I already mentioned my restraint, the fact that I don’t spill my emotions on anyone.

**Do you follow Yezidi literature in Armenia? Many praise Teresa Amryan’s *That Yezidi Woman’s Suitcase*.**

I have not read it yet. I know Teresa, she is a very gifted, and I was very happy to meet an educated Yezidi woman like her. The more educated Yezidi girls there are, the better.

**Recently you were in Kurdistan on business. Today, the world is making big projects in that unrecognized country. What path will the country take if evil forces do not interfere?**

Like other eastern countries, Kurdistan is also a corrupt country. It is difficult to say how it will turn out, it is an internal matter, I cannot say whether they will be able to reach a non-corruption level. But one thing is obvious. Kurds generally do not want to go to war with anyone. There were many wars, and now in this peaceful period economic growth is observed. Let’s hope they won’t be disturbed.

**Ziné, I want to end our conversation with such a comparison. In the novel, you remember that your mother grafted the Armenian apricot and nectarine and as a result a very tasty fruit was produced. In my impression, thanks to the grafting of Yezidi, Armenian and French worlds, you have become a “fruit” with just such a taste. You say that “Thoughts are worms that constantly rotate in the head and never give rest.” I want the worms in your head not to give you rest and as a result new literary works are created.**

Thanks a lot. It is also an honor for me to have a reader like you. Why does a person write? For sharing with others. It is worthy to write for people like you. That’s for sure!



# Recipe Corner



by Christine Vartanian



## Annie Chekijian’s Ma’loubeh – Upside Down Pilaf

This Ma’loubeh – Upside Down Pilaf recipe from Annie Chekijian is featured in the *St. James Family Table Cookbook* from the Women’s Guild of St. James Armenian Apostolic Church in Watertown, MA. “This is a customary Levantine dish consisting mainly of rice, meat, and vegetables. The word name means ‘upside down’ because the ingredients are layered one on top of the other, and after it is fully cooked, the pot is flipped over and served that way,” says Annie. (This dish is often cooked with chicken, beef or lamb, but it is easy to omit the meat and keep it vegan. If you are following a vegan diet, you can make it with the vegetables only; chickpeas can be added as well.)

“The rice can be Egyptian or American short grain, and the vegetables can be cauliflower or eggplant (some cooks use potatoes, tomatoes, zucchini, peas, and carrots). This is your chance to use any leftover vegetables that you have and make up your own combinations and creations. The best part of the dish is the flipping of it: you pull off the pot to reveal a steaming hot layered cake of rice, tender meat or chicken, and fragrant eggplant,” she adds.

Born in the Old City of Jerusalem, Annie Haroutiounian came to the United States in 1971 after marrying her high school sweetheart, Berj Chekijian. They have a son, Sarkis, and a daughter, Salpi, and “five beautiful Armenian-speaking grandchildren.” She has attended St. James Church services since the second Sunday she arrived in the United States. Annie has managed the parish Mesrob Mashdotz Institute that offers Western Armenian Language instruction for adults for nearly 30 years. She retired in 2016 after working for 45 years as a certified public accountant (CPA) for various firms.

“I enjoy teaching, tutoring, reading, cooking, baking, crocheting, entertaining and supporting the St. James Church as a volunteer when our Women’s Guild gathers to make manti, choereg, and simit during the year. Over the generations, many of my family members have made this recipe -- probably since my maternal grandmother came to Jerusalem from Armenia and learned how to make it there. My mother was born in Jerusalem, too, and her four sisters (my aunts) also learned to make this recipe from my grandmother. A common dish in Middle Eastern cuisine, Ma’loubeh is a little more labor intensive than some dishes, so it is always a festive event when it is made. It is often served on special occasions and everyone has their own twist. This impressive dish is relatively inexpensive to make, and everyone likes it. If you do not like eggplant or cauliflower, you can still enjoy the rice and tasty meat,” she adds.

### INGREDIENTS:

- 2 lbs. beef/steak cut into 3-inch pieces
- 3 cups parboiled rice, Ben’s Original™ or any substitute
- 2 medium heads cauliflower OR 2 large eggplants OR half each cauliflower and eggplant
- 1 stick butter
- Vegetable oil
- 1/2 cup pine nuts or slivered almonds
- 1 1/2 teaspoons allspice
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- Salt to taste

### PREPARATION:

Cut up the meat into 3-inch pieces. Sprinkle with 1/2 teaspoon each of allspice and black pepper. Add 5-6 cups of water and bring to a quick boil; lower heat and simmer until meat is tender, the time depends on the kind of meat you use. Drain the meat and save the broth.

Arrange the cut-up cauliflower florets and/or the sliced eggplant in a baking pan. Brush with oil and sprinkle with salt. Broil on low and turn so both side are light brown.

Brown the meat in a 6-quart pot with 2 tablespoons of butter and arrange pieces evenly in the bottom. Layer it with the broiled cauliflower and eggplant. If using both vegetables, arrange each of them separately on the bottom.

Rinse the rice and spread it evenly on the meat and vegetables. Use 4 1/2 cups of the broth, add some water if you do not have enough to make 4 1/2 cups of liquid. Add the rest of the allspice, black pepper and salt to taste. Slowly pour on the rice, cover, and bring to a boil. Lower heat and simmer until all liquid is absorbed, and the rice is cooked, like pilaf, about 35-40 minutes.

Remove the pot from the stove and let it stand (covered) for 10-15 minutes. Toast pine nuts or almonds in some oil. Add the butter, 3/4 of a stick left, to the nuts, and melt on low heat.

Invert the pot onto a large platter just like a Jell-O mold and lift the pot slowly; the end product should be like a cake with vegetable and meat toppings.

Note: You’ll need to be careful with this step. Uncover the pot and place a large, round serving dish face down on it. With both hands, grab the handles of your pot and the edges of the serving dish, and flip the entire pot upside down onto a table in front of you. It would be good to have someone standing by to help in case you feel like the pot or serving dish is slipping.

Sprinkle the nuts with the melted butter over the top of the dish. Serve with a fresh salad, Armenian bread, and yogurt, if desired.

Serves 4-6.

For information on the Women’s Guild, go to: <https://stjameswatertown.org/organizations/womens-guild/>

For similar recipes and how to assemble, go to:  
<https://palestineinadish.com/recipes/maloubeh-flipped-over-rice-cauliflower-and-chicken/>  
<https://fulbrightfeasting.wordpress.com/2010/02/03/upside-down-chicken-maloubeh-with-eggplant/>  
<https://www.almondandfig.com/post/2019/05/14/spring-maloubeh-upside-down#:~:text=Ma%20loubeh%20is%20a%20very,an%20upside%20down%20Ma%20loubeh>  
<https://chefindisguise.com/2011/12/22/makloubeh/>  
<https://www.vergingonvegan.com/single-post/2018/06/14/maloubeh-upside-down-rice>

For a how-to video, go to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uljptFPSKNM>

### ST. JAMES FAMILY TABLE – ORDER COOKBOOK & APRONS

“Her hands are busy spinning thread, her fingers twisting fiber.” Proverbs 31:19

ORDER TODAY: “The St. James Women’s Guild is over 75 years old, first started as a Ladies Auxiliary and Young Women’s Guild, and then blending into one strong organization called the Women’s Guild. These gifted, dedicated ladies have compiled a truly remarkable collection of 400 traditional Armenian, Middle Eastern and other favorite recipes -- from appetizers to desserts. This cookbook honors the past and present, and is a loving tribute to some of the Women’s Guild’s greatest cooks. It is sure to be treasured for years to come.”

Purchase the *St. James Family Table Cookbook* and give as gifts for your family and friends throughout the year. Limited quantities are available.

Cookbooks and Aprons are \$20 each (\$28 if you would like it shipped). Please contact the church office with any questions: (617) 923-8860.

To order, go to: <https://stjameswatertown.org/st-james-family-table-order-our-new-cookbook/>

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ARTS & CULTURE

CALENDAR

OF EVENTS & PROGRAMS

CALIFORNIA

**SEPTEMBER 17 — The Orange County Trex Fraternity – Presents KEF TIME So Cal! Bagramian Hall• 900 W. Lincoln Ave, Montebello (within the church grounds of the Holy Cross Armenian Apostolic Cathedral). 7 p.m. to 1 a.m. Semi Formal or Business Casual attire. Delicious Mezza Style / Armenian Specialties. Beautiful large outside lounge. Cigars by Dr. Garo. Music by Kef Time Legacy Band featuring: Andrew Hagopian, Phillip Hagopian, George Nigosian, Jim Karagozian, and Mal Barsamian. Ticket Prices: \$85 Adults, College-age students and under \$65.00. Table Sponsor. 10 Tickets for \$800.00. Tickets at [www.ticketleap.com](http://www.ticketleap.com). Donations are tax deductible. The Orange County Chapter Charitable Trust is a 501 C3 entity: E.I.N. 56-668-3467. A portion of our proceeds from this event will go to the Armenian EyeCare Project and to the Ararat Home of Los Angeles, Inc. Contacts: Ralph Dergazarian 714.681.3013 • Brian Melkesian 626.827.8434 • Chuck Simonian 559.799.3949 • Ari Gulugian 949.701.8006. <https://octriplex.org/kef-time/> Local hotel rooms at the Doubletree by Hilton.**

MASSACHUSETTS

**JULY 31 — Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. CONCERT AT THE PARK. Maléna, 2021 Jr. Eurovision Winner representing Armenia, will feature her winning performance “Qami Qaml”. Sunday at 4pm. Special Program of The Armenian Scholarship Fund at Berklee, Berklee College of Music and Friends of Armenian Heritage Park**

**AUGUST 3 — Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. Join us for TEA & TRANQUILITY. Meet Boston City Council President Ed Flynn and Boston City Councilors. Wednesday at 4pm.**

**August 14 — Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. Join us for UNDER THE AUGUST MOON. Sunday at 7:30pm. Featuring the Black Sea Salsa Combo**

**SEPTEMBER 9 — Tekeyan Cultural Association Boston Chapter invites 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](mailto: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! at 3pm. 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](mailto:hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org)**

NEW JERSEY

**AUGUST 12— Friday, 7–11 pm, all Armenians age 21+ are invited to another free “Armenian Night” at the most spectacular rooftop in Manhattan—a chance to re-unite with old friends and meet new ones. Entry is free if you arrive by 8 pm and mention host Andy Troy. (\$10 from 8 - 11 pm.) Bring Hye friends and business cards, and look for the Armenian flag at the entry. No RSVP. Hye professionals and students are most welcome to come and network with AESA, ABSA, and ArmenBar. 230 Fifth Avenue (& 27 St.), Manhattan.**

NEW YORK

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

RHODE ISLAND

**AUGUST 5 to SEPTEMBER 9 — The Cultural committee of Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Church of Providence continues programming the “Armenian Cultural Hour” programs, Fridays at 7:30 p.m. The program can be livestreamed on the church’s Facebook page by everyone at <https://www.facebook.com/armenianchurchprovidence>**

**August 5 – Armen Ajemyan, Trumpet**

**August 19 - Ruben Matevosyan, Concert in Yerevan**

**September 9 – Dance Ensemble of Vanush Khanamiryan Academy**

NEW JERSEY

**SEPTEMBER 21 — Book presentation by Adrienne G. Alexanian on her father’s memoir Forced into Genocide: Memoirs of an Armenian Soldier in the Ottoman Turkish Army. Wednesday 7- 9 p.m., Armenian Martyrs’ Congregational Church, 100 N. Edmonds Avenue, Havertown. (610) 446-3330 [office@amccpa.org](mailto:office@amccpa.org). There are no other books in literature on this aspect of the Armenian Genocide. The book contains rare documents and pictures which will be shown during the presentation. Book signing during the reception. All proceeds will be donated to the AMCC.**

DANCES WITH FILMS FESTIVAL PREMIERES ‘THE OTHER SIDE OF THINGS’ AT TCL CHINESE THEATRE

LOS ANGELES — “The Other Side of Things“ is an inclusive film created by talents from the US, Latin America, and Armenia. The film had its premiere on June 12 at the Dances With Films festival in Hollywood.

Inspired by the dogged determination of its characters, “The Other Side of Things” is directed by, and stars Guillermo Ivan (“Vantage Point,” “Rumba Love”). It is

The film follows a single Latina mom, who, after being evicted and forced to live in her car with her 7-year-old son, Andrew (played by Jake Krihkori), will do whatever it takes to fulfill her child’s dream of getting on a jet and becoming a pilot — even if that means turning her own car into a “jet.”

At its core, “The Other Side of Things” is an immigrant story portraying racial differences and the ways immigrants can be seen

as outsiders. Beyond that, it conveys the important message that the American dream is still alive, no matter what your current circumstances are.

The arc of Andrew gives children a sense of hope, inviting them to believe in their dreams wholeheartedly. In today’s social media-driven world, rife with bul-

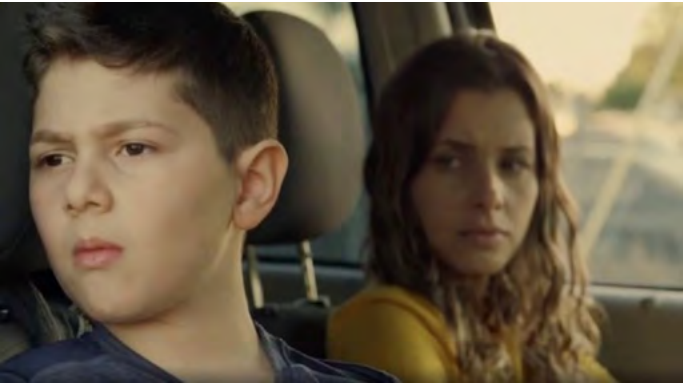
lying, The Other Side of Things provides aspirations of resilience and encouragement that it’s possible for new generations to break free from class restrictions. Furthermore, it portrays a message that your current socioeconomic status doesn’t determine your future.

Produced in cooperation with Golden Ceiba Productions, Jet 1 Cup, and the Krih-

koris, the project is an official 2022 Dances With Films selection.

“We are honored that our beloved short was selected for Dances With Films’ 25th

anniversary,” says Associate Producer, Ani Krihkori. “My son, Jake, plays the young lead and my other two children also have roles, so I am a very proud mama!”



Zair Montes with Jake Krihkori

written, produced and co-stars famed multicultural actress, Zair Montes.

“My hope is that other Latinas will be inspired to find their own empowerment by watching the main character,” says Zair Montes. “But more importantly, I want kids, the future generations, to know they can overcome any obstacle if they believe it in their hearts.”



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Մեծագոյն Նիւ Եորքի Մասնաճիւղ  
TEKEYAN CULTURAL ASSOCIATION  
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Details to follow





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COMMENTARY

**EDITORIAL**

# The Hazards of Negotiating ‘Without Preconditions’ with Turkey



**By Edmond Y. Azadian**

It was too good to be true: Turkey had agreed to hold negotiations with Armenia to normalize relations, to open the borders and establish diplomatic relations without preconditions.

After all, it was Turkey which had closed its borders unilaterally in the 1990s and there was no reason whatever for it to reverse that decision, once again, unilaterally.

Ankara has had no interest in normalizing relations with Armenia and held those relations hostage to the settlement of the Karabakh conflict in Azerbaijan's favor. Even after Baku “settled” that conflict through military aggression, Turkey failed to make a move until it received a nudge from President Joe Biden.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan cannot afford to aggravate relations with the US any further, since the standoff between Washington and Ankara has been escalating over the issues of the S-400 missiles, acquired by Turkey from Russia, and the threat of war with another NATO member, Greece.

Therefore, Mr. Erdogan, to ingratiate himself to Washington, consented to launch negotiations with Armenia, though half-heartedly. Representatives were assigned — Ruben Rubinyan from Armenia and Serdar Kiliç from Turkey. Four sessions yielded minimal results, in terms of opening the borders to third-country citizens and resumption of air cargo transportation between the two countries.

It has to be noted that after the first three sessions, news releases were issued, always containing the statement that the negotiations were held on condition that there be no preconditions.

The fourth release, however, had deleted that reference, signifying that the talks had hit a snag.

Throughout the negotiations, the Turkish side always reminded everyone that it was coordinating its policies with Azerbaijan, wherein the preconditions lay. But the Armenian side pretended that it was not aware of the 800-pound gorilla in the room until Ankara made its preconditions public, accompanied by a threat for good measure.

Indeed, in an interview given to the Turkish State TV this week, Turkey's Foreign Minister Mevlut Çavusoglu stated: “We don't yet see clear steps from Armenia on Zangezur [a corridor] and other projects or the peace treaty. Armenia's leadership, headed by Prime Minister [Nikol] Pashinyan, should take positive steps for peace. Words alone are not enough.”

And then he continued, “Whether Armenia likes it or not, this is the reality: we are one nation and two states. That is why if there is to be peace in the region, everybody needs to take steps, including Georgia and the Central Asian countries. We expect concrete steps from Armenia on this issue, be it Zangezur, the comprehensive peace treaty or towards us.”

This last comment certainly threw the proverbial monkey wrench into the negotiations.

There are two conditions which when met, will pose an existential threat to Armenia: Azerbaijan's comprehensive peace treaty and the Zangezur Corridor.

In the first instance, the peace treaty entails the recognition of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity, including Karabakh, as part of that territory. There is no taker of that argument: Karabakh has not been part of Azerbaijan's territory. It always had its special status, its own legislature, as an autonomous oblast. What Azerbaijan intends to do is to dismantle that legal entity with the collusion of Armenia's friends, Russia and Iran.

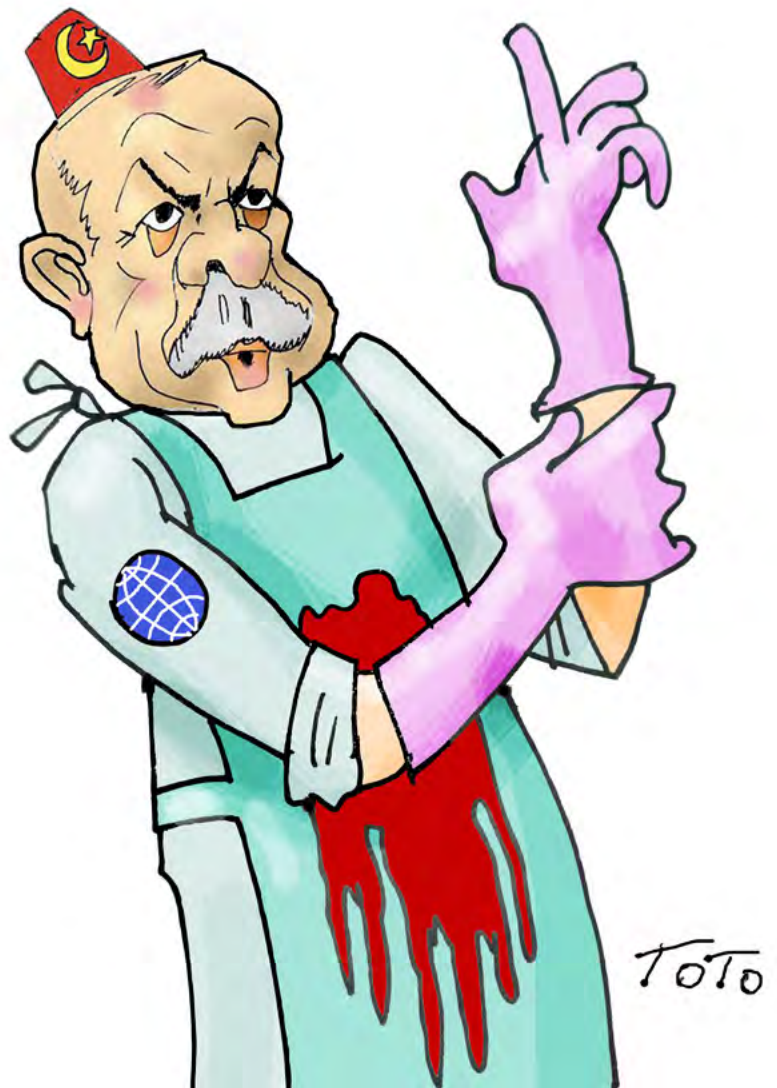
Çavusoglu's condition is amplified by President Ilham Aliyev's threat that if Armenia does not recognize Azerbaijan's territorial integrity, then we will not recognize Armenia's territorial integrity. Thus, the extension of that logic is that Armenia's territory is fair game for Baku to attack and annex, since there is no peace treaty.

The other threat is the demand to lay claim on the Zangezur corridor's sovereignty, slicing Armenia into two pieces, with its only mineral wealth of uranium, copper and molybdenum in the Syunik region exposed to outside threats.

Even the much-publicized meeting between the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan, Ararat Mirzoyan and Jeyhun Bayramov, on July 16, through the good offices of Georgia, held in Tbilisi, did not yield much and offered the opportunity for the Azerbaijani side to demand the removal of Armenian military from Karabakh, to which the Secretary of Security Council Armen Grigoryan acquiesced: Armenia will withdraw its forces in September. The November 9 declaration stipulates that the forces would remain in their current position until a peace treaty was signed. Thus, Armenia is going even further than the harsh conditions set in the peace agreement.

These demands indicate that Armenia's interlocutors do not have peace on their minds.

This is a challenge not only to Armenia but to the world



community and particularly to parties which have a stake in the outcome of the negotiations and which have stated their positions clearly.

In the first place, it is a challenge for President Biden who has to own these negotiations with their potential outcome, as the initiator of the process.

Next, it is a challenge for Russia, whose foreign minister, Sergey Lavrov, during his last visit to Armenia, stressed that all the roads and lines of communications which will be opened, will be controlled by the respective governments on whose soil they are located.

“There should be no equivocation about this issue,” he added. This means that the Kremlin endorses Armenia's sover-





## COMMENTARY

## MY TURN



by Harut Sassounian

## Armenian Officials Falsify the Reason For Banning Papazian From Armenia

Last week, I wrote about a scandalous incident when Armenian officials did not allow Mourad Papazian, a French-Armenian community leader who has devoted his life to the defense of the Armenian Cause, to enter Armenia after arriving at the Yerevan Airport. Despite Papazian's repeated questions at the airport as to why Armenian officials were banning him from entering the country, he was not given an answer. I will now comment on the latest developments in this case.

Initially, government officials told the media that they are unable to reveal the reason for Papazian's expulsion in order not to violate his right to privacy. When Zareh Sinanyan, Armenia's Chief Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs, was first asked why Papazian was banned from the country, he said that he had no idea. Sinanyan then wrongly claimed that the organization co-led by Papazian, the Coordinating Council of Armenian Organizations of France (CCAF), had no right to represent the entire French-Armenian community, since it was just one organization. Contrary to Sinanyan's statement, the CCAF is not just one organization, but a coalition of around 60 French Armenian organizations.

Later, one of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's unnamed aides gave a lengthy interview to the Armenpress wire service last week, alleging that Papazian was banned from Armenia for violating Chapter 2, Article 8, sections 1.k and 1.z of the law on "Foreigners." The aide went on to claim that Papazian was one of the individuals who attacked Pashinyan's motorcade in Paris on June 1, 2021. What happened to the government's initial excuse that it cannot reveal the reason for Papazian's expulsion to protect his privacy? The real reason for his expulsion was the Prime Minister's intolerance to anyone who dares to oppose his regime.

Here are the true facts: I verified that Papazian was not involved in any attack on Pashinyan's motorcade because he was not there. The protest was carried out by a group of young men who regrettably hurled tomatoes at Pashinyan's motorcade. That is not a proper thing to do to Armenia's leader while on foreign soil. Nevertheless, last year's incident was viewed by the Armenian government to be so unimportant that the Embassy of Armenia in Paris did not even file a complaint with the French authorities.

Secondly, it is very strange that after the June 1, 2021 motorcade incident in Paris, Papazian visited Armenia on four different occasions and no one at the Yerevan Airport obstructed his entry. If the Prime Minister's aide is serious

about his baseless accusation against Papazian, why did the government not object to his entry to Armenia until a year later, during his fifth visit? The Prime Minister's aide is thus acknowledging that Armenian officials are so incompetent that they cannot even implement properly their own decisions.

Furthermore, Pashinyan's aide falsely claimed that there are media reports about the Paris incident, including video tapes on the internet showing Papazian's and others' protest. The fact is that there is no such video showing Papazian at that protest simply because he was not there. Had there been such a video, the Armenian government would have disseminated it widely to prove Papazian's guilt.

Since the Prime Minister's aide based his accusation of Papazian on Article 8, sections 1.k and 1.z of Armenia's law on "Foreigners," I found it interesting that section 6 of Article 8 of that same law lists the following government officials as the only ones who can have access to the black list of individuals banned from entering Armenia: "The staff of the President of Armenia, the national security agency, authorized police officials, Foreign Ministry officials, the courts and the prosecutor's office." Importantly, neither the Prime Minister himself nor his aides are on this list of officials authorized to access the black list. How did Pashinyan's aide know that Papazian's name is on the black list and the reason why he was banned from entering the country? This is an obvious violation of the law, the same law that Pashinyan's aide quoted to justify banning Papazian. In a normal democratic country, this aide and his superiors would be prosecuted for breaking the law. What they have done to Papazian is an abuse of power. Armenia is not Pashinyan's private house so he can decide whom to let in and whom to ban.

Finally, while the government is busy blocking an Armenian nationalist from entering the country, a widely circulated video on social media showed a Turkish extremist at the Armenian Genocide Memorial in Yerevan, sticking his tongue out, howling like a wolf, giggling hysterically, ridiculing the Genocide and making the hand gesture of the terrorist Turkish Grey Wolves group, while wearing the flag of a Turkish soccer club which has the crescent and the star, the emblem of the Turkish Republic. While it is not always possible for the police to prevent such ugly incidents, if Armenian officials were not so busy trying the silence their political opponents, they would have more time to deal with the real enemies of the Armenian nation. How ironic that an Armenian nationalist is banned from entering Armenia, at the same time a Turkish extremist is allowed to enter the country and insult the memory of the Genocide martyrs.

It would have been far better for Armenian officials to tell the truth by acknowledging that they should not have expelled Papazian from Armenia, instead of inventing more lies to cover up their initial wrongful action.

## The Hazards of Negotiating 'Without Preconditions' with Turkey

eignty in the Zangezur issue.

During the July 18 tripartite summit in Tehran amongst Presidents Vladimir Putin, Ebrahim Raisi and Erdogan, the supreme spiritual leader of Iran, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, stated that "The Islamic Republic will not tolerate policies or plans that lead to the closing of the Iran-Armenia border, because that border has a history of thousands of years."

Analysts in Armenia interpreted this position as Iran's support for Armenia, whereas it contains some self-serving elements; at best, it demonstrates a rare case of confluence of interests. When Armenia controlled large swathes of border land before the Azerbaijani conquest, Iran felt more secure. Now that Iran has a broader border with Azerbaijan, it is more vulnerable to Turkey's designs to break up Iran along its ethnic fault lines, as well as expose it to Israeli surveillance and thus potential military operation.

Armenia is not alone facing the Turkish threats. That country's collapsing economy can no longer sustain Mr. Erdogan's maximalist military ambitions, though it is at the root of it. His popularity has hit a critical low point, endangering the prospects of his 2023 re-election. That is why he wishes to show a brave face to the world while domestically the inflation rate makes basic survival difficult for a majority of the population.

Michael Crowley, in an article published in the *New York Times* on July 23, states: "A senior U.S. official said that much of Mr. Erdogan's problematic behavior was a function of his political weakness in Turkey, where the inflation rate climbed to almost 80 percent last month. Hoping to shift attention from his mismanaged economy, Mr. Erdogan has turned to chest-thumping displays of nationalism and demagoguery over the threat from the P.K.K., a Kurdish separatist movement in Turkey, and Kurdish groups in Syria."

Turkey, indeed, is pushing the envelope on many fronts: The Tehran summit was convened to discuss Syria, where Mr. Erdogan plans a fourth raid to occupy 30 more ki-

lometers of that country's territory and slaughter Syrian Kurds aligned with the US forces. Turkey's partners at the meeting discouraged Mr. Erdogan from taking such actions. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, the White House and even the Pentagon issued warnings that Mr. Erdogan's plans will further destabilize the region. Ironically, even Israel, which had launched two missile strikes into Damascus airport a week before, advised against the raid, arguing that the action will enhance Iran's position.

Although Mr. Erdogan continues to mull over his plans, this time around his military operation will not be a cake-

violation of the treaty. Turkey's Defense Minister Hulusi Akar has also spoken out against the closure of four Turkish schools in Thrace, also evoking the Lausanne treaty, never mind that Turkey, a long time ago, had closed the Greek seminary in Haybeli and the Armenian Seminary of Soup Khach, in violation of the same treaty.

Last but not least, Mr. Erdogan, to test the limits of his aggression, bombed the Iraqi region of Zakho on July 20, killing at least eight civilians and wounding more than 20. The Baghdad government has recalled its ambassador from Turkey and has lodged a protest with the United Nations Security Council. That body, on July 25, said its members "expressed their deepest sympathy and condolences to the families of the victims and to the Government of Iraq and the Iraqi Kurdistan Region, wished a speedy and full recovery to those who were injured, and expressed their support for the Iraqi authorities in their investigations."

The European Union, in particular Germany, and the US have condemned the attack swiftly and vigorously. This international outcry may bring some measure to Mr. Erdogan's folly.

These events constitute the context of the political atmosphere that Turkey has created, and thus, placed Armenia in good company.

It is not clear at this point where Armenia's negotiations with Turkey may lead or even if they will continue, but we must not harbor any illusions: Turkey's ultimate goal is to destroy Armenia. It doesn't bother to hide it. We need to remember that at the victory parade in Baku on December 10, 2020, Mr. Erdogan was very sincere when he announced, "We are here to complete what our ancestors began," as he evoked the memory of Enver Pasha, one of the architects of the Armenian Genocide.

From the Armenian perspective the goal could only be to postpone the ultimate confrontation until such time that Armenia is in a position to neutralize the existential threat emanating from the Turkic world.

**"THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC WILL NOT TOLERATE POLICIES OR PLANS THAT LEAD TO THE CLOSING OF THE IRAN-ARMENIA BORDER, BECAUSE THAT BORDER HAS A HISTORY OF THOUSANDS OF YEARS."**

AYATOLLAH ALI KHAMENEI  
SUPREME SPIRITUAL LEADER OF IRAN

walk, as Syria has been amassing forces on its border, supported by the Russian military and Iran's proxy forces.

Tensions are rising on Turkey's borders, with Cyprus and Greece, as well. Turkey's Vice President Fuad Oktay warned: "The hydrocarbon resources of the Mediterranean are not the toys of the Greek Cypriots. Where our drilling ships will operate is determined by the decisions that Turkey will take alone as a sovereign state. No one should be disturbed by the activities that Turkey will carry out with its two ships in accordance with international law."

Turkey, of course, is aware that it is alone in this confrontation against a consortium that has brought together Greece, Cyprus, Israel and Egypt. The last time Turkey challenged Greece to drill in its littoral waters, it ended up in a confrontation with a French warship.

In his turn, Erdogan, speaking on the occasion of the 99th anniversary of the Lausanne Treaty, issued a threat that Greece has militarized some of the Aegean islands in





# Those Who Remained Inside the Real ‘Club’: The Precarious Armenian Citizens of the Early Turkish Republican Years

By Ari Şekeryan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

Released in November 2021, the Netflix miniseries “The Club” has had repercussions in Turkey and worldwide. The series features turbulent and violent episodes from the early Turkish Republic, targeting non-Muslim communities including Armenians, Greeks and Jews in Istanbul. “The Club” focuses on the life of a Sephardic Jew, Matilda Aseo, daughter of a once-wealthy Jewish family in Istanbul who lost their entire fortune in 1942, when the Turkish government imposed a Wealth Tax Law. The miniseries shows how Matilda and her family suffered, from this law, from the pogroms of September 1955, and from the regime’s nationalist policies.

Critics and scholars found the miniseries “valuable,” “unconventional,” and “an important step” to revisit Turkey’s past and (more importantly) towards “facing history.” Yet the show has not gone unquestioned. Two points stand out: first, Tasula conforms to a stereotype of “unchaste” Greek women as sexually available. The use of this stereotype is inconvenient. Secondly, the closing sequence has been found wanting: under the roof of the ‘club’ we see a family portrait, happy Turkish citizens, people who chose to stay. It crowds out the reality of those who suffered.

I concur with these critics. However, such criticism should not lessen the impact this mini-series brought to wider domestic and international society. Setting aside the international community’s ignorance about treatment of non-Muslim communities in early Turkish Republic years, most in Turkish society had no information about these violent episodes. This mini-

series opens the unwelcome pages of not-so-distant history, exposing millions to Turkey’s historical amnesia. (Netflix has over 200 million subscribers worldwide, including 3 million in Turkey.)

So, a question comes to my mind: is ignorance about the plight of non-Muslim communities in Turkey peculiar to wider society and non-academic circles? No. With scant exception, scholars too have failed to pay attention to these episodes, whether in research or analysis.

Researching nationalist state policies and their impact on the Armenian community in Istanbul, I began with a collection of Armenian and Ottoman Turkish newspapers published between 1923 and 1930. My aim was to understand this post-genocide period, neglected by previous history writers, whether Turkish or Armenian. (Two important exceptions are Lerna Ekmekcioglu and Talin Suciyan.) As I read my sources, I realized how far we are from understanding the fate of the Armenian community in Turkey. Discriminatory and violent episodes occurred well before the 1942 Wealth Tax Law and the September 1955 pogrom, featured in “The Club.” These, too, deserve to be brought to light.

## The Discriminatory Travel Ban

One episode that significantly affected the life of the Armenian community in Istanbul was the discriminatory travel ban imposed by state authorities on the Armenians. In 1925, no Armenian from Istanbul was allowed to travel outside the city limits. Similarly, Armenians were prohibited from travelling to Istanbul from Anatolia. Although members of the Armenian community were Turkish citizens and entitled to equal rights (in accordance with the Republic’s constitution and the provisions of the Treaty of Lausanne), the travel ban



A Netflix advertisement for “Kulüp” (“The Club” in Turkish)

was applied only to Turkish citizens of Armenian origin. Turkish Muslim citizens were left free to travel at will. In January 1925, a *Zhamanag* (Armenian newspaper) reporter told how Armenian merchants were stranded in Istanbul, banned from returning to their hometown of Catalca, a little over 30 miles to the west (*Zhamanag*, January 12, 1925, No. 5211).

Government authorities implemented the travel ban, allowing few Armenians to travel to Anatolia. A nation-wide shortage of qualified workers and construction experts led to a minor exemption in Anatolia (*Marmara*, December 26, 1924, No. 53). The state was willing to permit movement where it profited the state, a kind of commodification of these (implicitly) second-class citizens who were the members of an already traumatized post-genocide community. The initial promise from the newly-established Republican regime was to create a Turkish nation based on civic principles, where all the citizens would be equal regardless of their ethnic and religious background. The travel ban imposed on Armenians contrasts with the civic definitions of Turkish nationalism presented by the Republican authorities.

## Education and Language Policies

Alongside restrictions affecting travel and trade, the new Republican government also targeted education. There were tens of educational institutions in Istanbul belonging to the non-Muslim communities in the 1920s. Policymakers believed the Turkification process should begin by nationalizing the curriculum of these schools. They introduced new regulations. Increasing Turkish language, history, and culture classes for minority students was a key objective. Correspondingly, native language classes were decreased. Officials exerted further pressure by increasing Turkish teachers’ salaries, paid by these schools themselves, and forcing non-Muslim teachers in these schools to resign on the basis that they lacked necessary Turkish language knowledge.

The Armenian community leadership had limited means to protest the state’s nationalist education policies. Even though their reactions were far from being official protests, the Armenian educators did not take these severe changes lightly or embrace them readily. School directors and

Armenian teachers filed petitions expressing their view that the increased hours of Turkish language, history and geography courses were not pedagogically appropriate for the students. School directors urged the government to reduce the number of obligatory hours of Turkish courses. They met with no success (*Zhamanag*, October 11, 1925, No. 5477).

During the succeeding decades, Armenian schools closed as a result of funding issues and low enrollment rates. Yet the community managed to protect a number of them. In 1923, there were 47 Armenian schools in Istanbul. In 1998, there were 19 left. As of 2017, there were 16 (75. *Yılda Türkiye Ermenileri*, Istanbul: Türkiye Ermenileri Cemaati 75.Yıl Tertip Heyeti, 1998), p. 33; «Հայ Դպրոցը Անցեալէն Դէպի Սուր» [The Armenian School From the Past to the Present] <https://www.getronagan.k12.tr/uploads/haytbrots.pdf>). Differently put, two thirds of schools closed, an absent witness to the impact of the regime’s discriminatory policies. Yet one-third remain, reminding us all that the Armenian community nevertheless persists.

## Inside the Real Club

The experience of non-Muslim communities in early Turkish Republican years has its peculiarities. It is not an isolated case. Discriminatory treatment of minority populations in early nation-states is quite common. The Netflix miniseries “The Club” has brought the treatment of non-Muslim communities in Turkey in recent history to popular attention and that is significant. As more research is done and shared on these topics, domestic and international society will learn more of what happened. This may, in turn, help modern-day societies not to repeat past mistakes.

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An issue of the Istanbul Armenian publication *Zhamanag* from January 12, 1925