

# Karabakh Marks Somber 31<sup>st</sup> Anniversary

STEPANAKERT (Azatutyun) — Armenia’s government and parliament sent official delegations to Stepanakert on Friday, September 2, for official ceremonies to mark the 31st anniversary of the establishment of Nagorno-Karabakh Republic.

The ceremonies were attended instead by separate delegations of the three political groups represented in the National Assembly. The ruling Civil Contract party’s delegation consisted of only two parliamentarians.

“We are in Stepanakert as members of Armenia’s National Assembly,” said one of those lawmakers, Rustam Bakoyan. “This was the decision made by the [ruling party’s] parliamentary group.”

Bakoyan would not say why the parliament’s leadership, also affiliated with Civil Contract, did not send an official delegation to Stepanakert as it did last year. The parliament’s press of-

fice and leaders of its pro-government majority could not be reached for comment.

In a written statement, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan congratulated the Karabakh Armenians on the anniversary of the proclamation of their republic not recognized by any country. Pashinyan reiterated the official Armenian line that the Karabakh conflict will remain

unresolved until the issues of the disputed territory’s status and security are “addressed irrevocably.”

Statements to the contrary are “inappropriate,” he said, alluding to Azerbaijani leaders’ regular claims that Azerbaijan essentially ended the conflict with its victory in the 2020 war with Armenia.

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Ruben Vardanyan attends church in Nagorno-Karabakh shortly after announcing his move there (photo: Facebook)

## Russian-Armenian Billionaire to Move to Karabakh

**By Ani Mejlumyan**

Russian-Armenian billionaire and philanthropist Ruben Vardanyan has announced that he is giving up his Russian citizenship and moving to Nagorno-Karabakh.

While he presented his move as a patriotic gesture aimed at bolstering the precarious Armenian control over Nagorno-Karabakh, some suspect that his motives may have to do more with the heavy financial sanctions the United States and Europe have imposed on Russia.

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Nagorno Karabakh - President Arayik Harutyunian and other Karabakh Armenian leaders attend an official ceremony in Stepanakert, September 2, 2022.

# Armenia Criticizes Azerbaijan After Fresh Summit

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — Armenia accused Azerbaijan over the Labor Day weekend of misrepresenting the latest negotiations between the leaders of the two states and trying to torpedo Nagorno-Karabakh peace efforts.

It appeared to respond to Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev’s claims that Yerevan is ready to negotiate and sign a peace treaty with Baku on his terms.

Aliyev and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan met in Brussels on Wednesday, August 31, for fresh talks hosted by European Council President Charles Michel. The latter said after the four-hour meeting that the two leaders agreed to intensify negotiations on the peace accord sought by Baku. The Armenian and Azerbaijani foreign ministers will meet in September to “work on

“AZERBAIJAN IS INTENT ON TORPEDOING THE PEACE PROCESS AND CONTINUING ITS POLICY OF ETHNIC CLEANSING THROUGH THE USE OF FORCE.”

NIKOL PASHINYAN  
ARMENIAN PRIME MINISTER

draft texts,” Michel added in a statement.

Visiting Italy on Friday, September 2, Aliyev said the planned talks on the agreement will be based on five elements which the Azerbaijani side presented to Yerevan in March this year. Those include a mutual recognition of each other’s territorial integrity, something which Baku believes would uphold its sovereignty over Karabakh.

“The Armenian prime minister accepted these principles. That was reaffirmed at our meeting in Brussels two days ago,” Aliyev told journalists. He expressed hope that the peace treaty will be signed within months.

Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan countered on Saturday that while “there is nothing unacceptable to us” in those principles they must be “complemented” by Yerevan’s own counterproposals relating to the future status of Karabakh and the security of its population.

“We are ready for continuing peace negotiations on this basis,” Mirzoyan said in written comments. “Prime Minister Pashinyan again made this clear during the latest discussion held in Brussels.”

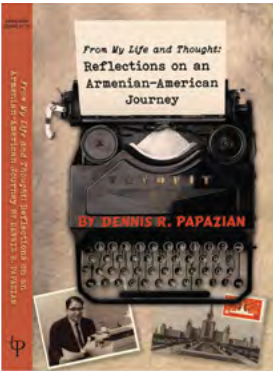
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# Drs. Dennis and Mary Papazian: An Academic Power Couple

**By Harry Kezelian** SAN JOSE, Calif. — It is hard to come up with a comparable living Armenian-American couple, as prolific and influential in the community, and as nationally respected in their fields, as Drs. Dennis and Mary Papazian.

The recent publication of Dennis Papazian’s memoir, *From My Life and Thought: Reflections on an Armenian-American Journey* (Fresno State, 2022), offered an occasion to interview the duo from their Bay Area home.

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**YEREVAN**

Teen Chess Prodigy Aims for Grandmaster Status



**MOSCOW**

Armenia, Russia talk parameters of a peace treaty with Azerbaijan



**ARIZONA**

Maral Yessayan’s Dance Journey







ARMENIA

## NEWS from ARMENIA

### Armenian Soldier Killed On Azeri Border

YEREVAN (*Azattyun*) — An Armenian soldier was shot and killed on Armenia's border with Azerbaijan the night of Monday, September 5, in what military authorities in Yerevan described as an Azerbaijani ceasefire violation.

A statement released by the Investigative Committee on Tuesday suggested that the 19-year-old conscript, Arman Sargsyan, was fatally wounded in the head by cross-border sniper fire. The incident reportedly occurred at an Armenian army post in Gegharkunik province bordering western Azerbaijan.

The Azerbaijani Defense Ministry denied that Sargsyan was killed by its troops. Earlier on Tuesday, it accused Armenian forces of again opening fire at its border outposts in the Kelbajar district just east of Gegharkunik.

The Armenian Defense Ministry was quick to deny the claim. It also deplored "totally false information" about Armenian ceasefire violations spread by the Azerbaijani side on a daily basis for almost a week.

Local government officials in two Armenian border villages close to Kelbajar told RFE/RL's Armenian Service on Tuesday that they have heard virtually no gunfire in recent days. They also said there have been no disruptions in agricultural activity there because of cross-border skirmishes.

### Armenian Defense Minister Traveling to US

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — A delegation headed by Armenian Defense Minister Suren Papikyan departed for the United States on September 5.

The Defense Ministry failed to provide any further details.

### Armenia Slams Disinformation Campaign By Azerbaijan

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — Armenia's Defense Ministry on Tuesday, September 6, denounced disinformation repeatedly spread by Azerbaijan, stating it "in no way contributes to the stabilization of the border situation."

The Azerbaijani Defense Ministry again falsely accused Armenia of ceasefire violation on Monday, alleging that Armenian troops opened fire at the Azerbaijani combat positions in the eastern section of the Armenian-Azerbaijani border.

"Such conduct, based on spreading absolutely false reports accusing Armenia of aggressive actions and attempts to artificially escalate the border situation cannot in any way contribute to actual stabilization of the border situation," the ministry said in a statement.

"The Armenian military did not open fire at Azerbaijani positions. Moreover, as reported earlier, an Armenian conscript, Junior Sergeant Arman Sargsyan, was fatally wounded in Azerbaijani shooting on Monday," it added.

# Teen Chess Prodigy Aims For Grandmaster Status

By Cristopher Patvakianian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN — Not everyone in life finds their calling, but for 15-year-old Emin Ohanyan, chess has always been an essential part of his existence. His chess journey started at the age 4, when he picked up chess watching his brother play and himself began to play, learning from his grandfather. Eventually, Ohanyan began learning and training at various chess schools throughout Armenia. Today, he is not only training in Armenia, but also competing in chess tournaments at the national and international level, and aspires to be a full time, professional player. Ohanyan asserts that "...one should master what they are passionate about, and for my entire life that has been chess."

And Ohanyan's passion, talent, and efforts for the sport speak for themselves. He is already an international master of chess, just one level below a grandmaster, the highest ranking in chess. Of his many victories, some highlights include winning first place in the European U16 Youth Rapid Championship in 2021, winning first place in the 2021 U16 Armenian Chess Championship, and most recently obtaining his first "grandmaster norm" at the Serbia Open Masters 2022, which is a certification of high performance at the grandmaster level. In order to obtain grandmaster status, a player must achieve two or more grandmaster norms in events covering a minimum of 27 games (along with other conditions) — meaning that Ohanyan is nearly at the highest possible title in chess.

Ohanyan, in the long term, hopes he can continue to develop and grow his professional career, and one day become a world champion.

"Chess players sometimes get to the point where they focus on making money rather than developing their skills...and my hopes are that I can become the best player that I can be and not sell out my dream," he said.

In Armenia, advancing one's career, despite how embedded it is in the fabric of the nation, is still quite difficult. Ohanyan noted that unlike the case for players in Europe, Armenians have

limited opportunities to compete in international tournaments due the geographical and financial constraints of attending and participating. As a result, many players in Armenia with potential don't get the opportunity to obtain higher titles and compete in more challenging, international competitions to advance their careers. Thus, as a player from Armenia, the stakes for being able to partake in tournaments abroad are even higher for Ohanyan, but he states that he wouldn't want it any other way.

"It's a big responsibility to represent your country, when you know thousands of people will be watching and that your victory is never really yours alone. I will always want to be under our flag and share my achievements with my country," he noted.

In his lifetime of playing chess, Ohanyan has learned many lessons that go far beyond the chessboard. The most important one thus far is the ability to learn from past mistakes and stay focused on the future. In his own words, "We should learn from and analyze our issues, but we shouldn't bang our heads against the wall for every mistake."

Mastering the psychology of the sport is an integral component of chess, and Ohanyan's approach to this is very much



Emin Ohanyan

centered on taking ownership and responsibility for the performance, and holding oneself accountable.

He said, "It's important to try to find issues in yourself - don't say it's God's fault or fate that something didn't work...if you didn't get the result you wanted to achieve, you have to find what's holding you back and figure out the solution."

Though a teen, Ohanyan's wisdom and grasp of chess seems far beyond his years. When asked what advice he would give to other aspiring chess players, Ohanyan replied "Believe in your power — fearing the opponent, not being the favorite to win, etc., doesn't mean there is no chance and that person will win. You have to believe in yourself and have confidence, and not succumb to thoughts that you are any less than your opponent."

If you are interested in following Emin Ohanyan's chess journey, you may visit his website <https://eminohanyan.com/> to learn more about his upcoming tournaments, past successes, and crowdfunding information.

## Sakapetoyan Family Renovates Office of Yerevan State University Armenian Linguistics Chair

YEREVAN — A day of recognition and remembrance took place at Yerevan State University's Department of Armenian Philology on September 2. Armen Sakapetoyan had paid for the renovation of the office of the Chair of the History of the Armenian Language and General Linguistics in memory of his multitalented linguist father Ruben Sakapetoyan and donated the latter's rich library to the Chair.

Representatives of the professors and lecturers of the Department, the Sakapetoyan family, and former students of Ruben Sakapetoyan were present, along with other invitees. The dean of the Department, Professor Artsrun Avagyan greeted the guests, presented the role of Ruben Sakapetoyan in scholarly pedagogy, and stressed his role in the development of Armenology. Avagyan declared that the initiative of the Sakopetoyan family was inspirational. He also noted that Sakapetoyan's books continue to teach students, and inspire scholars and linguists.

The current holder of the Chair of the History of the Armenian Language and General Linguistics, Professor Anna Abajyan, then expressed her gratitude towards



Armen Sakopetoyan cuts the ribbon to the renovated office, with Professor Anna Abajyan to his left.

Armen Sakopetoyan and his family.

In his turn, Armen Sakopetoyan, who is a member of the board of trustees of the Meghri Development Fund, thanked the speakers for their praise of his father. He declared that the Fund would continue to support the Department of Philology. He

announced the decision of its board to establish a scholarship for students of Armenian philology from Meghri, who will return to their native city to put the knowledge they attain in their university studies at the service of the development of the region.





## ARMENIA

# Karabakh Marks Somber 31<sup>st</sup> Anniversary

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“The Republic of Armenia will continue to support the maintenance of normal life, security and human rights protection in Nagorno-Karabakh,” added the statement.

Pashinyan said nothing about the future status of Karabakh acceptable to Yerevan. His political opponents and other critics claim that he is intent on helping Baku regain full control of the Armenian-populated territory.

The Armenian premier last visited Stepanakert during the six-week war stopped by a Russian-brokered ceasefire in November 2020.

“Artsakh (Karabakh) must continue to move along the path of independence,” Arayik Harutyunyan, the Karabakh president, said in a statement issued on the occasion.

## Generals Indicted

An Armenian law-enforcement agency brought additional criminal charges against a former commander of Nagorno-Karabakh's army on Thursday, September 1, hours after a court in Yerevan allowed his pre-trial arrest.

Lieutenant-General Mikael Arzumanyan was detained and charged with criminal negligence immediately after entering Armenia from Karabakh earlier this week.

The Investigative Committee initially indicted Arzumanyan over the capture by Azerbaijani forces of the Karabakh town of Shushi (Shusha) which happened at the end of the 2020 war. It claims that he failed to deploy more troops around Shushi before-

hand.

Arzumanyan was appointed as commander of Karabakh's Armenian-backed Defense Army on October 27, 2020 less than two weeks before the fall of the strategic town.

The Investigative Committee said on Thursday that the 49-year-old general also ordered Karabakh Armenian forces to withdraw from “strategically important” positions retaken by them days after the war broke out on September 27, 2020. It said



Lieutenant-General Jalal Harutyunyan

that the order amounted to abuse of power.

Arzumanyan's lawyer, Yerem Sargsyan, did not return phone calls throughout the day. He reportedly said on Wednesday that his client rejects the first accusation leveled against him.

Armenian opposition leaders have criticized Arzumanyan's arrest, saying that it is part of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's efforts to deflect blame for the disastrous war. They continue to hold Pashinyan primarily responsible for Armenia's defeat.

Movses Hakobyan, Armenia's former top general, also denounced the criminal case against Arzumanyan. He implied that it is aimed at lending credence to Pashinyan's “political statements” on the outcome of the war.

“Accusing Arzumanyan is not honest, to say the least, because he took over the army at a time when everything was already predetermined,” Hakobyan told RFE/RL's Armenian Service. “Secondly, nobody can judge whether a commander made a right or wrong decision in a particular situation.”

Arzumanyan was dismissed as Karabakh army commander last year. He has worked as an advisor to Arayik Harutyunyan, the Karabakh president, since then. A spokeswoman for Harutyunyan on Tuesday described Arzumanyan as “one of our best military commanders.”

Another former commander of Nagorno-Karabakh's army is being prosecuted in Armenia for serious military setbacks suffered during the 2020 war with Azerbaijan, it emerged on Friday.

In addition, the Investigative Committee said it has indicted Lieutenant-General Jalal Harutyunyan on two counts of “careless attitude towards military service.” It decided not to arrest him for now.

One of the accusations stems from an Armenian counteroffensive against advancing Azerbaijani forces launched on October 7, 2020 ten days after the outbreak

of large-scale fighting. Its failure facilitated Azerbaijan's subsequent victory in the six-week war.

In a statement, the Investigative Committee said Harutyunyan ordered two army units to launch an attack southeast of Karabakh despite lacking intelligence and the fact that they were outnumbered by the enemy and had no air cover. He said he failed to “seriously examine” their combat-readiness.

The law-enforcement agency also blamed the general for poor coordination between the units, which it said also contributed to the failure of the operation. He should have stopped or delayed the counteroffensive that left scores of Armenian soldiers dead and 19 battle tanks destroyed, he said.

Harutyunyan was also charged over the capture by Azerbaijani troops of the front-line positions of a Karabakh Armenian artillery unit on October 12, 2020. The Investigative Committee statement said that this was the result of inaccurate information provided by Harutyunyan to the unit. The latter lost at least 20 soldiers and 8 howitzers on that day.

It was not immediately clear whether Harutyunyan will plead guilty to the accusations. If convicted, he will face between four and eight years.

The 47-year-old general was seriously wounded in an Azerbaijani missile strike on October 26, 2020. He was appointed as head of an Armenian military inspectorate after recovering from his wounds.

## Billionaire Ruben Vardanyan to Move to Karabakh

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“Using myself as an example, I want to show how important Artsakh is for me and for all of us,” he said in a video he posted on his Facebook page on September 1, using an alternate Armenian name for the territory. “After the 2020 war, we Armenians around the world have an obligation to be together with the people of Artsakh. We should not just offer moral support, but concrete help.”

He said had “renounced” his Russian citizenship and “come to Artsakh as a citizen of Armenia.” He acquired Armenian citizenship in 2021. He has not offered more details about his relocation plans, except to say that he expects to now spend most of his time in Karabakh. It is not known if he owns a home there.

Vardanyan, a businessman and investment banker whose wealth is estimated at more than \$1 billion, is well known in Armenia for his philanthropic efforts there. He founded the IDeA foundation, which carries out development projects and holds the high-profile Aurora Prize awards for humanitarians around the world. He is also a founder of the United World College in Dilijan, an elite school.

In a September 1 interview with Russian newspaper RBC, he was asked about the assets he holds in Russia. “I will give everything to my partners and transfer it to the family foundation,” he said, without offering any further details.

Vardanyan is not under American or European sanctions, but he was named in a draft bill in the U.S. House of Representatives, the “Putin Accountability Act,” which called on him and other “kleptocrats” to be subject to personal sanctions. And even for Russian businesses not under specific sanctions, the sweeping financial

restrictions against the country have many businesspeople looking to leave.

He denied that his move had financial motivations. “Ruben Vardanyan is not under sanctions,” he said at a September 2 press conference in Stepanakert, the capital of Nagorno-Karabakh. “If I wanted to escape from sanctions, I could escape to any other country. It's easy for me to talk about my intentions, because I already have done a lot and am doing a lot for my country.”

Vardanyan has been involved in several large corruption scandals in Russia, including a huge money laundering network and a vast web of corruption run by the government of the Russian republic of Tatarstan.

He is close to Russian President Vladimir Putin as well as to the former leadership in Armenia. He has had a rockier relationship with the country's current leader, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, after the latter shut down a public-private investment project that the previous government had launched and which Vardanyan had worked on.

Since the 2020 war, Vardanyan has spoken regularly about Armenian affairs while remaining careful to not directly attack the current government.

His corruption scandals have barely registered in Armenia and he has long been seen as a potential political player there, where many citizens are disillusioned both with the ruling party and the opposition. At the Stepanakert press conference, he didn't

rule out seeking political office in Armenia or in Karabakh.

“We are talking about service, not as a position where I exercise power as a ruler over you, but a position in which I serve you,” he said. “I am prepared for anything, but that is not the reason I came here.”

Vardanyan has been rumored to be connected to a political party in Armenia founded in 2021, Country for Life. At the



press conference he said that he is “cooperating and exchanging ideas” with the founders of the party, but did not admit to any deeper relationship.

Following his announcement about moving, the party applauded the decision. “The party fully supports Ruben Vardanyan's initiative to create a pan-Armenian front for the strengthening of Artsakh's security

and development in all directions,” it said in a statement.

Still, many saw the move as more mercenary. “Vardanyan made billions in Russia. ... Now Vardanyan may lose this money and real estate due to sanctions against Russia,” wrote Russian pro-government analyst Sergey Markov on his Telegram channel. “And now Vardanyan makes the most elegant gambit. He pretends to sac-

rifice himself for the people of Karabakh. Moves to Karabakh, and renounces Russian citizenship and thereby eludes anti-Russian sanctions.”

(Ani Mejlumyan is a reporter based in Yerevan. This piece was originally written for Eurasianet.com. See related editorial on page 18 of this issue)



## INTERNAYIONAL

## INTERNATIONAL

## Putin to Pay State Visit to Armenia

MOSCOW (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Russian President Vladimir Putin will make a state visit to Armenia, according to a statement from the Armenian Foreign Ministry on September 5. The matter was discussed at a meeting between the Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Russia, Ararat Mirzoyan and Sergei Lavrov, on that day. No other details are available for now.

## Yazidi Woman Freed in Hol Camp

HESEKE, Northern Syria (ANF News) — A Yazidi woman was freed during the operation against the terrorist militia “Islamic State” (ISIS) in Hol Camp in northern Syria, according to a statement of the security forces of the autonomous region of North and East Syria (Asayish) on the ninth day of the operation, which started on August 25. According to the statement, the Yazidi woman was living among the ISIS families housed in the Hol reception and internment camp. According to the security forces, four more ISIS suspects were arrested on Friday and 33 tents used by ISIS for training purposes were dismantled.

With the latest arrests, at least 139 suspected members of the terror group have been taken out of circulation since the security operation began. According to a weekly report presented on Thursday by the Asayish Command on the operation in Hol Camp, 15 women who are alleged to be leading members of ISIS are among those arrested.

The operation in the camp near Heseke is the second phase of the “Humanitarian Security Operation”, which was launched in spring.

ISIS abducted about 7,000 Yazidi women from Shengal into slavery in 2014, some of whom are still in the hands of ISIS supporters in other countries. Between 2,700 and 2,800 people are still considered missing. Many of the abducted women were initially taken to Raqqa. During the crushing of the last ISIS enclave in al-Bagouz in eastern Syria in spring 2019, numerous Yazidi women and children were freed. However, not all of them identified themselves as Yazidis for fear of the consequences.

## French Foreign Minister Heads to Turkey to Discuss Russian Sanctions Evasion

PARIS, Sept 5 (Reuters) — France’s foreign minister headed to Turkey on September 5 to emphasize to Ankara the importance of its firms not circumventing Western sanctions on Russia after the United States said Turkish businesses faced the risk of sanctions. NATO member Turkey has sought to strike a balance between Moscow and Kyiv by criticizing Russia’s invasion and sending arms to Ukraine, while opposing Western sanctions and continuing trade, tourism and investment with Russia.

## Armenia, Russia Talk Parameters Of a Peace Treaty with Azerbaijan

MOSCOW (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Armenian and Russian Foreign Ministers Ararat Mirzoyan and Sergey Lavrov met on Monday, September 5 to discuss the parameters of a peace treaty between Armenia and Azerbaijan, the Russian side said in a statement.

The commitment to the comprehensive implementation of the agreements of the leaders of Russia, Armenia and Azerbaijan dated November 9, 2020 and January 11 and November 26, 2021 was reaffirmed.

The process of unblocking all economic and transport communications, as well as the delimitation and demarcation of the Armenian-Azerbaijani border were also on the table.

The Armenian Foreign Ministry issued a statement of their own, revealing that Russian President Vladimir Putin will make a state visit to Yerevan. No other details were provided though.

“The focus was on regional issues,” read a Russian Foreign Ministry statement on the talks.

“Further steps were discussed in the context of unblocking all economic and transport links, delimiting and demarcating the Armenian-Azerbaijani border as well as working out the parameters of a peace treaty between Armenia and Azerbaijan,” it said.



Armenian and Russian Foreign Ministers Ararat Mirzoyan and Sergey Lavrov

The Armenian Foreign Ministry also reported a detailed discussion of these issues but did not elaborate.

“Ararat Mirzoyan stressed the importance of the Russian side’s efforts, including in the framework of the co-chairmanship of the OSCE Minsk Group, to facilitate a lasting and comprehensive settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict,” the ministry said in a statement.

Mirzoyan phoned Lavrov last Thursday, the day after the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan met again in Brussels for talks organized by the European Union. Moscow has been very critical of the EU’s involvement in Armenian-Azerbaijani peace talks, saying that it is driven by anti-Russian “geopolitical ambitions.”

Both Lavrov and Mirzoyan praised Russian-Armenian bilateral ties.

## Paylan Raises Destruction of Ancient Armenian Monasteries in Turkey

ISTANBUL (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Turkish-Armenian lawmaker Garo Paylan has raised the destruction and isolation of the St. Bartholomew Armenian Monastery

Turkey: What do you think? What do you think is the benefit of destroying the monastery? Will Turkey gain or lose from the destruction of the monastery?” Paylan said.



Garo Paylan at the crumbling St. Bartholomew Armenian Monastery in Baskale

in the region of Baskale of Turkey’s Van province.

The church has been standing for 1600 years but has been damaged and isolated in the past 100 years and is now being deliberately destroyed, he said.

Paylan has been visiting the Armenian churches and monasteries in the provinces of Van and Mush in the last couple of days to learn more about the condition of historical and religious monuments in said areas.

“The monastery has been completely destroyed. The arch of the entrance door has been maintained, but the dome is damaged. I am asking the Ministry of Culture of

Paylan noted that only a few of the hundreds of Armenian monasteries in Van are standing today, one of which is St. Tovmas Monastery in Gandzak.

“I call on everyone to take responsibility for the preservation of this wonder located on the shores of Lake Van,” Paylan wrote on Twitter.

“I visited the historical Armenian monasteries of Mush and Van, which have unfortunately fallen into disrepair. The main responsible party for restoring and repairing our [the monuments] is certainly the government of Turkey. However, as Armenian people, we must remember our heritage, we must pursue their restoration.”

## Guédiguian, Toranian And Abkarian Call for Voluntary Tax to Help Armenia and Karabakh

By Jean Eckian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

PARIS — French-Armenian filmmakers Robert Guédiguian and Vasken Toranian and actor Simon Abkarian have launched an appeal to the Armenian community and its friends to help Armenia and Karabakh financially, with the logistical participation of the Armenian Fund.

The proposal is to participate in a voluntary tax with a minimum donation of 10 euros or 10 dollars per month to contribute to the security, sustainability and development of Armenia and Karabakh in these troubled times.

The Fonds Arménien de France (<https://www.fondsarmenien.org>) is a reliable and solid partner. Its legitimacy and credibility are no longer in ques-



From left, Robert Guédiguian, Simon Abkarian, Vasken Toranian (photo Jean Eckian)

tion. The authors also call on Hayastan All-Armenian Fund to urgently join this unprecedented operation in collecting this “sacred tax.”

A modest projection would be 10 euros or 10 dollars per month from 3 million people equals 360 million per year to help Armenia and Artsakh.





## INTERNAYIONAL

# Turkey's Inflation Tops 80 Percent as Poverty Deepens

By Mustafa Sonmez

ISTANBUL (AI-Monitor) — With presidential and parliamentary polls less than a year away, Turkey's government has bet on growth to contain popular grievances, but runaway inflation and a foreign-currency crunch is producing deeper poverty.

Consumer prices in Turkey rose 1.46 percent from July to August, official data showed on September 5, with annual inflation surging to a 24-year high of 80.21 percent.

Inflation has soared since September 2021 amid the slump of the Turkish lira, fueled by unorthodox rate cuts by the central bank. The surge in global energy and commodity prices after Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February has only made matters worse.

Heralding further inflationary pressures, the Turkish authorities announced fresh price hikes on gas and electricity on Sept. 1 — around 20 percent for households and around 50 percent for enterprises.

Energy expenses are a major item in the housing category of the inflation basket, in which prices rose 2 percent in August, bringing the annual rate to nearly 72 percent.

Food prices rose around 0.9 percent in August, with annual food inflation reaching 90.3 percent. The price of bread alone — an indispensable staple for low-income consumers — rose more than 101 percent over a year.

The recent relative easing in global energy prices resulted in partial reductions in gasoline and diesel prices last month, contributing to a 1.8 percent decline in prices in the transportation group. Nevertheless, annual inflation in this category stood at a whopping 117 percent.

The prices of durable goods such as furniture, whiteware and electronic appliances rose 3.3 percent in August. The months-long uptick brought annual inflation in the sector to over 92 percent.

Under the impact of the high season in tourism, prices in the hotels, cafes and restaurants group were up by about 3.3 percent in August, with the annual rate climbing to nearly 81 percent.

And with the advent of the new school year, prices in the education group shot up by 6.5 percent in August. In the health group, the price increases hit 7 percent.

In a further sign of more hikes on consumer prices in September and the ensuing months, the pace of producer prices remained faster. A monthly increase of 2.4 percent in August brought annual producer inflation to the staggering rate of almost 144 percent.

Moreover, the 12-month average of producer inflation in October will constitute the basis for next year's hikes on public sector goods and services. That means duties and fees charged by the state and the prices of public transport and other ser-

flation resulted in a GDP growth of 7.5 percent in the first half of the year. Turkey's GDP had grown 11.4 percent in 2021. Yet the factors that contributed to this expansion are hardly sustainable.

The GDP growth has been achieved mainly through cheapened exports and a rush for goods among consumers scrambling to protect their savings against inflation.

Amid the continued slump of the Turkish lira and the uncertainty caused by Ankara's interventions to rein in foreign-cur-

worsened income disparities. Payments to employees amounted to 25.4 percent of gross value added in the second quarter of the year, down from 36.8 percent in the second quarter of 2019, the year before the pandemic. The net operating surplus — or the share of employers — rose to 54 percent from 45 percent in the same period. The 25.4 percent share of labor is the lowest under the 20-year rule of Erdogan's Justice and Development Party.

The net operating surplus of companies, particularly the financial sector, has steeply increased over the past year in particular. Korkut Boratav, a veteran Turkish economist, attributes the widening income gap to three main reasons: "the excessive pumping of cheap credit to companies by the central bank, public banks and the Palace [Erdogan's administration]; the denial of [adequate] public financial resources to laborers and the unorganized state and helplessness of the popular classes in the face of inevitable inflation." For Boratav, it's "an environment of savage capitalism," with banks and corporates "running the show within the framework created by the Palace."



vices would be raised by an estimated 125 percent, which alone is an omen that the inflation storm will barely ease in 2023.

The working classes can hardly cope with inflation topping 80 percent, as the ostensible pay hikes lag well behind the price increases. With real incomes melting, relative poverty is deepening — a trend confirmed by the latest gross domestic product (GDP) data, released on Aug. 31.

On the shiny side of the coin, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's ambitions to keep the economy hot despite the galloping in-

flation, many saving holders chose to put their money in homes, cars and durable household goods. This trend of apprehension-driven consumption provided headwinds for the industrial and services sectors. Also, Turkish exporters' competitiveness increased due to the depreciation of the lira. But the accompanying inflation, coupled with an alarming current account gap and the Treasury's deficits, dampens hopes of maintaining that growth pace in the remainder of the year.

Moreover, the economic growth has

## Armenia Criticizes Azerbaijan After Fresh Summit

SUMMIT, from page 1

"The failure to listen to, or attempts not to listen to this view gives the Armenian side reason to doubt the sincerity of Azerbaijan's intentions to achieve peace," he went on. "Moreover, the continuing false and arbitrary interpretations of the negotiations and avoidance of compliance with understandings lead us to think that Azerbaijan is intent on torpedoing the peace process and continuing its policy of ethnic cleansing through the use of force."

Baku effectively dismissed the Armenian counterproposals before Michel's previous trilateral meeting with Aliyev and Pashinyan held in May. The Azerbaijani leader has repeatedly ruled out any status for Karabakh, saying that Azerbaijan's victory in the 2020 war with Armenia will put an end to the conflict.

On Sunday, Pashinyan reportedly briefed parliament deputies from his Civil Contract party on the results of his August 31 talks with Aliyev. One of them, Andranik Kocharyan, said they "received from the prime ministers answers to many questions" but did not elaborate.

According to some media outlets, Pashinyan told the pro-government lawmakers that he intends to sign the Armenian-Azerbaijani peace treaty before the end of this year. Kocharyan, who heads the parliament committee on defense and security, did not deny those reports. He indicated that Pashinyan's government believes that delaying such a deal is not in Armenia's interests.

"We are now in a situation where we have no chance to stall for time," Kocharyan told reporters.

Armenia's main opposition forces will portray such statements as further proof that Pashinyan is helping Baku regain full control of Karabakh.

They started regular street protests in Yerevan in May after the prime minister signaled his readiness to "lower the bar" on Karabakh's status acceptable to Yerevan. They failed to force him to resign.

Opposition leaders on Friday pledged to continue the protests, while announcing a change of their tactics.

## Yazidis Migrate En Masse, Citing Financial Instability

SHARIA CAMP, Kurdistan Region (Ahval) — Poverty, instability, and unemployment have driven a large number of Yazidis to take illegal and dangerous routes to Europe in recent months, members of the community told Rudaw on Friday, September 2.

Zidane Khalaf, 18, and his friend Wisam Mishko, 17, spent eight years at Duhok's Sharia camp without having a proper job, and access to clean water and electricity. To them, there was no glimmer of hope to return to the Yazidi heartland of Shingal as it was controlled by a myriad of armed groups.

Mishko and Khalaf packed their stuff, and prepared to leave for Turkey, then to Greece, and from there to western European countries.

"The situation is unstable [at the camp]. We have been living in a camp for eight years now," Khalaf told Rudaw's Naif Ramadhan before crossing to Turkey. "There is no electricity and our wa-

ter is contaminated."

He added that the presence of multiple armed groups in Shingal is a major push behind their migration.

There are currently more than a hundred Yazidis stranded in Greece with the numbers keep getting higher.

A group of 150 Yazidis from Shingal have been stranded outside refugee camps in Greece for nearly a week now as Greek authorities have denied them access to camps and the right to return to their homeland.

Greece is a key route used by refugees and migrants as an entry point into the European Union.

The lack of job opportunities and security are the main reasons driving civilians to leave Shingal, a Yazidi migrant stuck in Greek territories said.

A total of 4,377 Yazidis have migrated out of Shingal and Duhok camps since August, Sherzad Pirmusa, head of the Duhok-based Alind Organization for

Youth Democratization said this week.

Scores of people, mainly youth, from across the Kurdistan Region and Iraq take to smuggling routes on a daily basis out of desperation, in hopes of escaping the endless crises in the country, including the lack of employment, political instability, and corruption.

Murad Ismael, president of the Sinjar Academy, drew attention to the increasing rate of migration out of Shingal indicated by civilians selling their properties to afford the process. He advised the people not to sell their real estate, saying "this is the land of your ancestors and fathers, and you must keep it wherever you go."

Hundreds of thousands of Yazidis fled their homes in the summer of 2014 when the Islamic State (ISIS) seized control of their homeland, seeking shelter on Mount Shingal, and then in the Kurdistan Region with a limited number resettled in Europe and North America.





# Community News

## Legacy Naming At AUA: The Kevork & Cecile Keshishian Student Union

YEREVAN/LOS ANGELES — The recent naming of the Kevork & Cecile Keshishian Student Union has spurred a great deal of enthusiasm among students, faculty, and staff of the American University of Armenia (AUA). The generous contribution of the Keshishian family towards naming the student union will leave a lasting legacy honoring the lifelong community service and meaningful impact the couple has made in Lebanon and the United States. Their name inscribed at the front entrance of the AUA student union will inspire students for generations to come.

Cecile Keshishian, née Simonian, and her late husband Dr. Kevork Keshishian were both born to survivors of the Armenian Genocide. Kevork grew up in Aleppo, Syria and Cecile in Beirut, Lebanon. For both, obtaining a good education was of utmost importance.

After completing his secondary education in Aleppo, Kevork won a



Dr. Kevork and Cecile Keshishian

scholarship and moved to Beirut to study medicine at Saint Joseph Jesuit University. After graduation, he practiced pediatrics until emigrating to the U.S. in 1968. He then switched his specialty to radiology, embarking on a three-year residency and becoming an American Board-certified radiologist. Dr. Keshishian was a well-known speaker and lecturer in the Armenian Diaspora. He was also a pioneer in the field of family dynamics and authored four books in Armenian: *How to Raise Kids in a Happy Home*; *Puberty & Its Problems*; *Love & Family*; and *Sexual Harmony in Married Life*.

Cecile pursued her secondary school education at the Melkonian Educational Institute in Cyprus and majored in business. Upon returning to Beirut, she began working as an executive assistant at Canada Dry International at a time when the company was expanding into various countries in the Middle East. Later, after the couple emigrated to the U.S., she continued her education while raising two children and graduated magna cum laude from Notre Dame College with a double degree in American history and business.

see LEGACY, page 7



Alex Kew and the 7 millionth tree

## A Visit to Armenia With the Armenia Tree Project

By Alex Kew

YEREVAN/WASHINGTON — Last month, I had the absolute pleasure of being invited to Armenia with the Armenia Tree Project for a tour of both the country and their tree operations. My family has been long involved with ATP and I interned at their Boston office over a few summers. I've always believed very strongly in the work they are doing, so I was thrilled to have the opportunity to see it all in action.

We arrived in the capital city of Yerevan in the middle of the night late Sunday night, and began our tour bright and early first thing Monday morning with our first tree nursery.

Armenia Tree Project has four nurseries in operation, and on day one we headed out to the Karin Nursery. This is ATP's first nursery, and for this tree-hugger it was a sight to behold. We saw the new greenhouse, filled to the brim with baby trees, germinated just a few weeks ago and growing for forestry plantings. Outside, there were rows and rows of fruit trees for community planting, and even ornamental trees shaped by ATP's experienced arborists.

After touring the nursery we headed to a nearby Community Tree Planting site. Just like Casey Trees, ATP also has a "Community Tree Planting" program. Though it operates a bit differently, and with much younger trees, the underlying message is the same: re-tree community sites to create vibrant healthy green spaces for generations to come.

The site we visited was Saint Gevorg Monastery, one of many ancient religious sites. The land around this monastery was planted by ATP over 20 years ago, and the impact is unbelievable. The whole space has transformed from dry cracked land to an oasis of

see TREES, page 10



Right to Left: Alex Kew, mother Julia Kew, sister Christina Kew, planting a tree with ATP Chief Propagator Tigran Palazyan

## Illinois Holocaust Museum Hosts Program on Centennial of The Smyrna Great Fire

CHICAGO — For thousands of years Smyrna was the wealthiest of cities located today on Turkey's Aegean coast, an elegant, cosmopolitan city where Greeks, Armenians, Turks, Jews and others lived and worked together — a city known for religious tolerance.

But after the "Young Turks Revolution" and creation of a Nationalist government in 1919, a lethal campaign calling for the destruction and brutal persecution of the Christians of Asia Minor, Pontos, and East Thrace began.

The Great Fire of Smyrna started on September 13, 1922, after the Turkish armed forces entered Smyrna, a deliberate act by the Turkish government to destroy or expel the Greeks and any other Christian population. The entire Greek and Armenian quarters of the city were destroyed, forcing the population to flee and seek shelter in Greece and elsewhere. Historians believe that the number of victims was in the tens of thousands, while the number of refugees was over a million. Thousands of Greek and Armenian men were subsequently deported into the interior of Anatolia, where many died in harsh and brutal conditions. After the Smyrna Catastrophe the Hellenic city founded over 3,000 years before, a jewel of the Eastern Mediterranean, ceased to have a Hellenic community.

The Illinois Holocaust Museum and the Asia Minor and Pontos Hellenic Research Center will present an online discussion by renowned scholars and educators as they address one of the most tragic and major events in modern Greek history on September 18, at 1 p.m. CDT.

Participants include:

George Shirinian, Author and Executive Director, Zoryan Institute

Dr. Constantine Hatzidimitriou, Adjunct Assistant Professor at St. Johns' University and City University of New York,

Dr. Paul Bartrop, Emeritus Professor, Florida Gulf Coast University

Kelley Szany, Senior Vice President of Education and Exhibitions, Illinois Holocaust Museum and Co-Chair, Illinois Holocaust & Genocide Commission

Community Partners: Hellenic American Leadership Council; The UCLA Stavros Niarchos Foundation Center for the Study of Hellenic Culture; The National Hellenic Museum; The Pan-Pontian Federation of USA and Canada; The Chair for Pontic Studies at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

This commemoration is free to the public. Register: <https://ihm.ec/smyrna2022>





COMMUNITY NEWS

# Legacy Naming At AUA: The Kevork & Cecile Keshishian Student Union

LEGACY, from page 6

In the US, Kevork and Cecile raised their two children, Alek and Aleen, with the same values with which they had grown up: active devotion to education, philanthropy, and the Armenian cause.

Cecile served as president of Manchester, New Hampshire's CMC Hospital Associates (with over 600 members) and the first non-American-born President of the New Hampshire Medical Auxiliary. She was also one of the founders of the New Hampshire Good Samaritans Suicide Pre-

vention Hotline and a board member of the American Children's Theatre.

In 2005, Cecile was awarded the Ellis Island Medal of Honor — the only award of its kind sanctioned by both the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives — joining the illustrious company of Ronald Reagan, Henry Kissinger, Bill and Hillary Clinton, and many other notable Americans.

Cecile notes that her philanthropic spirit was passed on to her by her mother. Orphaned during the Genocide at the age of four, her mother overcame the trauma she



View of the Keshishian Student Union's main room and kitchenette



View of the Keshishian Student Union's meeting room and study areas

had experienced and worked hard to graduate from the American University of Beirut School of Nursing. "She became a nurse who then used her earnings to educate me and my three siblings. Her philosophy of life, which she also passed on to us, was to 'leave the world a better place than you found, or else your life would have no meaning,'" Cecile recalls, recounting how her family would regularly welcome refugees into their home during the war in Lebanon in the 1970's, helping them find jobs,

enroll in local schools, and find housing.

Her husband similarly bore a strong community service mindset. An active community leader since his youth in Lebanon, Dr. Keshishian continued his efforts in the US as a member of the AGBU International Central Board while also serving as president of the Tekeyan Cultural Association, consistently focused on further expanding programs and chapter memberships throughout the U.S. and Canada. Dr. Keshishian likewise instilled the notion of philanthropy into their children at a very young age. Both Alek and Aleen now donate time and money to various Armenian and American causes.

Cecile recalls how she and her husband learned about AUA before it was even founded, when Dr. Keshishian and Dr. Mihran Agabian, both members of the AGBU Central Board, discussed the potential establishment of a university to bring Western-style education to Armenia. The idea was soon realized with the backing of philanthropist and president of AGBU International Louise Manoogian Simone, who suggested that this university should have an affiliation with a university in the US. Cecile explains that "as descendants of survivors of genocide, we always prioritized education over all else and believed that education opens doors. It is a privilege



The Keshishian Family, 1992 (from left- Alek, Cecile, Kevork, Aleen)

to help AUA educate Armenians and expose them to all the benefits of a Western education."

A few years ago, when considering the AUA facility where they would want to leave a lasting family legacy, Dr. and Mrs. Keshishian felt that the Student Union would be the most fitting location — a place all students use for meetings, study groups, discussions, and other curricular and extracurricular activities. "We hope that students at AUA recognize the importance and blessing of a great education and that they will use the knowledge they gain to make their community and the world a better place."

Located on the first floor of the Paramaz Avedisian Building (PAB), the Kevork & Cecile Keshishian Student Union measures 300 square meters, with a capacity of 150 persons. The facility houses a large collaborative space, a kitchenette, a study room, the Math & Writing Center, and a meeting room frequently used by student committees and the Student Council.



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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Drs. Dennis and Mary Papazian: An Academic Power Couple

PAPAZIAN, from page 1

Dennis, 90, is a former administrator, professor of history, and director of the Armenian Research Center (which he founded) at the University of Michigan – Dearborn, was also instrumental in Armenian-American political life, as one of the founders of the Armenian Assembly of America.

Mary, who started her career as a professor of English at Oakland University in Rochester Mich., quickly moved into administration as well, serving at Oakland, Montclair State (New Jersey), Southern Connecticut State, and San Jose State.

Their accumulated experience and combined CVs seem only to be made exponentially greater by their marriage, through which they have supported each other not only personally but professionally and in their service to the Armenian community.

## Cold War Professor

Throughout the interview, Dennis and Mary Papazian both stressed that Dennis' legacy lies in his efforts to build the infrastructure of the Armenian-American community, more so than in the scholarly realm.

The publication of *From My Life and Thought* underscores these contributions.

Dennis Papazian's early life was typical of Armenian-Americans of his generation. "My family was very pro-Armenian, as you can imagine. My father was sent to the state of Georgia by the folks at Ellis Island. He was the only one of his siblings who went back to the old country to find an Armenian bride. He valued his Armenian identity, and so when it was time for him to marry he went back to [Constantinople] and found a 16-year-old beauty from a good family who had some inherited wealth in the family deeds to properties on the Bosphorus, though she didn't really know that at the time. Our family valued work, we enjoyed it and stressed trying to achieve success."



Dr. Dennis Papazian, circa 1970s

Young Dennis eventually moved with his family to Pontiac, Mich., a working class suburb of Detroit. The impetus for the move came from his mother, eager to find suitable Armenian husbands for Dennis' two sisters, who were coming of age in the 1940s.

When asked why he chose to study history, gaining his Ph.D. at the University of Michigan – Ann Arbor, Dennis states: "I wanted to find out about the world. The past, the present, and to predict the future maybe."

Mary, 63, frequently spoke about to how she sees her husband's approach to the field. "I think he was drawn to it for the reasons he said, but the key is the practical implications. How the past impacts how the world works. And Russia was the hottest political issue of the day."

Graduating with his bachelor's degree in history and philosophy from Wayne State in 1954, Dennis went on to earn a master's from Wayne State in East European Studies in 1956 and another master's in history from the University of Michigan – Ann Arbor in 1958.

Beginning his doctoral program at Ann Arbor within a year of the 1957 launch of Sputnik, the Space Race between the US and the USSR was intensifying. Indeed, the Cold War was the "hottest" political issue of the day and became the defining context for Dennis Papazian's academic career.

Simultaneously, with the establishment of the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) in 1955, the Armenian Studies field was starting to develop in the US; and various other social and political changes to Armenian-American community institutions in the post-War era which coincided with the coming-of-age of the first American-born generation and the impending 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Armenian Genocide in 1965, signaled the development of the modern Armenian-American community.

Dennis Papazian was one of the group of people who guided that development, working side-by-side with other figures like Alex Manoogian, William Saroyan, Stephen

Mugar, and Prof. Richard Hovannisian.

A trip to the Soviet Union as a graduate exchange student during the 1961-62 academic year was a formative experience. Working on his doctoral thesis at Moscow State University, he encountered almost every aspect of life behind the Iron Curtain, entertainingly detailed in the new book.

Meanwhile, he provided information to officials from the US Embassy in Moscow. While remaining a politically pro-American (and a "good liberal" in his words – his trip was partially inspired by JFK's legendary Ann Arbor speech inaugurating the Peace Corps, at which Papazian was present), Papazian easily connected on a human level to the citizens of the USSR.

An plane crash in Uzbekistan at the end of his trip formed the turning point of Papazian's life. "I reflect on that often," he states. The young Soviet assigned to guide him through Central Asia survived, as did Papazian, but with broken vertebrae. Most everyone else apparently perished in the crash. "It changed my life, because I nearly died, and then it took a while to recuperate." Coming face-to-face with mortality gave Papazian a new outlook on life, and strengthened him to face his goals head on.

After returning from Moscow, Papazian was offered a position as a history lecturer at the University of Michigan – Dearborn; he received his PhD from the Ann Arbor campus in 1966.

He had a genial and humorous teaching style, but also had high expectations for his students. "I'm educating each one of you to be Secretary of State," was one of his favorite sayings. According to Mary Papazian, her husband's goal was "Helping his students have aspirations and the necessary thought processes to work at the highest levels."

Dennis Papazian relates that he devised a course of study which included three weeks in Europe and the Soviet Union — making sure to include Armenia. "These were kids who had barely been out of Dearborn," he says.

## Community Leadership

At the same time, Papazian's involvement in the Armenian-American community increased through his relationship with Detroit industrialist and philanthropist Alex Manoogian, President of the AGBU from 1953-1989.

Having been active as a young man in the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America (ACYOA) on the local and national level, Dennis was mentored by Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan, Primate of the Eastern Diocese from 1945-1954. As a professional, Alex Manoogian became his second mentor in Diasporan life. "I worked with Alex Manoogian, who taught me about the Armenians; he was a great influence in my life," he recalled. Papazian was chairman of the Manoogian Cultural Fund for nearly a decade.

"Dennis was of that generation, the post-survivor generation," says Mary Papazian. "The community at that time was suffering from PTSD. The institutions that we now take for granted, in many ways, still needed to be built in what was a reestablishing of the [Armenian] people."

"We went through a whole process in the 20<sup>th</sup> century of building the institutions and the power of the Diaspora is critical to that," adds Dennis. "Alex Manoogian deserves a lot of credit for building Armenia."

Papazian also gives credit to his fellow academic, Prof. Richard Hovannisian of UCLA and later USC, who was also "very substantial for developing Armenian consciousness" in America, and apparently the feeling was mutual.

The fact that Alex Manoogian, fellow industrialist-philanthropist Edward Mardigian, and Dennis Papazian all came out of the Detroit community reinforced how important the community was, especially at that time.

Papazian helped to establish the Armenian Assembly of America as a non-profit advocacy group to lobby Washington for Armenian-American causes and interests.

At the time, representatives from all parties and groups in the community came together to present a united front. This was in 1971, only a few years after the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1915 Genocide.

"That's what the Assembly was trying to do, to create a new identity for Armenians in America where all segments of the community collaborated on mutual interests."

"It's a thread from the Assembly but even before that," Mary Papazian states, "finding ways to think of the nation as something bigger than the parts, and all have a role to play in its survival."

Dennis Papazian adds, "Not to advance each agenda but to advance the common agenda. Present the good parts that keep us together, not the things that keep us apart. We need to think beyond our immediate survival and our immediate interest."

Papazian explains how he got his start in lobbying,

through businessman and community leader Stephen Mugar. "When I went to Washington, Mugar took me to see Tip O'Neill. He [Mugar] says 'When he [Papazian] speaks, I speak.'" O'Neill asked Papazian what he wanted. "[I said,] 'I want recognition of the Armenian Genocide,' and he helped us achieve that in the House." That was in 1975.

Tip O'Neill also inspired the creation of the Assembly's long-standing internship program, which Papazian instituted.

Of his work with the Assembly, Papazian says "My legacy was trying to bring the whole community together and to introduce the community to the ways of Washington, which they didn't understand. You have to work together and then the United States will respond. If we go in separately, they won't respect us as much."

After returning to Michigan, Papazian, who had already served as associate dean of Academic Affairs at U-M Dearborn, was chosen as director of Graduate Studies. Then in 1985, thanks to a grant from the Knights of Vartan, he was able to establish the Armenian Research Center at the same university and acted as its executive director. The center is a unique depository, archive, and library of Armenian and Armenian-related materials that serves as a center of academic study at one of the most important commuter schools in the heart of Metro Detroit.

## Speaking on Behalf of Unity

One of Dennis Papazian's most memorable acts, as he tells it, was being asked to speak at an event organized by the Armenian Revolutionary Federation in 1988, on the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the independence of the First Republic of Armenia.

The speech, which took place at Lincoln Center in New York and was facilitated by Catholicos Karekin II of Cilicia through the Eastern Prelacy, is full of expressions of unity which were still rare at the time. Karekin II later was elected Catholicos Karekin I of All Armenians in 1994, but passed away in 1999.

In his speech, Papazian stressed that he did not come from a *Tashnag* (ARF) background or from their "side" of the community. But the history of Armenians and the future of Armenia was something which should unite them all, and all should work together toward the benefit of Armenia.

An interesting political aspect of the speech was that while Papazian recognized that the importance of the First Republic had often been ignored by non-*Tashnags*, he demanded that the ARF banner be placed on the stage along with the Tricolor flag of Armenia. Why? Because the tricolor was the flag of the Republic of Armenia, albeit defunct at the time, and belonged to all Armenians; in Papazian's mind, the ARF could not use the flag to represent their party only, and therefore he demanded the ARF also put their own banner on the stage of this meeting which was under their auspices. Catholicos Karekin agreed with the suggestion.

"The message to the ARF shows that Catholicos Karekin was a guy who understood these things, and it's a great tragedy that he died, because he could have done great things for the Armenians," he notes.

## Reflections on a Renaissance

Mary Papazian attributes her husband's success in his community-wide efforts to the fact that, "for most of us, there's kind of two parts, your American and your Armenian life. That's less true than it was decades ago. But Dennis, as well as Manoogian and Mardigian, didn't separate that. That's part of why they were so successful."

Dennis Papazian sums up the accomplishment of his generation as "Building the infrastructure of the community in the all the areas. In the political awareness area, scholarship, the Diocese, St. Nersess Seminary, NAASR, these are all institutions that go from being unseen to being seen."

As for the future? "My advice is to stick together; we are drifting apart again. The Assembly drifted apart from unification [when the ARF established their own advocacy group, the ANCA (Armenian National Committee of America)] It's not good that it's separate," Papazian states. He also voices the concern that, "I wonder if we are educating our young people to be patriotic... we have to pay attention to the education of the youth in addition to recreation."

Armenians have a lot of potential, Papazian adds. "Armenians are very talented and very high-achieving in education and elsewhere. We sometimes will have certain standards in our professional lives but we forget some of that when we deal with the Armenian world. If we actually harnessed all the energy and talent, and brought that to advancing Armenian interests, we would be unstoppable."





## COMMUNITY NEWS

**Dr. Mary Papazian: High Achievements, Forward Looking**

Mary Arshagouni Papazian grew up in a bit of a different atmosphere from Dennis. Born in California a generation later to a Greek-born Armenian father and a Los Angeles-born Armenian mother, who met as students at UCLA. “I grew up straddling both the Armenian and the American world,” she says. “I went to the public schools in my early years, but my parents were close to Prof. Richard Hovannisian. And I carried the candle in the ceremony to break ground at the Armenian Martyrs Monument in Montebello, Calif.”

She continues, “I came out of an Armenian-American background, but I became closer to the community when I attended Ferrahian (for high school), which was unusual in the 1970s.”

Papazian’s mother was a long-time English and history teacher at Holy Martyrs Ferrahian Armenian High School, in Encino, which is the oldest Armenian day school in the US. “I knew I wanted to study English at UCLA, but the question was what am I going into when I graduated? I narrowed it down to law and grad school.”

Inspired by John Milton’s 17<sup>th</sup>-century epic poem *Paradise Lost* and the poet John Donne, she ended up choosing grad school. Mary Papazian is nothing if not enthusiastic about literature, the humanities and their significance in today’s world.

In relation to Milton, “It wasn’t the theology [that captured my interest] ... He was a very innovative thinker. The language is creative, passionate, and powerful. It imagines what’s possible and envisions what could happen in the future...”

“The poetry, vision, language and insights of writers such as Donne and Milton have motivated me through-



Dr. Mary Papazian with Dr. Blenda Wilson, former Chancellor of U-M Dearborn and subsequently President of Cal State Northridge

out my career, especially as I transitioned from teaching to administration. For me, it’s about creating a space for learning, building the future, and being open to visionary ways of thinking to achieve. What tools do we have to inspire others to bring about positive change? How can we understand human nature, how psychology works, and recognize how to motivate people for good? The key is to be able to keep your values.”

Donne and Milton, in Papazian’s view, “explored humankind’s place in the world on an individual scale but also a broader scale. Thinking through values, experience, psychology. And how language has an impact on that. How it all comes together.”

After finishing her dissertation, Papazian relocated to Michigan where she taught at Oakland University in Rochester, a northern suburb of Detroit. “One of the attractions there was that there was a robust Armenian community. That was always an important part of my life. Being able to follow professional goals, [having the Armenian community] gives you a support system and makes you feel at home wherever you are. It makes you feel a part of something, and that’s very empowering.”

It was in Michigan that Mary and Dennis met and married in 1991, and where their two daughters, Ani and Marie, were born. After a decade as a faculty member, she moved, like her husband, into the administrative side of academia, which wasn’t necessarily as easy for a woman then or now.

“I was fortunate that early in my career I was in a department that had senior women leaders. They helped me develop my scholarship, achieve tenure and promotion, and so on. But as I gained experienced and more responsible roles in higher ed administration, I became aware of how women at times were treated differently. Women are often brought in when there are challenges and not always recognized for their accomplishments, large and small. For

example, if a woman is confident and strong, that’s sometimes seen as intimidating.”

Papazian has stressed her mission to pay it forward.

“I’ve worked to develop women leaders. [One thing I tell them is,] you can learn things when you’re in a role - you don’t need to know it all before you get there,” she stresses.

After serving as associate dean of Oakland University’s College of Arts and Sciences from 1999 to 2004, the Papazians relocated to New Jersey, where Mary served as Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Montclair State University from 2004 to 2007. Following that, from 2007 to 2011, she was provost and senior vice president for Academic Affairs at Lehman College, CUNY (City University of New York).

In 2011, Papazian was named president of Southern Connecticut State University, and in 2016, she was chosen as president of San Jose State University, a position she held until December 2021. These achievements made her the first Armenian-American female president of a university. During her decade-long tenure as president of these two public institutions, she brought both stability and a transformative vision for the future that continues to guide both institutions today. She was especially effective in creating needed structural changes and hiring diverse, accomplished faculty and staff members so critical to the success of these institutions in fulfilling their mission.

Mary Papazian resigned from the presidency of San Jose State University at the end of 2021 following a controversy involving a 2010 investigation of sexual harassment allegations against an athletic trainer at the school. Papazian announced she was resigning because she felt it would best for the school as a whole. It is to be noted that the school created a video to honor Papazian’s service and accomplishments. In it she offered an apology to the affected former student-athletes on behalf of the university, while reinforcing her commitment to moving forward in creating sustainable change as well as helping the university move forward in all areas.

**Liberal Arts in a Tech-Based World?**

In recent years, Mary Papazian has taken to studying and exploring the future of the humanities and the liberal arts degrees in our changing world. For example, is a liberal arts degree or an academic career even worth it in our digital age?

“I think young people should pursue their passion,” she says, “but go into it with your eyes open. It is difficult to get a job as a full-time tenured faculty member, but it is very rewarding to have such an impact on students and change the course of things.”

Papazian thinks the key is “to create looser bridges between academia, higher ed, and the world of work and community engagement. I use the example of the liberal arts and humanities, and these fields aren’t seen as practical. The truth of the matter is the kind of foundational thinking and experiences that you gain enable people to see and connect the dots between things.”

What about the increase in focus on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) ? “Yes, we need science and technology, but you can’t have innovation without creativity and you can’t have creativity without the breadth that comes from a background in the liberal arts. This is where innovation matters in learning. Where is the human element in all of this? How is it used in a human society? Who brings those qualities to the table – liberal arts majors and visual arts majors, which brings an ability to see yourself in others’ shoes and that gives you the ability to see from multiple perspectives, and so much innovation comes from the ability to make unusual connections.”

Students do need to be adaptable to the technology-based economy in which we live. She advocates requiring more science-based classes for humanities majors, but especially tech-related classes, which have practical applications for the working world: “I think liberal arts students also want to be developing hard skills along the way, like digital skills. They should have some experience in technical areas. If you’re able to think different and also communicate, you’re in a position to be successful if you also have the technical skills. If you only have the technical skills you may be stuck in a certain job.”

She even mentions that Google did a study of the performance of their teams (“Project Aristotle”), finding that non-engineers were higher performing because they were better listeners. “One of the skills we want people to learn is collaboration. None of us are going to be strong in all areas.”

Papazian believes that a similar approach is beneficial for Armenia’s future. “If you think about what’s going on in Armenia today, one of the areas of real growth in the economy is the innovation economy. When you’re a global nation you’re living in different environments; you have the depth of history and the strength in arts and sciences.

When those two things come together, it creates the possibility for innovation.”

In relation to Armenia, she continues, “A lot of the energy is around innovation. The particular qualities of experience that Armenians have had over the decades, and the willingness to learn [will serve the country well]. I’m on the advisory board for FAST [Foundation for Armenian Science and Technology], and I’m excited about the innovative ecosystem that is emerging and that will allow Armenia to compete in the digital society.”

**Partners in Problem Solving**

The Papazians both agree that their marriage has been an asset to their respective careers. “It’s worked out wonderfully,” says Dennis. “She adds to my knowledge, we bring different experiences to problems and we can solve them, and have solved them together. I really enjoy Mary’s knowledge and I think she enjoys mine. We plan, we accomplish and it’s great.”

Mary in turn adds: “I think the key is having a shared view of the world, having a shared set of values. I had the benefit that Dennis had already navigated so many of the challenges that I was going to see — that was extraordinarily helpful. We were socializing and talking with his colleagues and friends who were tremendously experienced, such as Blenda Wilson, who was the chancellor at U. of Michigan, Dearborn, when Dennis established the Armenian Research Center. Blenda was an extraordinary leader, full of grace, and politically smart. I learned so much from her. [Cal State Northridge, where Wilson was president] was destroyed by an earthquake, and she rebuilt it. Her priority was to make sure the students graduated on time. The last building she rebuilt was the administration building. That has always stayed with me.”

The Papazians also stressed their shared Armenian roots and noted that they were married in 1991, the year Armenia got its independence. They also expressed their deep pride in their daughters. Their oldest, Ani, recently graduated from Tufts Medical School and is now in a pediatric residency program at University of California, San Diego. Their younger daughter, Marie, is a recent graduate of Barnard College/Columbia University, in English and creative writing. She is just beginning her career as a writer.

What was the period of Armenia gaining independence like for two people whose lives were so intertwined with the Armenian-American community and Diaspora at large at the highest levels?

“It was hard to imagine,” says Mary. “For the longest time it seems an impossible dream. The possibility of a free and independent Armenia was always abstract. You never knew if it really was going to happen. But suddenly the dream becomes realized. All of a sudden the whole momentum shifted. Armenia in those early years was such a dark and difficult place. How do you build a country, and what’s our role in the Diaspora? And how does the newly emerging Republic of Armenia relate to the lost provinces of Western Armenia from where our ancestors came? We are at a point in Armenian history when reclaiming Western Armenia is not realistic. But we do have a chance to build a thriving country and that has to be our commitment. And while it may not be a country that includes our lost Western Armenian provinces, it is important that it be a country that understands and embraces the culture of both Eastern and Western Armenia.”

She continues, “That’s why I am involved in the newly created Armenian Society of Fellows and serve on the Board of Trustees of Haigazian University, an important Diasporan institution in Beirut, Lebanon. Working with Armenia itself, as well as with the global Armenian Diaspora so that we all move in the same direction. It’s partnership - we need each other.”

Mary Papazian looks forward to continue working with Armenia through the Armenian Society of Fellows, to help the country develop strong educational partnerships with institutions in the West.

“For those of us who are the children or grandchildren of survivors, our concept of going to Armenia before independence was something akin to going back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Suddenly going to Armenia is not going back 100 years. It’s no longer going back in time; it’s going to something that’s just as much a part of today’s world, a place where we can imagine the future.”

As for the cultural differences and distance that still exist between Eastern and Western Armenians? “Having an independent Armenia, we have to build a future together,” she says, despite our differences. “As generations interact with each other more, we’ll see a coming together of Armenians in both the homeland and the Diaspora.”

*From My Life and Thought: Reflections on an Armenian-American Journey* is available at NAASR and Abril Bookstore.



## COMMUNITY NEWS

# A Visit to Armenia with the Armenia Tree Project

TREES, from page 6

fruit trees. The orchard at this monastery overflows each summer with so many native fruits that they give them away to the clergy, patrons of the church, and local school children, and still have too many left over!

The next day we headed south to see ATP's newest nursery — the Betty Howell Nursery in Chiva village. This is ATP's newest operation and serves primarily as a forestry nursery. We joined for the dedication of this nursery, and the ATP staff laid out the most beautiful table of treats for us



Left to Right: Christina Kew, Alex Kew, Julia Kew, at the Mirak Reforestation Nursery in Margahovit

to enjoy while some of the local environmental education students presented. We then all got a chance to plant a tree, and I jumped at the opportunity. My mom and sister and I planted a small fir tree together, and it was so fun to talk shop with the workers and see firsthand how the planting is done

in Armenia.

My favorite spot on the trip by far was our visit to the Mirak Nursery. My family has been involved with ATP for a while, and a number of years ago we had the opportunity to name one of the nurseries. We dedicated this site to my great-grandparents who were forced to flee the country during the 1915 Armenian Genocide. They were never able to return to their homeland, so to be able to honor their legacy in this way felt incredibly emotional to me.

This site is able to produce hundreds of thousands of trees every year, all for reforestation efforts across dry and desertifying land. To not only have the opportunity to return and walk upon the land from which my family came, but to know that we are able to bring new life back through reforestation, brings me such immense joy and hope for



Karin Nursery Greenhouse – growing seedlings for reforestation



Alex Kew at the Karin Nursery

this land and its people.

After visiting the Mirak nursery, we were invited to ATP's environmental education center in Margahovit Village, the Ohanian Center, for the planting of the 7 millionth tree! Everyone gathered in between downpours of rain to ceremonially plant a blue spruce in celebration. There were a few more trees laid out to plant as well and I got to flex my planting skills with my family.

Over the course of the rest of the trip we got to experience even more culture, food, and cool tree stuff. We visited ATP's fourth and final nursery, the Khachpar nursery — another site growing trees for both forestry and community planting. And I would be remiss if I didn't mention all the absolutely delicious food and stunning historical cultural sites we got to experience. All in all,

*continued on next page*

## New Altar Servers Attend Deacons' Training Program

ARMONK, N.Y. — From July 24 to 31, the Deacons' Training Program welcomed 19 young men from the Eastern and Western Dioceses, including two young men, Arin Parsanian and Zareh Mirzayan, who are returning to St. Nersess to commence their fall semester studies in preparation for ordination to the holy priesthood.

This year, many of the participants were first-time attendees of St. Nersess Summer Conferences, who gathered to learn the music and rituals of the Badarak and other services of the Armenian Church as well as their meaning and importance.

The program was led by co-directors, Dn. Alex Calikyan, a 2019 seminary graduate, and Dn. Ari Terjanian, and was guided by Fr. Mardiros Chevian, dean. Daily classes were led by Fr. Tateos Abdalian and the Fr. Nigoghos Aznavourian, a 2020 seminary graduate, as well as Dn. Alex and Dn. Ari. Dn. Anthony Maldonado and Dn. Garen Megrdichian assisted as counselors during the week.

Armenian language classes focused on learning to read the Armenian alphabet, fluency in chanting in Armenian, and basics of grammar in *Krapar* (classical Armenian) for the advanced students. In the Deacons' Training classes, students reviewed the chants, hymns, and liturgics of the *Badarak*, as well as obtained invaluable theological explanation behind our sacred rituals. The advanced Deacons' Training class, led

by Dn. Alex, reviewed the sacrament of Holy Matrimony. Fr. Nigoghos also led a *nshkhar*-making class. Students participated in daily Bible Studies, which centered around Bishop Daniel Findik-

ounjian presenting on repentance; and Dn. Alex giving a moving presentation on St. Stephen and the diaconate.

On Thursday afternoon, a special service was held to bless two new icons



Participants learning rituals of the Badarak

yan's recent book release, *Building up the Body of Christ*.

Evening lectures were also offered, including guest speaker Bishop Daniel Findikyan, seminary professor of Liturgical Studies and former primate of the Eastern Diocese, previewing his soon to be released translation of *The Book of Hours* (*Zhamakirk*); Dn. Arthur Sab-

in the St. Hagop Chapel, St. Nersess the Graceful and St. Nersess the Great. Officiating at the ceremony was Bishop Daniel, assisted by the participants. The icons were anonymously donated in commemoration of the Fr. Karekin Kasparian, former dean of St. Nersess and Fr. Mardiros Chevian, current dean of the seminary.

On Friday, the participants traveled to Point Pleasant Beach in NJ, where the group enjoyed time on the beach and the boardwalk.

On Sunday morning, Badarak was celebrated in the chapel, with Fr. Tateos serving as the guest celebrant, and assisted by the participants of the program at the altar and in the choir. Dn. Alex delivered the sermon.

"Glory to God for once again blessing us with the opportunity to inspire a new group of future deacons and servants of our church," shared Dn. Ari Terjanian. "We exhort all the participants to carry forward Fr. Tateos' closing message, 'Listen, Learn, Go, Do!' May all continue their studies and service to our Lord back home at their parishes and henceforth in their earthly ministries."

The participants enjoyed wonderful meals throughout the week, prepared by Wilma Petrossian, Manager of Food Services. Dn. Levon Altiparmakian was invaluable in his support behind the scenes to ensure the conference ran smoothly.

"Thanks to Der Mardiros and the entire staff of St. Nersess Seminary, the instructors and guest speakers, our dedicated participants, and especially Dn. Ari, it brings me great joy and encouragement to see that through the Deacons' Training Program, we carry on the vision of our church, namely Building Up the Body of Christ," exclaimed Dn. Alex Calikyan.



COMMUNITY NEWS



Right to Left: Alex Kew with Executive Director of ATP Jeanmarie Papelian

from previous page

this trip was a life changing experience — and I am honored to be able to see, firsthand,

the immense impact of ATP’s work here in my homeland.

(Alex Kew wrote this story originally for Casey Trees, an organization in Washington, DC, for which she serves as a communications officer.)

Annovis Bio Appoints Henry Hagopian III as Chief Financial Officer

BERWYN, Penn. — Annovis Bio, Inc. ( NYSE: ANVS) (“Annovis” or the “Company”), a clinical-stage drug platform company addressing neurodegenerative diseases, announced the appointment of Henry Hagopian III as Chief Financial Officer, effective immediately. Mr. Hagopian comes to Annovis with 30 years of finance and accounting experience, including 15 years of increasing responsibility at Organogenesis, a leading publicly-traded regenerative medicine company. The company has also announced that Jeff McGroarty has stepped away from his role as Chief Financial Officer to pursue other interests.

“The company has made substantial progress and is now reaching an exciting inflection point given the advancement of buntanetap into Phase 3 clinical trials,” said Maria L. Maccicchini, PhD, founder, president, and CEO of Annovis. “Looking at the future of Annovis, Henry is an excellent addition to our team and will help take the company to the next level given his extensive experience in finance, accounting and strategic execution. I look forward to working closely with him to advance our mission of revolutionizing the treatment of neurodegenerative diseases.”

“This is an exciting moment to be joining Annovis as it continues its mis-



Henry Hagopian III

sion to improve the lives of those suffering from neurodegenerative disorders,” said Hagopian. “I’m excited to join this dynamic and talented team and look forward to working with the management to advance the pipeline and contribute to its success. I share the management team’s passion to advance buntanetap, having experienced the devastating effects of neurodegenerative disease among my own close friends and family.”

Hagopian joins Annovis from Organogenesis, a Nasdaq-listed leading regenerative medicine company, where he spent 15 years of increasing responsibility, most recently as Senior Vice President, Finance and Treasurer. In 2020, he was the company’s interim Chief Financial Officer. Mr. Hagopian has an extensive background in corporate accounting, financial reporting, treasury operations, financial planning & analysis (FP&A), and investor relations.

Hagopian received both an MBA and an MS in Accounting from the Carroll Graduate School of Management at Boston College and a BS in economics and finance, *Summa cum laude*, from the Silberman College of Business at Farleigh Dickinson University.

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# TCA Family Night Showcases Duduk Player Chilingirian And TCA Youth Band at Beshgeturian Center

ALTADENA, Calif. — On August 26 the Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) Beshgeturian Center Social Committee or-

ganized a family night at the TCA Center in Altadena. Friends and members gathered to enjoy an evening with a performance by

the Lebanese-Armenian duduk artist Raffi Chilingirian, who was visiting Los Angeles, and by the newly formed TCA Youth Band.

Chairman of the Social Committee Jirair Frounjan welcomed all. The TCA West Coast Executive Secretary Mayda Kuredjian introduced the guest artist and the members of the Band.

Pianist Marie Kayayan accompanied duduk master Raffi, whose selection of sentimental melodies from Gomidas, Khatchadour Avedissian and other famous artists took the audience to our homeland Armenia.

The guests enjoyed a lavish buffet and joined the TCA Youth Band to sing Armenian songs.

Many guests from different age groups expressed their desire to join committees that the Tekeyan Cultural Association had in the Beshgeturian Center. Enthusiastic guests Hosen Melkonian, Dr. Levon Boyadjian and others sang solo and in groups. The special duet of *Dzagats Paleni* with Chilingirian and Haig Kaymakamian on flute was moving and very impressive, while the songs presented by Khatchig Nahabedian were as beautiful as usual.



Raffi Chilingirian

giran and Haig Kaymakamian on flute was moving and very impressive, while the songs presented by Khatchig Nahabedian were as beautiful as usual.

Inspired by the joyous atmosphere and the committee's efforts, the following guests made donations in order to encourage young talent: Vartan Nazerian and Bertha Baghjian donated \$1,000, Bedros Anserian \$300, and Aya Stella Morgan \$200.



TCA Youth Band member Haig Kaimakamian, at left, with Raffi Chilingirian, and Marie Kayayan on piano

## OBITUARY

### Dickran Gregory Haroian

#### Army Veteran, Descendent of Genocide Survivors

WALTHAM, Mass. — Dickran Gregory Haroian of Waltham (formerly a resident of Belmont for 50 years), passed away on September 2, 2022 at Meadow Green Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Waltham. Son of the late Arakel and Daleta (Ferahian) Haroian, brother of the late Henry Haroian and Haigaz (Huck) Haroian, beloved husband of the late Melina Marilyn (Misakian) Haroian of 66 years, devoted father of Dr. Alan Haroian and his wife, Kristin, of Londonderry, NH and John Haroian and his wife, Debra, of North Andover, grandfather of Carl and Edward Haroian, both of Boston. Also survived by several nieces and nephews.

Following graduation from Watertown High School, Dickran served in the U.S. Army and was deployed in Schwetzingen, Germany for two years. Once he completed his military service, he married his childhood sweetheart in October 1955. He then went on to work for the U.S. Postal Service for 31 years, starting as a letter carrier and retiring as a supervisor at the South Postal Annex in Boston.

Following his retirement from the U.S. Postal Service, he was employed by the Cambridge Trust Company in Harvard Square where he managed their mailroom for fifteen years.

Dickran, who was the youngest son



born to survivors of the Armenian Genocide, was very proud of his ancestry and heritage. He was a lifelong parishioner of St. Stephen's Armenian Apostolic Church. Dickran was a totally selfless individual. His happiest days were those spent doing good deeds for others. He was a friend to all who knew him.

A funeral service was held on Thursday, September 8, at St. Stephen's Armenian Apostolic Church in Watertown followed by interment at the Highland Meadow Cemetery in Belmont.



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

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# Arts & Culture

## Dr. Vartan Matiossian And Artsvi Bakhchinyan To Discuss *A Woman Of the World: Armen Ohanian*

FRESNO — Dr. Vartan Matiossian and Artsvi Bakhchinyan will present a lecture on their new book, *A Woman of the World: Armen Ohanian, the 'Dancer of Shamakha'*, in a virtual presentation on Saturday, September 17, at 10 a.m. (Pacific time)/1 p.m. (Eastern time)/9 p.m. (Yerevan time). The presentation is part of the Fall 2022 Lecture Series of the Armenian Studies Program.

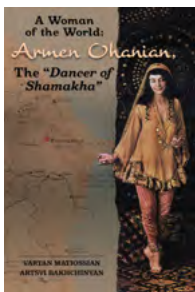
*A Woman of the World* is Volume 16 in the Armenian Series of The Press at California State University, Fresno.

*A Woman of the World* is a fascinating chronicle of the life of dancer and author Armen Ohanian (1888-1976). She was a well-educated woman born in an Armenian family in the Caucasus and fluent in half a dozen languages — truly a “Woman of the World” who lived through times and places as diverse as the Russian Caucasus, the Iranian Constitutional Revolution, the Belle Époque in France, the Roaring 1920s in the United States, the early Soviet Union, and ended her days in Mexico after living an eventful life cloaked in mystery. She bridged multiple cultures as an actress in the Caucasus, a theater director in Persia, a writer in France, and a translator in Mexico. Above all she was an acclaimed dancer from Asia to Africa, from Europe to America with the monikers “dancer of Shamakha” and “the Persian dancer.” Mounting on a wave of Near and Far Eastern dances sweeping the West, she belonged to a category of dancers that conceived of choreographies nurtured by their culture of origin.

Matiossian is a historian and literary scholar with a broad range of interests in Armenian classical and modern culture. He has published extensively in Armenian, Spanish, and English, including eight books, almost two dozen translations, and several edited volumes. He is currently the Executive Director of the Eastern Prelacy of the Armenian Church in New York.

Bakhchinyan is a scholar specializing in the history of the Armenian Diaspora and culture, as well as a writer and translator. He is the author, editor, and translator of some twenty books, and a frequent contributor to journals and periodicals in Armenian, Russian, and English. He is a regular correspondent for the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*. He is a researcher at the Institute of History of the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia (Yerevan).

Zoom Registration Link: <https://bit.ly/armenianstudiesohanian>. For information about upcoming Armenian Studies Program presentations, follow @ArmenianStudiesFresnoState on Facebook or at the Program website, <https://fresnostate.edu/armenian-studies>.



A master class in Armenia in summer 2021

## Akhtamar Quartet on Solidarity Tour in Lebanon

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach  
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

In June 2021, the Brussels-based Akhtamar Quartet conducted a three-week concert tour in Armenia, performing 20 concerts free of charge for varied audiences, with the aim of bringing hope, optimism and moral support through the power of music. Armenians were still suffering from the effects of the November 2020 war, and the Covid pandemic. The tour was a resounding success, and as a result, they have decided to repeat the experience, this time in Lebanon.

In 2020 that country and its people were shattered by the Beirut port explosion, which further aggravated an already dramatic economic crisis, compounded by the pandemic; a deteriorating financial situation, rising unemployment and massive unemployment have created a situation producing “the worst kind of spiritual distress.” In presenting their solidarity project, the Akhtamar Quartet writes that “when both actions and words cease to function, solidarity between people remains.” And it is the aim of the “Music 4 Lebanon” project to remoralize vast layers of the population, by bringing them the healing power of music.

As they did in Armenia last year, they plan to offer 15 concerts throughout the country, again for free. They begin in Beirut on September 6, and will perform in Baakline, Mashghara, Joub Jannine, Hammana, Baalbek, Hermel, Mish Mish, Bqerzala, Halba, Tripoli, and Bsharre, before returning to Beirut on September 19. Again, they have scheduled performances for people who are particularly vulnerable under the current crisis conditions, patients in hospitals, children in schools, residents of nursing homes and refugee camps. In Yerevan, they had presented a master class with students at the Komitas Conservatory and in Beirut they will organize an encounter to share music and experiences with students at the National Conservatory. Again, for children, they will present their musical/theatrical show, “The Dream Makers,” which had energized and delighted youngsters in Gyumri.



Members of the Akhtamar Quartet

The name of the quartet was inspired by the *Armenian Miniatures* by Komitas/Azlamazyan, a central component of the ensemble’s performances since its inception. Based in Brussels, where it was founded in 2014, the quartet features violinists Coline Alécian and Jennifer Pio, violist Ondine Stasyk, and cellist Cyril Sinon. The ensemble was one of six chosen for the Tremplin Jeunes Quatuor of the Paris Philharmonic in 2016, and in that same year, it received the second prize at the Festival Musiq3 of Belgium. Last year they came in third at the International Johannes Brahms Competition. They have performed widely throughout Europe, as well as Armenia, and in 2020 released their first CD, with *Komitas Miniatures* and “an Armenian quartet” composed for them by Eugénie Alécian, a pianist and composer from Paris whose niece is a violinist with the quartet.

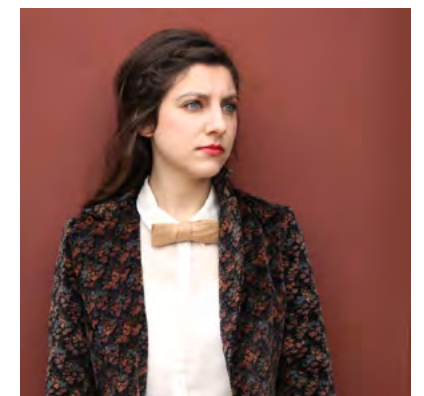
## Two Questing Young Minds:

Tenny Arlen and  
Sharisse Zeroonian

By Arpi Sarafian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

Published posthumously by the ARI Literature Foundation (Yerevan, 2021), with the support of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, the poems in *To Say with Passion: Why Am I Here?* show a depth of perception unusual for a 20-year-old. In these poems, Tenny Arlen mourns the loss of a child’s endless questioning, his endless “Whys.” Indeed, the persona in the poems trusts that if grown-ups did not, with their “I know”s, destroy a child’s sense of wonder and his curiosity, and instead “asked more questions, we would probably have no wars.” When man wants to be the center of it all there can be no holi-



Tenny Arlen

ness left in nature. “We set on fire, we saw, we empty,” writes Arlen. She, in fact, wonders if “climbing the silver staircase to the moon” would help answer life’s “inexplicable questions.” Even if life were to grant that possibility, however, it is a possibility Tenny Arlen was denied. The fledgling poet lost her life in a car crash a few months before starting the doctoral program in comparative literature she was admitted into at the University of Michigan—Ann Arbor.

Arlen’s questions posit a world full of fear, devastation, sadness, and especially loneliness. “I was born dead/voiceless,” confides the persona. Nonetheless, there is no outrage, no anger, in Arlen’s attempts to give expression to the devastation. No fear of the darkness either. Perhaps a degree of sadness that she is, “After all the promises and the waiting, alone in a an empty room,” that the “You and I” has changed to “I and I.” The pain is always confronted with courage and with awe. The questing artist is determined to create. “Words are within me,/they follow me,/they sing to me,/they talk to me,/I am not alone,” she insists.

While words do offer the persona some respite from the loneliness and the “vast silence,” “they can offer no solace.” Her older sister tells her of fairies that would whisper to her from under her pillows, but the younger sister never heard them “behind the trees and in the spiders’ cobwebs:” “I never saw them, not even one.” “Fairies are an illusion,” writes Arlen in “Memoirs,” a poem in the collection. We are ultimately alone.” “We die in silence.”

see MINDS, page 16





## ARTS &amp; CULTURE

# Maral Yessayan's Dance Journey

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN / TEMPE, Az. — Maral Yessayan, PhD, has an impressive academic background: She was a visiting professor at Dartmouth College; an Andrew Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow at Dartmouth (2012-14) and a fellow at the Gender Research Institute at Dartmouth (2013-15). She also received a Mellon Dance Studies Fellowship at Brown University in 2013.

Her research interests center on dance, corporeality, and embodiment and draw on performance theory and ethnographic methods applied to cultural, social, and nation-branding practices. She has written *Linger-ing in Girlhood: Dancing with Patriarchy in Jordan* (2015), *Monarchical Nation branding: Queen Rania's Performance of Modernity* on YouTube (2015), and "Performing Jordan in an Era of Transformative Globalization: The Emergence of Alternative Labor Markets and the New Working Female Dancer" (PhD diss., University of California, Riverside).

Yessayan was born in Jordan. From the age of seven she studied ballet, modern dance, jazz, improvisational techniques, Jordanian national and Latin American dances (salsa, meringue). At Amman Performing Arts Center she studied under choreographer Rania Kamhawi. In 1999 she graduated from the program of the Royal Academy of Dance, after which she studied Russian ballet with Alexander Petukhov, a one-time artist of the Bolshoi Theater in Moscow, and French ballet with François Perrin. In 2003, she graduated from the University of Jordan, majoring in economics. She led workshops for the Jordanian national state dance ensemble and performed as a solo dancer and actress in the Syrian "Enana" dance group, in the performing arts centers of the "Nur al-Hussein" foundation. She led the dance education program at "Haya" cultural centers and was commissioned to choreograph the opening for the Children's Dance Festival led under the auspices of Jordan's Ministry of Culture. She actively participated in Jordanian and international dance festivals, performed in Mexico, Turkey, Syria, and USA.



Moving to the USA, Yessayan completed her master's degree in Dance in 2005. She studied American ballet with Erica Helm at Shenandoah University (Virginia), and modern and contemporary dance techniques under Ting-Yu Chen and Keith Thompson to name just a couple, and movement improvisational methods under Susan Rose and Wendy Rogers. In 2007, Maral Yessayan starred in Rosie Trump's short dance film that was featured in the Dance Camera West Film Festival, Los Angeles CA, 2008. She also started as a lead dancer in Now. Here. This. with the Casebolt and Smith Dance Company 2008.

Her interests grew to explore dance beyond "just" a medium of entertainment, so she pursued and competed her PhD at University of California, Riverside in Critical Performance Studies (2010). Her research took a comprehensive approach to showcase how dance does not exist apart from ideologies and identity markers that govern cultural patterning and social structure. She received the mentorship of scholars such as Priya Srinivasan and Lila Abu-Lughod (Columbia University). Her dissertation focused on the politics of Jordanian national dance with particular attention to the female body and the lives of dancing women navigating Islamic and tribal prospective views about dance. Her work sheds light on the much ignored experiences of dancing women's lives in the Arab and Muslim world.

After her PhD, Yessayan was offered a fellowship by the Andrew Mellon foundation to further her research and artis-

tic interests through a post-doctorate degree. Because of her interdisciplinary work, Yessayan became the pivot between the Women's and Gender Studies, Theater, and Middle East Studies departments at Dartmouth. Her academic and artistic accomplishments led her to be recognized by a dozen scholarships, awards, and invitations to speak and lead workshops at universities, conventions, and conferences both nationally and internationally.

After many years of email communication, we met last August in Yerevan, after which this conversation was born through email.

**Maral, you seemed to have studied and practiced all types of dances, from classical to modern and folk. What have you learned from each of them?**

Our bodies are wondrous in what they can do. When we are conscious of our body, we have two choices: we either focus on its limitations or its potential. I always chose to focus on what my body can do, instead of what it cannot do. At a young age, I explored moving in different ways, styles, and genres and pushed the boundaries of what my body can do. I fell in love! Ballet for its pristine form. Modern dance for its abstract expression. Jordanian dance for its raw earthiness. Salsa for its sensuality. Experimental movement for its simplicity. I discovered that each dance form is unique above all the others. So, I would say my journey with different dances has been driven by

my own curiosity to move my body to its full potential. It's an unfolding process. I've also been blessed to have learned under the best teachers. For that, I am grateful.

**You have studied the dances of Jordan for your undergraduate thesis and your doctoral dissertation at the University of California, analyzing the Jordanian version of the dabke (dabqah) dance. Was Jordanian dance studied well enough before you?**

It was quite the challenge to find scholastic

writing on the Jordanian dabkah as a dance form. At the time, I was able to find ethnomusicological material on the musical traditions of Jordanian dances but the existing material on the dance itself was small, shallow and sparse. I realized that in order to get a full grasp on Jordanian dances, my research had to be both ethnographic and "auto-ethnographic" in method. So I travelled to villages to see the dances in their rural form but also drew on my own knowledge of the dance in its staged form. I interviewed key personalities, government officials, Islamic clergy, cultural guardians, elders, choreographers and dance practitioners. Jordan's Minister of Culture Jeryes Samawi (God rest his Soul in Peace), endorsed my research, furnished me with new contacts, and facilitated the process of data collection from national archives. Without all these people, my thesis and dissertation would not have been possible. To them I am always indebted.

**Dabke is thought to have its origins in ancient Phoenician dances. The Armenians in Lebanon also have a version of dabke that is sometimes performed in Armenia.**

Dabkah (Dabkeh, Dabke etc) is traditionally associated with the practices of the folk or peasant communities residing in the region historically known as Greater Syria, which today includes Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, the Palestinian occupied territories, and Israel. It is not surprising that Lebanese Armenians have adopted the form and brought it to Armenia. The adoption of dances and their circulation globally is not new or unique to this case. Historically, dances have been adopted from one practicing community to another. In the process of a dance's transmission, its meanings also change. So for Lebanese Armenians dabkah takes a whole new meaning. Through movement, Lebanese Armenians nostalgically celebrate their past and connection to Lebanon, the land they left behind, and to have a sense of community on new soil in Armenia. At the same time, they demarcate their difference from other Armenian settling communities as well as local Armenians. At once Dabkah becomes a way for Lebanese Armenians in Armenia to mark their belonging and separation.

**In your dance performance "Here and There" you examine intercultural dialogue through improvisational art. How is this dialogue possible?**

"Here and There" is an attempt to East-West fusion approaches to dancing making. Some scholars would call this "hybridity," others would call it "fusion art." Despite the nomenclature, the idea is to mix things together to create something new. So my goal in creating this work was to bring together different forms of movement that have different histories and geographically different origins and meanings and trace them through my body. Sometimes, I moved between different dance genres

distinctively but mostly my interest was to blur the lines between the forms. The intent was to showcase how our bodies are multilingual, multicultural, and multifunctional, in an increasingly demanding and interconnected globalized world where at once we can be "here" and "there."

**You created your special choreographic tribute to the memory of the victims and survivors of the Armenian Genocide.**

My performance "Hearing the Dead" is a tribute to and commemoration of the countless victims and survivors of the genocide. I created this piece while residing in Los Angeles in 2007 to raise awareness about the Armenian Genocide. It's a multi-media performance that combines movement, speech, and the screen. The piece explores the connection between corporeal memory and oral history and shines light on the suffering of the 'remembering' body. One of the things I wanted to accomplish through this piece is the often unspoken and understudied effects the Armenian genocide inflicted on its survivors. Grief, PTSD, anxiety and depression are all expressed and embodied forms of survival lived out and performed through this piece.

**Among Middle East Armenian communities, the Jordanian one seems less known. How was community life in Jordan and how it is now?**

Growing up in the 1980s, most Armenians in Jordan were centered in the old part of the city of Amman. The Armenian community was vibrant and alive. The Armenian community's activities and social life revolved around the Armenian Orthodox Church, The Yuzbashian Gulbenkian Armenian Orthodox School, and the two Armenian Party clubs (Tashnag and Ramgavar) — all of which were all adjacent to one another on a hillside street in Ashrafiyyeh. In the 1990s, Silva Hairabedian was advocating for Armenian drama and the arts. She directed, produced, and wrote a beautiful play in which I starred. By the 2010s, the compounding effect of students studying abroad and the exceeding number of families leaving Jordan thinned out the Armenian community in Jordan. The small number of students and low funding with the added stress of the pandemic resulted in the unfortunate shut down of the one and only Armenian school in 2020.

**How did your family end up in Jordan?**

My grandfather Iskandar was 3 years old in 1915 with a twin brother. His family lived in Dortyol, a city in southern Turkey today. When the deportation plan of Ottoman Armenians was set into motion, they were forcefully abducted from their home, deported into the wilderness and driven further south on a march to face an almost certain death. The men were separated from the women and children on these death marches — with the men leading at the front and the women and children at the back. Weeks of walking went by with no water, no food, just marching south across the Syrian desert.

My great grandmother, Serpouhi, had an eight-month old infant, three-year old twins in her arms, a six and an eight-year-old daughter and son between her skirts. She was hungry, thirsty, and could no longer carry the weight of her three youngest children. She had to make a choice. In agony and tears, and arguably the hardest decision of her life, she placed one of the twins under a shaded rock and left him behind. It was not my grandfather. Their story unfolds unexpectedly. My great-grandfather Tatios was a smart man who had just lost all his fortune — except one. He carried a cane made out of carved wood for support. The cane was not just any cane. It was filled with gold coins. When my great-grandfather Tatios heard what Serpouhi had done, he gave up all his coins to an Ottoman soldier in exchange for his horse and rode four hours up north to find the child. Call it a miracle, Misag was untouched and still alive. The twin brothers were united and the family survived its way to Jordan where Bedouins provided them safety, shelter and protection.

**A touching story, indeed! Maral, now you live in Arizona. Are there any Middle Eastern or Armenian activities?**

Unlike cities like Glendale, which holds the greatest concentration of Armenians who make up a demographic majority of the city, the Armenian community in Arizona is relatively small and spread out. There is the St. Apkar Armenian Apostolic Church where we carried out my daughter's dedication service. The church is the main institution that serves families with Armenian heritage to preserve the language, culture and traditions. I see much potential for growth and togetherness for the Armenian community in post-pandemic Arizona.

Here in Arizona, my priority has been my family. I've been raising my daughter who attends a ballet school and has much of myself in her. I exercise and practice Yoga and continue to cultivate my body into a higher level of physique.

After a long sabbatical and now that my daughter is older, I've been considering getting more involved in the arts scene in Phoenix, or maybe even travel as a guest speaker, or pivot into acting. I have not taken up a new project yet but the sky is the limit as they say, so wish me luck!

**Good luck, Maral! And welcome back to Armenia again!**





## ARTS &amp; CULTURE

# Recipe Corner



by Christine Vartanian



Cauliflower Soup by Steve Sharafian (Courtesy: Steve Sharafian)

## Steve Sharafian's Favorite Cauliflower Soup

*"This soup (Courtesy: <https://food52.com/recipes/15247-paul-bertolli-s-cauliflower-soup>) might seem plain, but trust us. Paul Bertolli, who was at the helm of Chez Panisse and Oliveto for over 20 years, knows exactly how to make a vegetable become the best it can be. This recipe comes from *Cooking by Hand*, Bertolli's IACP award-winning book of recipes and essays, and makes for a soup that's delicate, sweet, and smooth as a flannel scarf."*

— Genius Recipes

Cauliflower is low in calories yet high in vitamins. Whether its roasted, mashed or added to soups and casseroles, there's an endless number of ways to cook cauliflower. Like this modest yet impressive soup recipe contributed by Steven Sharafian at his brilliant "A Serious Bunburyist" food blog.

"From the many soup recipes I have collected through the years, a number of them really stand out. These recipes share the same qualities: a few simple ingredients that in a short amount of time transform into something delicious. One example is the potato and leek soup in Richard Olney's *Simple French Food* (1974). Another one is this cauliflower soup in Paul Bertolli's *Cooking by Hand* (2003)," says Steve.



*Cooking by Hand* is a personal, thoughtful and truly outstanding cookbook. It shares a number of qualities with Olney's *Simple French Food* and Ferguson Henderson's *Nose to Tail* series. Bertolli is passionate about cooking. He seeks to honor yet advance food traditions. The first section of his book, entitled *Cleaning the Fresco*, speaks to this theme. The cooking that makes sense to Bertolli is "food grounded in a tradition, yet enlivened by the act of greeting the process and the ingredients anew." The recipes in this chapter include vitello tonnato, a poached veal loin served in a rich tuna sauce; artichokes braised in olive oil; potato gnocchi with butter and Parmigiano-Reggiano; and his recipe for cauliflower soup.

Cauliflower originally came from the Mediterranean region and arrived in Europe around the end of the 15th century. It has been grown and eaten across Europe since then but did not start growing in the United States until the 1900s.

Today, California produces more cauliflower than any other state. Cauliflower is grown in the Salinas Valley — also called the "Salad Bowl of the World." The growing season can last 10 months due to its moderate climate and rich soil. Other states that grow cauliflower include Arizona, Florida, Michigan, New York, Oregon, Texas, and Washington. It is also grown in Wisconsin and can be found at farmers markets in September and October.

While white is the most common color, you'll also find cauliflower in shades of orange, purple, and green. No matter the color, the taste is the same: mild, slightly sweet, a little nutty.

"What struck me when I first read Bertolli's cauliflower soup recipe were its simple ingredients," says Steve, "The soup's base is water. The only vegetables are onions and cauliflower which is rich in pectin that creates a 'refined smoothness' when puréed. The only other ingredients are salt, pepper and olive oil."

Bertolli writes: "This soup is a good example of the austere requirements of certain foods: that the clearest expression of their flavor suggests adding next to nothing. This soup is plain but plainly good."

### INGREDIENTS:

3 tablespoons olive oil  
1 medium onion, 6 ounces, sliced thin  
1 pound 6 ounces fresh cauliflower  
Salt  
5 1/2 cups hot water  
Extra-virgin olive oil  
Freshly ground black pepper

### PREPARATION:

Warm the olive oil in a heavy-bottomed pan. Sweat the onion in the olive oil over low heat without letting it brown for 15 minutes. Add the cauliflower, salt to taste, and 1/2 cup water, raise the heat slightly, and cover the pot tightly. Stew the cauliflower for 15 to 18 minutes, or until tender.

Add another 4 1/2 cups of hot water, bring to a low simmer, and cook an additional 20 minutes. Working in batches, purée the soup in a blender to a very smooth, creamy consistency.

Let the soup stand for 20 minutes. In this time it will thicken slightly. Thin the soup with 1/2 cup water. Reheat the soup. Serve hot, drizzled with a thin stream of extra-virgin olive oil and freshly group pepper.

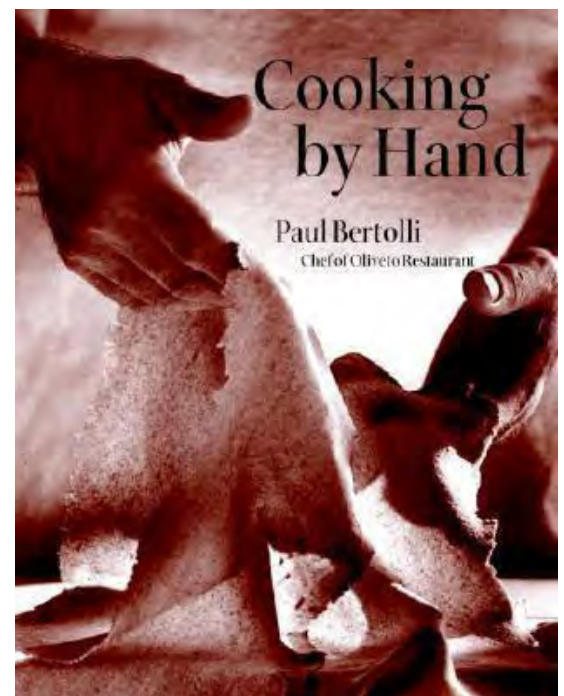
Tip from Steve: "Some final thoughts. Do not succumb to a desire to enrich the soup by adding butter or cream. The soup is perfect as is. Its flavor is clean, deep and rich; the cauliflower almost tastes roasted. I have made this soup using an immersion mixer and the results are still fine. Use extreme caution when blending hot ingredients, especially if using an upright blender. Always work in small batches only filling one-quarter or less of the jar."

For this recipe, go to: <http://ibunbury.blogspot.com/search/label/Cauliflower%20Soup>

For all recipes, go to: <http://ibunbury.blogspot.com/>

To order, *Cooking by Hand: A Cookbook Hardcover* – August 19, 2003 by Paul Bertolli (Author) go to:

Paul Bertolli, renowned chef and author, launched Fra' Mani Handcrafted Foods in March 2006 in Berkeley, California. He serves as the Curemaster of Fra' Mani and is responsible for all product development and creation. Paul's maternal grandfather was a salumiere and his love of salumi was ignited at a young age while savoring prosciutto and soppressata vicentina from his grandfather's cellars. In 1985, Chef Bertolli was included in *Esquire* magazine's registry of "Men and Women Under 40 Who Are Changing the Nation," and chosen as an honoree in "Who's Who of Cooking in America," a national award designed to pay tribute to 25 individuals most directly involved in shaping, refining and improving American cuisine. In 1988, Random House published his first book, *Chez Panisse Cooking*. In 2003, Clarkson Potter, a division of Random House, published his book *Cooking by Hand*, which contains a substantial chapter on cured meats. *Cooking by Hand* received an IACP (International Association of Culinary Professionals) award, that recognizes excellence in cookbook writing.



Cauliflower Soup recipe © 2003 Paul Bertolli.

<https://www.amazon.com/Cooking-Hand-Paul-Bertolli/dp/0609608932>

<http://www.framani.com/paul-bertolli/>





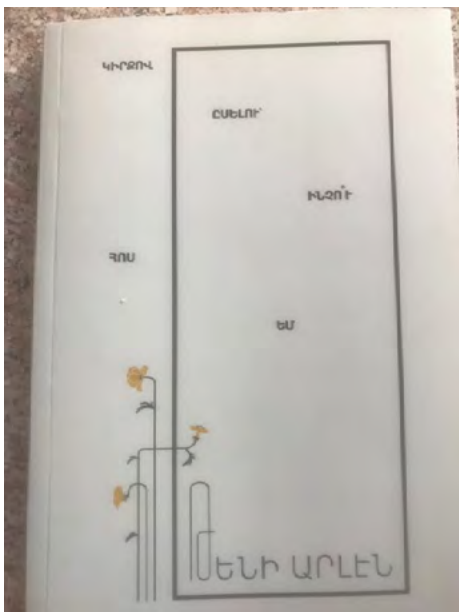
ARTS & CULTURE

# Two Questing Young Minds: Tenny Arlen and Sharisse Zeroonian

MINDS, from page 13

Arlen writes in Western Armenian, a language she started to learn in adulthood, but had no time to master. In fact, Arlen began her university education with no prior knowledge of Armenian and steered herself towards an Armenian identity. At 24, just a few months before she died, she changed her name to Soghovme. *To Say with Passion: Why Am I Here?* is the first full-length volume of creative literature written and published in Armenian by a US-born author.

As Dr. Hagop Kouloujian, Arlen’s Armenian language teacher at UCLA, also editor of the collection, avers, by putting the language to everyday use, Arlen helps keep Western Armenian alive and contemporary. When those who were born into Armenian and acquired it as they grew up — the best way to learn a language — abandon it, Arlen, who grew up removed from any Armenian community, goes out of her way to study it, and uses it to write



poetry. The poet gives those who see no future for Western Armenian in the Diaspora much to ponder. Miracles do happen.

Another young writer who has recently caught my attention is Sharisse Zeroonian, author of *Floater* (Las Vegas, 2022), a refreshing collection of short fiction that takes the reader from tattoo parlors in New Hampshire to family vacations in Cape Cod. Zeroonian expands her focus beyond her Armenian background to include characters from different ethnicities. The stories are strikingly contemporary, full of references to recent technological innovations — text messaging, Facebook, funny memes, smiley face emojis — young and old are immersed in.

Zeroonian has an amazing ability to observe and to record. This is how she describes Provincetown, a town on the very tip of the Cape: “In this tiny part of Massachusetts, the words ‘I’m sorry’ are considered more revolting than the words ‘I love guns.’ You don’t apologize because no one looks at you funny, whether you’re a man whose eyelids and lips shimmer like tinsel, or a mother of three who

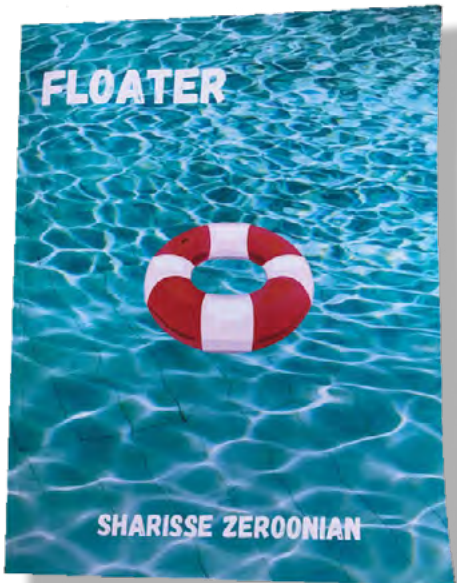
needs to touch every door knob five times before walking into or leaving a room.” With ease, and much wit, Sharisse writes about the everyday lives of young people in conflicted states of emotion, making no attempt to commend or to condemn. The title of the collection does indeed capture, to borrow her words, “the men, women, and children of varying backgrounds who hover between nebulous, conflicting states of emotion and being because their environments are just a few sizes too big or small for them.”

The 27-year-old author has a unique sensitivity to the emotions of both her peers



Sharisse Zeroonian

and the older adults in her life. Her insights into the suburban mentality, and into the dynamics of relationships between parents and their kids, or between a mom and a dad on the verge of a divorce, are shockingly penetrating. With incredible delicacy Sharisse describes the hurt feelings of a daughter whose room, after his divorce, her father “destroys,” to convert into a painting studio. Underlying her descriptions of the psychological states of mind of her char-



acters is a self-assurance that engages the reader and invites her to “dive in.”

With no intent to sensationalize or to alarm, Zeroonian records the painful details of a depressed mother compulsively checking things over and over. As the title of one of her stories suggests, the characters that come to life in her stories are “Real People.” While there is much good-humored sarcasm, there is no judgement, no preaching here. A little girl’s shock at seeing two women kiss in a restaurant does not construe as criticism. The budding writer reveals herself as a person with a genuine acceptance of the folks she is surrounded with.

The stories are also full of many eye-catching metaphors which, as she tells the reader in her introduction to the collection, Zeroonian has consciously labored

*continued on next page*



## Tekeyan Cultural Association

# 21<sup>st</sup> Anniversary



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ARTS & CULTURE

CALENDAR  
OF EVENTS & PROGRAMS

CALIFORNIA

AUGUST 25-DECEMBER 15 — 100th Anniversary at Fresno’s Valley Lahvosh Baking Company® - Guided Tours Available. Valley Lahvosh Baking Company® is listed on Fresno’s Local Register of Historic Resources and celebrates its 100th Anniversary in 2022. In honor of this milestone, guided tours of the factory will be given and are scheduled for: August 25, September 22, October 20, November 17 and December 15. Call today to reserve your place: (559) 485-2700 ext. 200. Sign up for a guided tour of this historic bakery and see where Valley Lahvosh® and the Original Peda Bread are made. <https://m.facebook.com/valleylahvoshbakingco/> <https://www.instagram.com/valleylahvosh/?hl=en>

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.

OCTOBER 8 — The Tekeyan Cultural Association Metro Los Angeles Chapter presents “An Evening of Comedy III featuring Harout Soghomonian” on Saturday, 8 p.m. at Phoenicia Restaurant, Glendale . Special guest appearance by Antic and guest appearance by Tsoghig Samuelian. Admission \$100. For reservations call or text 818.730.1100.

MASSACHUSETTS

SEPTEMBER 11 — Saint Gregory Armenian Apostolic Church of Merrimack Valley Annual Picnic, 158 Main St. North Andover. 12 Noon to 5pm Call Sharké @ 978-808-0598 or Visit [www.saintgregory.org](http://www.saintgregory.org)

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 14 – OCTOBER 14 — Opening Reception: Thursday, September 15, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. Members Exhibition 2022, the upcoming exhibition at Mosesian Arts, Watertown, gives current members of the arts center an opportunity to showcase their work. What is surprising in this year’s exhibition is how many of the artists turned to nature for inspiration, for comfort, and reflection. <https://www.mosesianarts.org/>

SEPTEMBER 12 — St. James Men’s Club Monthly Dinner Meeting with speaker Mark DerMugrditchian discussing his book 4 Strokes West: An Amazing American Adventure. Monday. Losh Kebab and Kheyma Dinner. 6:15 p.m. Social Hour, 7 p.m. Dinner. \$20 per person. Ladies welcome. St. James Armenian Church – 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown. For more information e-mail [mensclub@sthapop.com](mailto:mensclub@sthapop.com).

SEPTEMBER 18 — Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston will be hosting its annual picnic on September 18th from 12 noon to 5pm. For more information, see <https://htaac.org/>.

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)

OCTOBER 2 — Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston will host its International Food Festival which from 12 noon to 3 p.m. For more information, see <https://htaac.org/>.

OCTOBER 8 — Save the Date for Sayat Nova Dance Company’s 35TH ANNIVERSARY PERFORMANCE. To be held at Regis College, Weston, MA. More details to follow soon.

OCTOBER 9 — Sayat Nova Dance Company’s 35TH ANNIVERSARY GALA, celebrating 35 years of preserving and promoting Armenian culture. To be held at The Castle at Sheraton, 1657 Worcester Rd., Framingham, MA. 6 pm – Reception; 7 pm – Dinner and Program. Entertainment by popu-

lar singer GOHAR HOVHANNISYAN & BAND. Donation: \$150 for adults; \$100 for 18 and under. RSVP by September 30.Tables of 10 guests highly encouraged. [www.sayatnova.com/35th-anniversary](http://www.sayatnova.com/35th-anniversary)

OCTOBER 14-15 — St. James Armenian Church 75th Annual Bazaar – Save the date for the return of our traditional two-day Bazaar! Delicious Armenian Food and Pastries. Silent Auction, Raffle, Children’s Activities, Booths and Vendors. Details to follow. St. James Armenian Church – 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown. For more information contact 617.923.8860 or [info@sthapop.com](mailto:info@sthapop.com) or visit [www.stjameswatertown.org](http://www.stjameswatertown.org).

OCTOBER 15 —Armenian Friends of America (AFA) will celebrate their 10th Anniversary of Hye Kef 5 with a dance. Performing will be Mal Barsamian, Joe Kouyoumjian, Leon Janikian, Ken Kalajian and Jason Naroian. 6:30 – Midnight, Doubletree by Hilton, 123 Olde River Road Andover. For AFA Room rates, Call the hotel front desk. Tickets are now available online: [www.ArmenianFriendsofAmerica.Org](http://www.ArmenianFriendsofAmerica.Org). Tickets will not be sold at the door.

OCTOBER 29 — Save the Date: A Panel Discussion with Artists from “On the Edge: Los Angeles Art 1970s-1990s from the Joan and Jack Quinn Family Collection. At the Armenian Museum of America, 65 Main Street, Watertown. [www.armenianmuseum.org/on-the-edge](http://www.armenianmuseum.org/on-the-edge)

NEW HAMPSHIRE

OCTOBER 2 — Shish Kebab Picnic – Sunday. The Ararat Armenian Congregational Church at 2 Salem St. Salem,NH will hold a shish kebab picnic Sunday, Oct. 2. A church service is at 10:30 a.m. followed by the picnic from noon to 4 p.m. Wildlife encounters for kids is at 2 p.m. The event includes food, live music, face painting, a bounce house and more. Meal tickets are \$20 at the door and include your choice of lamb or chicken, rice pilaf, vegetables, salad, hummus, tabouleh, pita bread and dessert. Free kids meals for children 12 and under. Free meal for the first 100 who attend the church service. For more information call Mary Ann @ 603-770-3375. All Tickets sold at door.

NEW JERSEY

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

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>

September 9 – Dance Ensemble of Vanush Khanamiryan Academy

September 23 — Armenian Cultural Hour - Friday, 7:30 pm, “Daniel Yezhishit”

OCTOBER 1 — AHARI, the Armenian Historical Association of RI, is sponsoring an Open House, “Under the Tent”, at the museum on Saturday, Oct 1, 2022 from 1PM - 4 PM. celebrating its 5th Anniversary since its opening on 245 Waterman Street, Providence. It will be an interactive, informative and fun day. Bring old photos with Armenian script for translations. Live performances, dance instructions, refreshments and more. Chronicles’ oral histories. Free and open to the public. [info@armenianhistorical-ri.org](mailto:info@armenianhistorical-ri.org) or 401-454-5111.

OHIO

SEPTEMBER 22 — Lessons of the Armenian Genocide: a lecture & Q&A from Pulitzer Prize-Winning Author Peter Balakian organized by the Armenian Cultural Garden of Ohio and John Carroll University Peace, Justice & Human Rights Program. 7 p.m. at the John Carroll University Donahue Auditorium (in the Dolan Science Center), 20700 N. Park Blvd. University Heights, OH 44118. Free and open to the public.

PENNSYLVANIA

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. 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.

from previous page  
for, and continues to “torture myself for,” because finding one is “my greatest joy.” Indeed, “A wispy curl of slumber, like smoke left behind from a just-blown-out

candle, unfolded inside her body,” “This excuse, like all his others, would just be another Hail Mary echoing in a box,” or, “being around this crew felt like putting on an itchy sweater,” make her “torture”

worthwhile.

Many of the stories in this debut collection were published in the *Armenian Weekly*, between 2019 and 2020.

Two young writers full of promise. One

snuffed out too soon, a grievous loss. The other is well on her way to fulfilling her promise. Zeroonian is currently pursuing an MFA in Writing for Stage and Screen at Lesley University.





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COMMENTARY

**EDITORIAL**

# A Spark of Light in a Somber Commemoration



**By Edmond Y. Azadian**

There is an ironic twist in the proclamation of the 31<sup>st</sup> anniversary of independence of Karabakh. Under normal circumstances, this occasion should have been a moment of celebration and prospect of a promising future life. But instead, all official quarters have been full of gloom and doom in the shadow of defeat at the 44-Day War.

Karabakh held its own events marking this historic anniversary, without any high-level representation from Armenia. Somber speeches were given on the occasion by Arayik Harutyunyan, president of Karabakh, and statements read from Armenia's president Vahagn Khachaturyan and Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. None of them came up with a positive tone or hopeful outcome. Arayik Harutyunyan referred to the destruction in the wake of the 44-Day War. Armenia's president spoke of the "issues related to the threat of a new war, the status of Artsakh as well as the issues of humanitarian nature that [are] the permanent agenda priorities of Armenia and Artsakh."

Pashinyan himself appealed to "the international community [which] is obliged to make efforts to address humanitarian problems caused by the 44-Day War and to prevent the implementation of the policy of the ethnic cleansing in Karabakh."

The only person who spoke up against Azerbaijani leader Ilham Aliyev's statements that the Karabakh issue was solved through the war was Armenia's Parliament Speaker Alen Simonyan, who stated: "The issue of the status of Karabakh is being discussed on internal and external platforms. It is under the mandate of the OSCE [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe] Minsk Group co-chairs; all other discussions have nothing to do with reality."

Many people participating in the commemorative event in Stepanakert who were interviewed expressed apprehension regarding a potential ethnic cleansing there in the mold of the evacuation of the three towns in Karabakh on August 25, namely Berdzor, Aghavno and Sus. But they also demonstrated resilience and expressed their determination to stay put "on territory of our ancestors."

Once again, there were tumultuous discussions in the Armenian media reviewing the history and the legal developments of the Karabakh issue. There was an abundance of criticism and accusations about the negotiators of the past 31 years. Questions were raised as to whether Karabakh should have unified with Armenia or declared independence at all, and why Armenia failed to recognize Karabakh's independence and thus rendered it an international pariah.

Many wise commentators have realized that the combined power of the Turkish-Azerbaijan propaganda machine has steamrolled over reality and pushed the false narrative of Karabakh as part of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, disregarding historical and legal facts.

Comparisons were made between Karabakh, East Timor, Kosovo and South Sudan, where independence or self-determination were granted on the basis of remedial cessation, something denied to the people of Karabakh.

During the last 31 years, there has not been a moment of calm and stability for the leadership to chart a reasonable future for both entities and today's situation is more confused than ever. While tourists and Russian émigrés have been flooding Yerevan, Armenia's citizens are licking their wounds and contemplating where their next meal will come from or plan-

ning to leave the country altogether.

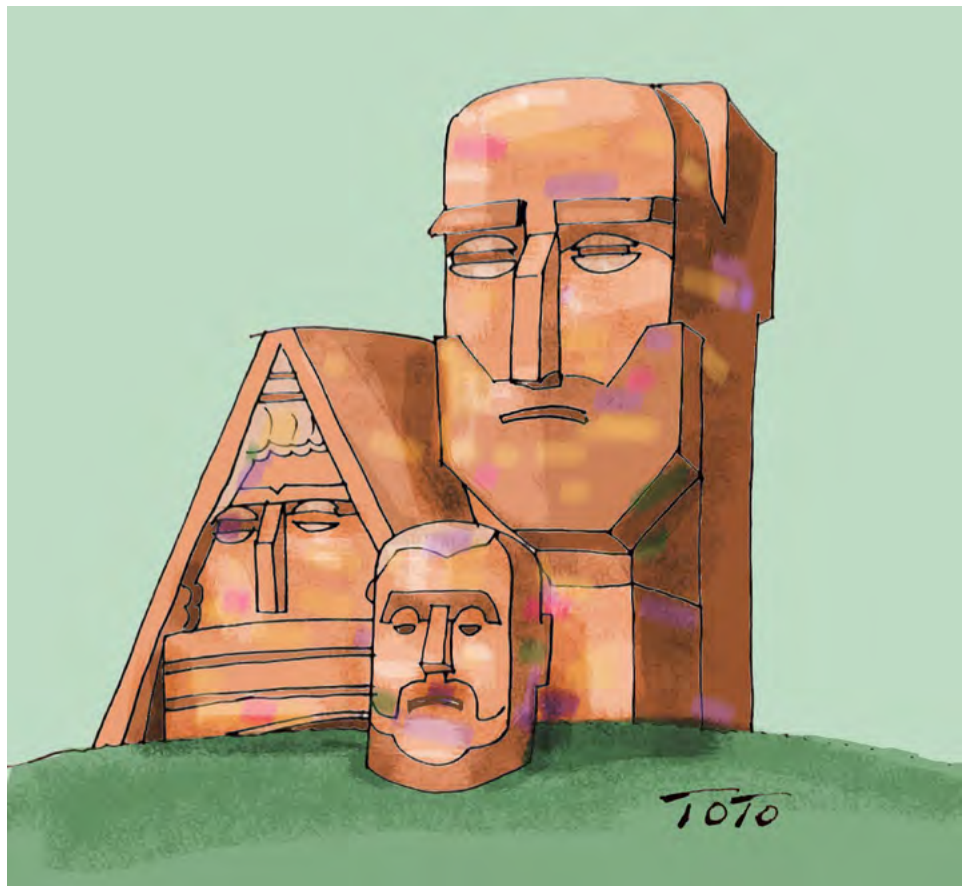
To keep the anxiety of the citizenry at the highest levels, the Azerbaijani army creates daily border incidents and blames the Armenian side for them, while its government pressures Armenia to sign a peace treaty under duress, lest the political situation change with the unforeseen outcome of Russia's war in Ukraine.

Amid this turmoil, a new voice has emerged, that of Ruben Vardanyan, a billionaire benefactor who has advanced many ideas and projects about Armenia's future. Still, he has always been viewed with suspicion by many. He is accused of political ambitions in Armenia and his name has been mentioned recently in connection with the newly founded political party Country of Living (Aprelu Yerkir), although he denies being a member of this or any political party.

This time around, he has made a dramatic decision to renounce his Russian citizenship, turn over his billion dollars in assets to his family members and move to Karabakh. He admits the risks involved in this move, but says, "This was the right decision."

What Vardanyan plans in Karabakh is anyone's guess, but speculations abound.

Few commentators take him at his word that he has moved



to Karabakh to use his resources and raise funds internationally to help the Karabakh people. Instead, the more prevalent view is that he is following the political path of Serzh Sargsyan and Robert Kocharyan, who used Karabakh as a launching pad for a political career in Armenia. Now that Karabakh is under siege and its future uncertain, it is questionable whether the same scenario can still be viable.

Some other commentators believe that Vardanyan had taken a shrewd step in renouncing his Russian citizenship to avoid US sanctions. Although at the present time there are no sanctions against him, his name has come up in many political discussions at the US Congress. In addition, in March 2019, the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project and partners uncovered a multi-billion-dollar money-laundering network that allegedly operated through Vardanyan's bank.

In any case, many people, including this writer, believe that he may already have made a deal with President Vladimir Putin, which explains why he is confident enough to make this bold initiative.

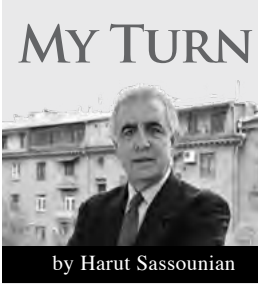
The press in Armenia claims that Vardanyan advocates that Armenia join Russia's proposed Union State and obtain a status similar to that of Tatarstan. However, in one interview, with Mikayel Melkonyan, he stated that Armenia should think

*continued on next page*





COMMENTARY



# Azeri Consul General Departs From L.A., Leaving Behind a Trail of Deception

The Consul General of Azerbaijan, Nasimi Aghayev, departed from Los Angeles at the end of August to become his country’s new Ambassador to Germany. Aghayev left behind a trail of deception. I hope the German government keeps a close watch on this questionable Azeri “diplomat.”

Let us start with the most recent scandal. Last week, Aghayev proudly posted on Twitter and Facebook a certificate bearing the signatures of four out of five Los Angeles County Supervisors, expressing their appreciation for his service as the Consul General of Azerbaijan.

The first hint that something was amiss when it was noticed that the name of the fifth L.A. Country Supervisor, Sheila Kuehl, was not on the certificate. Such documents are usually signed by all five Supervisors, which is diplomatic protocol. There must have been a particular reason why Supervisor Kuehl’s signature was missing. When the Armenian National Committee of America — Western Region (ANCA-WR) asked Supervisor Kuehl’s staff why her signature was not on the certificate, they said that they had asked the L.A. County Protocol’s Office not to add her signature. It turns out that the other four Supervisors had also not given their permission to add their names to the certificate.

Shortly after Aghayev posted the certificate on Twitter and on his Facebook page, each of the four Supervisors — Holly Mitchell, Hilda Solis, Kathryn Barger, and Janice Hahn told the ANCA through separate Tweets that their signatures “were mistakenly added to the certificate without their authorization.”

The four Supervisors attached to their Tweets the letter of apology issued by Lourdes Saab, Chief of Protocol of LA County Supervisors. The letter was sent to all four Supervisors. Here is an excerpt from one such letter: “The County of Los Angeles Office of Protocol mistakenly added Supervisor Kathryn Barger’s signature to a scroll presented to the Consul General of Azerbaijan last week and would like to publicly note this error.”

After I contacted Brenda Duran, Deputy Executive Officer, Los Angeles County Executive Office, asking her to clarify the status of the certificate issued to Azerbaijan’s Consul General by mistake, she replied in writing: “The County of Los Angeles’ Office of the Protocol (Office) apologizes for any confusion. The Supervisors’ signatures were applied in error. Accordingly, the Office is declar-

ing that the unauthorized scroll is void and should be taken down from any social media or any other platforms. Because the County of Los Angeles is not bound by an unauthorized and erroneous action taken by an office in excess of that office’s authority, no one should rely on the subject scroll as any kind of declaration by the County of Los Angeles.”

Nevertheless, the certificate wrongly issued to Azerbaijan’s Consul General is still posted on his Twitter and Facebook page, falsely claiming that he was honored by the L.A. County Supervisors. That certificate is null and void and publicizing such an erroneously issued certificate is dishonest. Instead of being embarrassed, Aghayev lashed back at the ANCA for bringing this mistaken certificate to the attention of the Supervisors.

No one should be surprised that this is not the first time that Azerbaijan’s Consul General is involved in such a scandalous and dishonest behavior. There are four other examples. I wrote an article last October, revealing that Azerbaijan’s Consul General publicized a proclamation issued and later cancelled by the Mayor of San Diego. The Mayor apologized, rescinded his proclamation the following day and pledged not to issue proclamations on Azerbaijan in the future. Similarly, Boston Mayor Martin Walsh issued on February 2021 and later cancelled a proclamation to commemorate the so-called “Khojoli Day.” The Mayor rescinded his proclamation two weeks later and apologized to the Armenian community.

The same scenario was repeated in Portland, Maine. Mayor Kathleen Snyder initially issued a proclamation on February 17, 2021 to commemorate “Khojoli Remembrance Day.” However, on April 1, 2021, the Mayor wrote: “I have decided to rescind the Mayoral Proclamation.... I once again apologize for the pain and harm that the issuance of this proclamation has caused.”

Finally, the City of Torrance, California, issued a proclamation on October 15, 2021 to celebrate “Azerbaijan Day.” Later that day, Torrance Mayor Patrick Furey stated that the City “issued a proclamation in error. On past occasions, the City has proclaimed Azerbaijan National Day in the City of Torrance on the effective date. In light of recent events in the associated region, the City has respectfully requested that the Consulate General of Azerbaijan in Los Angeles remove the proclamation from all media.”

Nevertheless, the rescinded proclamations of San Diego and Torrance remain on Consul General Aghayev’s Facebook page.

Amazingly, such an incompetent and dishonest Consul General is elevated to become Ambassador to Germany, instead of being fired. Given Aghayev’s repeated undiplomatic behavior in Los Angeles, Pres. Aliyev could not have made a worse choice in promoting him to the rank of Ambassador.

## A Spark of Light in a Somber Commemoration

strategically and if this scenario were unavoidable, work to attain the best possible deal. As the country as a whole is steering steadily towards the West, this prospect looks less likely. But within the context of the complex Caucasian political scene, anything can happen.

Armenians are quick to decry their benefactors. We need to wait and see if Vardanyan delivers on his benevolent pledges before questioning his motives or criticizing his plans.

Before Vardanyan, there was the precedent of Levon Hairapetyan, a billionaire from Karabakh who had built his fortune in Russia and returned to his native land to help his fellow countrymen. One of his projects was to finance the wedding of thousands of young Karabakh couples and guarantee the future education of their offspring. That was the most direct move to aid Karabakh’s future politics, because population statistics was one of the political chips in the negotiations. Hairapetyan’s plans should have been enacted by the government, which, however, lacked the resources for this, if not the vision.

What happened next to Hairapetyan and his plans were tragic. Azerbaijani power circles in Moscow were able to smear his reputation, ruin his plans and lead him to an early death in a Russian jail. Armenia’s government, at the time headed by Serge Sargsyan, maintained a cynical and cowardly silence, refusing to take a step towards his rescue.

Admittedly, Hairapetyan was foolhardy and not politically savvy and thus he fell into a trap, losing his fortune and his life. On the contrary, Vardanyan is an astute operator who certainly has learned much from his predecessor’s mistakes to avoid such pitfalls.

If we take Vardanyan at his word, he may become a valuable leading force in Karabakh and Armenia, and certainly in the diaspora, where he has broad connections.

Armenia and Karabakh are desperate and they must take advantage of any light that shines their way.

## LETTERS

### Remembering Centennial of Smyrna Atrocities

To the Editor:

September 2022 marks the 100 anniversary of the Smyrna atrocity, the massacre of thousands of Armenians.

In a few short days, the beautiful cosmopolitan port city of Smyrna (now known as Izmir), was destroyed . Christians, mostly Armenians and Greeks had begun to leave their villages on the west coast of Asia Minor surrounding Smyrna and flocked to this city which had Armenian and Greek quarters. One would assume that these refugees felt they would be in a safe haven (they were wrong).

Mustafa Kemal, the Turkish Leader had many skirmishes with the Greek army. The Greek army wasted no time in occupying the west coast after the war in 1919. Their purpose was to protect the Greeks living in that area. Also,

to claim the spoilers of war.

Seemingly, this spearheaded a nationalistic response by the Turks with an ethnic cleansing thrust which was disastrous for the Christians.

My mother, Marie Kouyoumdjian, and my uncle Theodos escaped to Greece in the last days before Smyrna was set on fire.

Again, one would assume after the genocide of Armenians since the late 19th century, that the massacres would have stopped at the end of World War One, and the dissolving of the Ottoman Empire. But the reality was that the genocide persisted into 1924.

John Hamalian  
River Edge, NJ

## Azerbaijanis Reportedly Settling in Villages On Karabakh-Armenia Corridor

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Azerbaijanis have reportedly started to settle in the Nagorno-Karabakh settlements of Berdzor, Aghavno and Sus after hundreds of Armenian families were displaced less than 10 days earlier.

Aravot.am on Sunday, September 4 published footage from the road that previously only served to connect the Armenian town of Goris to the Karabakh capital city of Stepanakert, which showed an Azerbaijani motorcade loaded with mattresses, bedding and other necessary items driving towards said villages.

The road through Berdzor (the Lachin corridor) is now used by Azerbaijanis too but a new route connecting Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia opened to traffic on

August 30.

The corridor, currently used as connection between Armenia and Karabakh, was supposed to serve its purpose at least until the fall of 2023, but Azerbaijan built a new road and demanded that the corridor be moved now.

Nagorno-Karabakh’s authorities informed the few remaining Armenian residents of the town of Berdzor and the villages of Aghavno and Sus that are situated along the current Lachin corridor that no Russian peacekeepers will be left in the territory after August 25 and, therefore, they needed to leave their homes before the end of the month. However, a top Russian diplomat has said that the peacekeepers were not going to move an inch.



# STARMUS VI: Brian May Awarded Stephen Hawking Medal

YEREVAN (Panorama) — Queen guitarist Brian May has been awarded the Stephen Hawking Medal for Science Communication on the sidelines of STARMUS VI. Musician Rick Wakeman presented the award to Brian May at the official opening of the festival at the Karen Demirchyan Sports and Concerts Complex on Monday, September 5.

STARMUS is a global festival of science communication and art that brings together the most brilliant minds on the planet. Its aim is to inspire and educate the next generation of explorers and regenerate the spirit of discovery. The world-famous festival is associated with Stephen Hawking, Brian May, Alexei Leonov and other world-renowned names.



Rick Wakeman of the band Yes, stands next to Brian May, second from left



Brian May, left, with Garik Israelyan, right

STARMUS was first held on the island of Tenerife (Spain) in 2011 and combines science, education, art and technologies to enhance science communication. STARMUS festival was founded by astrophysicist Garik Israelyan and May, who also has a doctorate in astrophysics, becoming a platform for world-renowned scientists, Nobel Prize laureates, astronauts, scientists and representatives of culture and art to share their experience and knowledge

about the latest discoveries with the public. Their collaboration makes it possible to highlight the problems of humanity and to hold discussions on possible solutions. May said his dream to visit Armenia has finally come true. “To be in Armenia is a big thrill. I have never been here and am very excited. I wish I had longer to see some of the country,” he said at a news conference on September 6. The guitarist noted after the 1988 earthquake he was very concerned about Armenia, trying to help the country with other musicians.

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Brian May at a press conference on September 6.

“At that time I wished that I could come to Armenia, but it wasn’t possible. Now this fulfills my dream and I am very happy,” the rock legend said.



Brian May with Armenian duduk player Djivan Gasparyan