

Road Link to Artsakh At Risk, Says Armenian Parliament Speaker

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — A senior Armenian official on Monday, December 5, accused Azerbaijan of planning to close the sole road connecting Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia.

“We see the Azerbaijani side’s intention to close the Lachin corridor,” said Alen Simonyan, the Armenian parliament speaker and a leading member of the ruling Civil Contract party.

“The Lachin corridor is the only full-fledged road of humanitarian significance for the livelihood of Nagorno-Karabakh’s Armenians,” he added during a regular session of the Parliamentary Assembly of



Parliament Speaker Alen Simonyan

the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).

Simonyan made the claim two days after a section of the road outside the Azerbaijani-controlled Karabakh town of Shushi was blocked by a large group of Azerbaijani officials for about four hours. As of Monday afternoon, the Armenian government did not officially react to the incident.

Baku claimed that the officials from the Azerbaijani ministries of environment and economy blocked the road section because they wanted to investigate “illegals” in LACHIN, page 2

US Diplomat Says It Will Facilitate US-Azerbaijani Talks, as Russia Slams Western Mediation

WASHINGTON (Azatutyun) — The United States will spare no effort to continue to facilitate a resolution of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, a senior US diplomat said after visiting Baku and Yerevan this week.

“We firmly believe that continued direct dialogue and diplomacy, not military action, is key to resolving issues and to reaching a comprehensive lasting peace and prosperity for all,” Philip Reeker, a senior adviser for Caucasus negotiations at the State Department, said in a video address released by the US Embassy in Armenia on Friday. “We all understand that this is not easy.”

Washington is “committed to doing

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French National Assembly Adopts Resolution Calling for Sanctions against Azerbaijan

PARIS (Public Radio of Armenia) — The French National Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution supporting Armenia and calling for sanctions against Azerbaijan.

With the resolution, the National Assembly condemns, in the strongest terms, the military aggression of Azerbaijan on September 13 and 14 against the southern and southeastern regions of the Republic of Armenia, in violation of its sovereignty.

The National Assembly calls for an end to the military occupation by Azerbaijan of the sovereign territory of the Republic of Armenia and for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Azerbaijani forces. It urges strict compliance with the terms of the trilateral statements of November 9, 2020 and January 11, 2021.

The lawmakers invite the government to work within the United Nations Organization with a view to deploying an international force capable of ensuring the end of hostilities in the South Caucasus and the safety of civilian populations and emphasizes the importance of the role of the Security Council to endorse an agreement of the parties concerned on the deployment of such a force.

The lower house of the Parliament calls on the government, in consultation with the European Union and the United States,



The French National Assembly during the proposal of the resolution (screenshot)

to take any diplomatic initiative likely to promote the development of a lasting peace treaty between the Republic of Armenia and Azerbaijan. It also calls on the government to intensify efforts at the level of the European Union in order to adopt a common position aimed at promoting the normalization of relations between Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia.

In this regard, the lawmakers welcome the establishment of a European Union civilian mission aimed at restoring confidence, stabilizing the situation on the ground and contributing to the work of the boundary commissions of the Repub-

lic of Armenia and Azerbaijan. They also comment the deployment of an assessment mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to Armenia, at the request of the government in Yerevan.

The National Assembly calls for due respect for the territorial sovereignty and independence of the Republic of Armenia and urges an immediate and unconditional release and repatriation of all Armenian prisoners of war.

It calls on the Government to mobilize so that an international and independent investigation can be conducted into the

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Jivan Avetisyan Wants to Bring Story of Artsakh to the World

By Harry Kezelian
Mirror-Spectator Staff

DETROIT — Jivan Avetisyan is a filmmaker from Artsakh. His latest film, “Gate to Heaven,” is on a worldwide tour, being shown in various countries, including in the US, where it was distributed through AMC Theatres.

Avetisyan is following the film’s distribution wherever it goes, making appearances and raising awareness about the movie. But he’s even more interested in raising awareness about the struggle of the people of Artsakh. In fact, that is why he made the film in the first place.

Although the film is receiving its premiere in various parts of the world, it isn’t exactly new. It was first released on October 17, 2019. With the pandemic and its subsequent lock down five months later, Avetisyan did not have a chance to promote it around the world as he would have liked.

The genesis of “Gate to Heaven” came after the 4-day war of 2016. Avetisyan said he wanted to make a film that would show the situation in Talish.

“I knew stories connected to the war,” he says. “The stories about the opera singer and photojournalist are true, but are



Richard Sammel and Tatiana Spivakova in “Gate to Heaven”

brought to the situation that took place in Talish.”

The film tells the story of a German photojournalist who had been in Nagorno-Karabakh during the war in the early 1990s, and who traveled back to Artsakh in 2016 when conflict broke out again. He meets a young singer who is going to perform in an opera. The hidden connection which is revealed between the two main characters forms the rest of the movie’s plot.

The film is more artistic than a Hollywood blockbuster, but it is not an avant-garde style “art film.” Avetisyan has brought a picture of real people and real life to the screen without over-dramatization. Because the film is intended for a worldwide audience, much of the dialogue is spoken in English, with portions in Armenian and

German. Avetisyan believed that in this way he could get the message of Artsakh’s struggle across to a wider audience.

Throughout the film, the “Gate to Heaven” (Drakhti Darbasē) serves as an actual geographical location, a vista of great beauty looking across a cliff, open to the sky; as well as a metaphor.

“Every man has their own drakhti durē (Door to Heaven),” Avetisyan commented in our recent interview. “Every character [in the film] says his sins to confess, and pass through.” He continues that being born in Artsakh, he views the land with religious fervor. “We are continuing to fight for it; Artsakh is like our Jerusalem, it’s the place which is religious.”

One of the outstanding features of the film is the exquisite cinematography of the scenery and landscapes in and around Shushi. Unfortunately, most of the areas depicted in the film are currently in the hands of the Azerbaijani military, including the “Gate to Heaven.” The location serves as a focal point of the film, the opera singer character’s favorite place to go to during her childhood. It seems also a metaphor for the possibilities that Armenia and the Armenian people have to strive for greater heights.

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ARMENIA
Chef Sedrak Teaches Refugees from Artsakh



NEW YORK
Souren Baronian, Fusing Cool Jazz and Middle Eastern Music



MASSACHUSETTS
Dr. Myron Allukian, Jr. Honored with Paul Revere Award





ARMENIA

NEWS from ARMENIA

Armenia Returns Remains From 1st Karabakh War

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — On December 5, Armenian handed over to Azerbaijan the remains of 10 victims from the First Karabakh War, as well as 2 maps that indicate the possible locations of 4 other bodies, reports the National Security Service of Armenia.

Since the end of the Second Karabakh war on November 9, 2020, the Armenian side has transferred the remains of 140 victims of the First Karabakh War and 5 maps to the Azerbaijani side.

Official: 15,000 Obtained Armenian Citizenship

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — The Deputy Chief of Police Ara Fidanyan said on December 2 that about 15,000 people obtained Armenian citizenship in 2022.

Fidanyan said that some 3,000, people were naturalized in 2021. He also noted that most are ethnic Armenians.

CSTO Chief Says It Is Necessary to Give Aid to Armenia

PanARMENIAN.Net - The draft decision of the CSTO Council on measures to provide assistance to Armenia needs to be signed, this is important for Yerevan, CSTO Secretary General Stanislav Zas said on Monday, December 5 at a meeting of the Parliamentary Assembly of the organization in Moscow.

“On behalf of the heads of state, a monitoring mission headed by the Secretary General and the Chief of the Operational Headquarters of our organization worked out in Armenia. As a result of this work, a draft decision of the Collective Security Council on joint measures to provide assistance to the Republic of Armenia was prepared, which was discussed at the session of the Council on November 23. Due to the different positions of the CSTO states, it was not possible to adopt this project,” Zas noted.

“I hope that after a certain revision we will come to the signing of this draft decision and the adoption of these measures. I am sure that this is necessary, including for Armenia.”

Zas stressed that the situation on the border remains “difficult.” According to him, despite the differing assessments of the CSTO member countries of the situation, all states agree that in the current conditions Armenia faces risks and threats. “Therefore, a set of measures to provide assistance to Armenia was developed – six points that were approved by all states, a rather weighty package of measures,” he explained.

“This includes additional political and diplomatic work to ensure the territorial integrity of Armenia, the extension of the monitoring mission for an additional two months, which would deploy its working groups along the border in difficult areas. This is the provision of military-technical assistance.”

Azerbaijani Summit ‘Still Possible’ in December

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — The leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan may still hold fresh peace talks this month, a senior Armenian lawmaker said on December 6.

Eduard Aghajanyan, the chairman of the Armenian parliament committee on foreign relations, also confirmed that Baku has responded to Yerevan’s recent proposals regarding an Armenian-Azerbaijani peace treaty.

“The Armenian side has received Azerbaijani proposals that are in essence a reaction to the Armenian proposals,” he told a news conference. “As regards to a possible meeting of the leaders or the foreign ministers of our countries before the end of the year, I think that it cannot be excluded.”

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan were due to meet in Brussels on December 7. Aliyev canceled the meeting late last month, objecting to French President Emmanuel Macron’s participation in it.

A European diplomatic source said last

week that the European Union keeps trying to arrange the summit this month.

Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov did not rule out the possibility of such a meeting during a visit to Moscow on Monday.

Bayramov also indicated that the Armenian proposals are not acceptable to his government. He said Baku continues to insist that the peace accord be based on key elements which it presented to Yerevan in March this year.

Those elements include mutual recognition by Armenia and Azerbaijan of each other’s territorial integrity. This would presumably mean Armenian recognition of Azerbaijani sovereignty over Nagorno-Karabakh.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said last week Pashinyan effectively agreed to such recognition in a joint statement with Aliyev, Macron and EU chief Charles Michel issued after their October 6 meeting in Prague. Lavrov appeared to stand by his



Member of Parliament Eduard Aghajanyan

statement at a joint news conference with Bayramov.

Lavrov based his claims on the Prague statement’s reference to a 1991 declaration signed by Armenia and other newly independent Soviet republics in Kazakhstan.

Aghajanyan and other Armenian pro-government lawmakers countered on Tuesday that the declaration does not apply to Karabakh and its status.

Two Killed in Crash of Small Plane

YEREVAN (News.am) — Two people who died in a plane crash in Armenia on December 1 were Russian citizens, according to Hayk Kostanyan, the press secretary of the Ministry of Emergency Situations of Armenia.

The said plane was Slovenian.

Earlier, Armenian News-NEWS.am had

reported that at 2:20 p.m. on December 1, the national center for crisis management received information that a B55-type plane had crashed and caught fire in the area of Jraber village of Kotayk Province. The rescuers who arrived at the scene found two burnt bodies.

The plane was a two-seater, and had tak-

en off from Zvartnots International Airport of Yerevan and was headed for Astrakhan, Russia, but the plane lost contact soon after takeoff. The plane crashed in an open field, and no infrastructure was damaged.

The Civil Aviation Committee of Armenia had issued the following statement regarding this plane crash: “We inform you that on December 1 of this year, at 13:11 local time, communication with the private BeechCraft 95-type aircraft flying in the Yerevan-Astrakhan direction was interrupted. At 14:20 local time, the plane was found crashed in the area of Jraber village of Kotayk Province. There were only crew members on board — 2 pilots — who were killed. Preliminary data collection is underway at the Civil Aviation Committee regarding the incident.



The debris from the crash

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gal” mining activity in Karabakh and its “ecological consequences.” It said that they and Russian peacekeeping forces stationed in Karabakh agreed to work out a “roadmap to environmental monitoring” in the mining area. The peacekeepers did not publicly confirm that.

Karabakh’s environmental protection agency insisted later on Saturday that it has been properly monitoring the work of a local gold mining company. At the same time, it expressed readiness to invite international experts to conduct an “additional environmental risk assessment” at the Karabakh gold mine.

“I am convinced that there is no ecological problem there,” Armen Khachatryan, a senior Armenian lawmaker, said on Monday.

“Such provocations can always be expected from Azerbaijan,” he told RFE/RL’s Armenian Service. “We must be careful and attentive but not alarmist. We must be ready to cope with all challenges that could arise later on or have already arisen.”

Khachatryan noted that early this year Azerbaijan blocked gas supply from Armenia to Karabakh for several weeks.

Armenian Ombudswoman Briefs US Official On Azerbaijani War Crimes

WASHINGTON (Panorama.am) — Armenia’s Human Rights Defender Kristinne Grigoryan met with Erica Olson, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State overseeing policy for Southern Europe and the Caucasus, in Washington on Tuesday, December 6.

The ombudswoman expressed her gratitude for the efforts made by the State Department toward the repatriation of Armenian prisoners of war. She also presented the problems and emotional difficulties that the family members of the prisoners of war are going through given the provocative information environment created by Azerbaijan, the Ombudsperson’s Office reported.

Olson noted that the US officials are continuing their work aimed at solving many

humanitarian issues, including the return of prisoners of war, and clarifying the fate of missing persons, etc.

“The Defender presented to Ms. Olson the ad hoc reports of the HRD Office, which documented and analyzed the continuous violations of human rights during and after the Azerbaijani military aggression on September 13-14, 2022, and the humanitarian problems faced by people living in the communities that were attacked. The reports also included facts about the war crimes which were confirmed by the Defender’s Office based on a specific methodology, as well as the testimonies of repatriated prisoners of war concerning the facts of torture and inhuman treatment during their detention in Azerbaijan,” it said.



ARMENIA

Chef Sedrak Mamulyan Teaches Refugees from Hadrut How to Cook Authentic Artsakh Food

By Haykaram Nahapetyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN — Hadrut has been Armenian-populated since time immemorial. This part of the Armenian homeland maintained its identity and local Armenian administration across millennia. This was terminated during the 2020 aggression against Artsakh, when Turkish-Azerbaijani forces conquered and depopulated the historical Armenian settlement. Many Hadrut natives moved to Stepanakert and some came to Yerevan.

At the Megerian Carpet Museum, one can meet people from Hadrut every week. One of Armenia's top chefs, Sedrak Mamulyan, teaches the art of cooking in the culinary studio part of the museum.

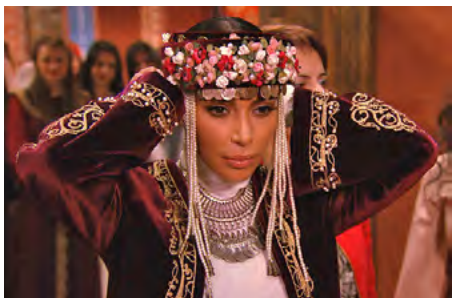
"It may sound controversial. However, we teach people of Artsakh how to cook the authentic food of Artsakh," noted Mamulyan during our conversation. "That's because many of our traditional recipes have been forgotten. So, we work on recovering



Chef Sedrak Mamulyan teaching



Chef Sedrak Mamulyan



Kim Kardashian visiting the Megerian Carpet Museum

the authentic Armenian cuisine of each region of Armenia and teach the locals," he continued.



The beginnings of a rug

Mamulyan has founded the Armenian Cookery Traditions Development and Protection NGO for this purpose. The organization explores and tries to revive the best Armenian traditions of cooking.

Raffi Megerian, a businessman from New York, runs the former Hyegorg carpet factory in Yerevan. After the Soviets collapsed, the previously giant carpet factory of the Soviet Armenian republic went out

of business. The Megerian rug dealers from New York restored traditional Armenian carpet weaving at former Hyegorg. Now they run a museum and a restaurant beside the factory, visited by Charles Aznavour, Kim Kardashian, US Congressional delegations, various American ambassadors to Armenia, and many other notables.

"These days, hamburgers or cheeseburgers are popular, but with the help of chef Sedrak Mamulian we try to find out what traditional food was baking cooked by our parents and grandparents and teach it to our young generations. One of the best chefs is helping them here at our location," added Megerian.

They both approach Armenian traditional cuisine from a broader perspective. "Traditional food is related to the ingredients that grew in local areas and to the ceremonies for which those dishes were prepared. Therefore, it is part of our cultural heritage and history," observed Mamulyan. Per Megerian, today when some of Armenia's neighbors try to hijack Armenian traditional carpets and dishes, such work becomes even more essential.

The accompanying video segment at mirrorspectator.com includes interviews with Megerian and Mamulyan and a tour of the Megerian Carpet Museum.

Family of Woman Killed By Pashinyan Motorcade Sticks To Cover-Up Claims

By Naira Bulghadarian

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — Relatives of a pregnant woman who died after being hit by a police car escorting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's motorcade continued to accuse Armenian authorities of a cover-up as the sole suspect in the case went on trial on Thursday, November 24.

They argued that the authorities refrained from holding the suspect in detention and prosecuting other, more high-ranking security officials over the death of Sona Mnatsakanyan. They also claimed that key evidence relevant to the high-profile case is withheld by prosecutors.

Mnatsakanyan, 29, was struck by a police SUV while crossing a street in the center of Yerevan in April this year. The vehicle did not stop after the collision. Its driver, police Major Aram Navasardyan, was arrested twice by investigators but freed by courts despite being charged with reckless driving and negligence.

Navasardyan again denied the accusations at the beginning of his trial in Yerevan. He also insisted that he did not flee the site of the accident.

Navasardyan's lawyer, Ruben Baloyan, went further, effectively blaming Mnatsakanyan for her death. Baloyan said that his client should not have been indicted in the first place.

Meanwhile, Mnatsakanyan's family petitioned the Yerevan court to arrest the policeman pending the outcome of the trial, saying that his being at large has adversely impacted the pre-trial investigation. The court rejected the demand.

"It looks like we are fighting against the state apparatus," Grigor Mnatsakanyan, the victim's uncle, told reporters. "Had there been no favoritism [the police officer] would have been in jail now."

Raffi Aslanyan, a lawyer representing the dead woman's family, said the probe was deeply flawed also because no members of Pashinyan's security detail or other officials in charge of his motorcade were prosecuted as well.

Aslanyan further complained that investigators have still not clearly explained why they did not obtain and use audio of radio conversations among security personnel that escorted Pashinyan on that day. The victim's mother, Armine Makinyan, alleged earlier that the recordings were destroyed as part of the cover-up.

Makinyan pointed out that her daughter died more than an hour after being hit by the police car. She said Mnatsakanyan or her unborn baby could have stayed alive had she been immediately rushed to the hospital.

Pashinyan's limousine and the six other cars making up his motorcade drove past the dying woman. Pashinyan has still not publicly commented on the accident that shocked many in Armenia.

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

AUA President Dr. Karin Markides Steps Down

YEREVAN — After serving three and a half years as president of the American University of Armenia (AUA), Dr. Karin Markides bid farewell to the university on December 3. The Boards of Trustees of the American University of Armenia Corporation and the American University of Armenia Fund thanked her for her dedication to the university and her service during a highly challenging period in Armenia. The Boards expressed their gratitude for her perseverance and tenacity in the face of adversity and wished her all the best in her future endeavors.

Under Markides' leadership as AUA's fifth president, the institution has realized important changes with respect to the strategies of the University for the critical role it will play in the coming decades. Undergraduate enrollment of well-qualified students has grown substantially, while new academic programs were added in Politics and Governance, Nursing, Human Rights and Social Justice, and Environment and



AUA President Dr. Karin Markides

Sustainability Science. The AUA faculty has grown to meet the University's academic needs and research in areas integral to Armenia's advancement. Markides successfully created a culture of collaboration enhancing AUA's impact.

"I am honored to have served as your president, and I am sure that you will take the opportunities we have created for you to make AUA an impactful force in the country and a visible attraction on the international scene," wrote Markides in her

farewell message to the AUA community. "As an Armenian by choice, I will constantly support you and become one of your strongest ambassadors."

During Markides' term, AUA established new working agreements, incentives and practices with international organizations, government agencies and universities in Armenia, the United States and Europe which will expand the university's educational and research interactions.

Markides is Swedish and a former professor of analytical chemistry.

While the Board conducts an international search for a new president, AUA Co-Founder and President Emeritus Dr. Armen Der Kiureghian will serve as interim president. Dr. Der Kiureghian is the University's fourth president and has played a pivotal role in AUA's founding, devoting 30 years of service to the institution, with the last five years as President. Following his retirement in 2019, he continued serving as a member of AUA's Board of Trustees.

INTERNATIONAL

INTERNATIONAL

Turkey Defense Minister Threatens Armenia with 'Brotherly Fist'

ANKARA (News.am) — Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar once again voiced Turkey's perception of peace.

"Any threat or provocation against Turkey or Azerbaijan, regardless of its source, will be recognized as a common challenge to the brotherly countries," the minister said, addressing participants of the joint Turkish-Azerbaijani "Brotherhood Fist" exercises, Turkish media reported on December 6.

The Turkish minister indirectly confirmed Ankara's participation in Azerbaijan's aggression against Armenia and Artsakh: "The world community witnessed our unity during 44-day war, which resulted in liberation of historical lands of Azerbaijan from long-lasting Armenian occupation."

"We sincerely hope that Armenia will not leave Turkey and Azerbaijan's hand of peace unanswered," Akar stressed.

He, added that if Armenia does not allow for the creation of the "Zangezur corridor," the country will experience a "brotherly fist."

Iranian Trade Center to Open in Armenia

YEREVAN (Arka) — More than 100 Iranian companies will display their products in a trade center that is expected to open in Armenia in early 2023, Vardan Kostanyan, Armenia's trade attaché in Iran, told reporters on December 6.

He said that will give ample opportunities to Armenian entrepreneurs, as the center will act as a platform for developing economic cooperation and founding joint business projects in Armenia.

Kostanyan stressed that Armenia is widely advertised in Iran as a member state of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), where Iranian companies can found joint ventures with Armenia peers and sell their products across the Eurasian Economic Union.

Uruguay Pres. Reiterates Support for Armenia

MONTEVIDEO (Reuters) — President of Uruguay Luis Lacalle Pou received members of the Armenian National Committee of Uruguay on December 6. Minister of Health José Luis Satdjian was also present at the meeting.

During the meeting, the president was briefed on the consequences of the recent invasion of Armenia by Azerbaijan and the humanitarian situation resulting from the military aggression launched against Armenia and the Republic of Artsakh in 2020.

The president stated that Uruguay's historical position of solidarity with Armenia and its people remains intact, especially in these difficult times. He expressed support for the positions and decisions of the executive authorities and the two chambers of the parliament related to Armenia.

Armenia, Hungary Restore Diplomatic Ties

LODZ, Poland (Azatutyun) — Armenia and Hungary officially agreed on December 1 to restore their diplomatic relations frozen by Yerevan a decade ago.

Armenia's former leadership cut those ties in 2012 after the Hungarian government controversially extradited to Azerbaijan an Azerbaijani army officer who hacked to death a sleeping Armenian colleague in Budapest in 2004. The officer, Ramil Safarov, whom a Hungarian court sentenced to life imprisonment in 2006, was pardoned, rewarded and promoted by Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev on his return to Azerbaijan.

The Hungarian government claimed to have received prior assurances from Baku that Safarov would serve the rest of his life sentence in an Azerbaijani prison. Yerevan dismissed that explanation.

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban had traveled to Baku and met with Aliyev two months before Safarov's release. Orban has long maintained a warm relationship with the Azerbaijani leader.

Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan and his Hungarian counterpart Peter Szijarto announced their governments' decision to restore diplomatic ties after meeting on the sidelines of an OSCE ministerial conference held in the Polish city of Lodz.

In a joint statement, they said the move will "open a new page in Armenian-Hungarian relations." They noted the "common Christian heritage" of the Armenian

Turkey Says Finland Must End Arms Embargo to Join NATO

ANKARA (AP) — Finland must publicly declare that it's lifting an arms embargo on Turkey to win Ankara's approval for its membership to NATO, the Turkish foreign minister said on December 6.

Mevlut Çavusoglu made the comments ahead of visit by Finland's Defense Minister Antti Kaikkonen, who was scheduled to discuss his nation's bid to join the military alliance with his Turkish counterpart Hulusi Akar on December 8.

"The Finnish defense minister's visit to Turkey is important because we have not yet heard a statement from Finland saying they've lifted their arms embargo against us," Çavusoglu told reporters. "We're expecting such a statement from there."

Sweden and Finland abandoned their longstanding policies of military non-alignment and applied for membership in the alliance after Russian forces invaded Ukraine in February, amid concerns that Russia might target them next.

But NATO-member Turkey has been holding up Sweden and Finland's bids to join the military alliance, accusing the two Nordic countries of ignoring threats to Turkey from Kurdish militants and other groups it considers as terrorists and pressing them to crackdown on these groups. Ankara has also been pressuring the two countries to lift a de-facto ban on weapons sales to Turkey.

Sweden announced in September that it was removing an arms embargo it had imposed on Ankara in 2019 following Turkey's military operation against the Kurdish militia in Syria.

Turkey, which has accused the Nordic countries of ignoring threats against it from Kurdish militants and other groups that it considers as terrorists, has not endorsed their accession. The parliaments of Turkey and Hungary have yet to ratify their applications. The 28 other NATO member states have already done so.



Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan and his Hungarian counterpart Peter Szijarto meet in Lodz, December 1, 2022.

and Hungarian peoples.

Unlike other European Union member states, Hungary has openly support-

ed Azerbaijan in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The Hungarian Foreign Ministry reaffirmed that support three days after

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everything we can to support your efforts towards a durable peace," Reeker added, echoing US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's remarks made at the most recent meeting of the Armenian and Azerbaijani foreign ministers hosted by him in Washington on November 7.

Blinken spoke with Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev by phone later in November. He urged the two sides to "schedule further talks as agreed in Washington," according to the State Department.

Reeker, who is also the US co-chair of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group, met with the Armenian and Azerbaijani leaders during his latest tour of the South Caucasus states.

Aliyev and Pashinyan were due to meet in Brussels on December 7. Aliyev canceled the meeting last week, objecting to French President Emmanuel Macron's participation in it sought by Yerevan.

Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan and his Azerbaijani counterpart Jeyhun Bayramov traded fresh accusations on Thursday when they addressed an annual OSCE ministerial conference held in the Polish city of Lodz.

Mirzoyan said that Azerbaijani forces occupied more Armenian territory and committed war crimes during large-scale fighting on the border between the two countries in September. He also deplored Baku's continuing armed "provocations" at various sections of the border.

Bayramov said, for his part, that progress in Armenian-Azerbaijani talks has been "quite limited" so far because the Armenian side is "imitating" a peace process and not honoring its commitments.

Russian Grousing

The attention from the US and Western partners is not sitting well with Russia. Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on December 1 accused Western powers of obstructing Russian efforts to end the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan and trying to hijack Armenian-Azerbaijani agreements brokered by Moscow.

Lavrov also questioned the effectiveness of separate peace efforts made by the United States and the European Union.

"It's hard for me to imagine how they can discuss the issue of [Armenian-Azerbaijani border] delimitation and the peace treaty

without a [precise] map of the former Soviet republics which is kept in the Russian [general] staff," he told a news conference in Moscow.

Lavrov reiterated that the US and France stopped cooperating with Russia within the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group, which was for decades co-headed by the three world powers, following the Russian invasion of Ukraine. They thus "buried" that mediation format, he charged.

US Assistant Secretary of State Karen Donfried denied this when she visited Yerevan in June. Later in the summer, another senior State Department official, Philip Reeker, was appointed as the new US co-chair of the Minsk Group.

In a clear jibe at Armenia's leadership, Lavrov said Pashinyan effectively recognized Azerbaijani sovereignty over Nagorno-Karabakh in a joint statement with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, French President Emmanuel Macron and EU chief Charles Michel issued after their October 6 meeting in Prague.

"Armenia and Azerbaijan confirmed their commitment to the Charter of the United Nations and the Alma Ata 1991 Declaration [by former Soviet republics] through which both recognize each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty," read that statement.

This recognition was meant to be at the heart of an Armenian-Azerbaijani peace treaty promoted by the West. Pashinyan publicly backed such a deal ahead of the Prague summit, stoking Armenian opposition claims that he is ready to help Baku regain full control over Karabakh.

Later in October, Russian President Vladimir Putin signaled support for a different peace deal that would indefinitely delay an agreement on Karabakh's status. Pashinyan repeatedly stated afterwards that he backs this formula and hopes Moscow will get Baku to accept it.

Lavrov complained on Thursday that the Prague statement made this task much harder for the Russians. Aliyev was ready to consider the Russian version of the peace treaty before the summit held in the Czech capital, he said.

"When the Armenian side is telling Russia, after signing that document [in Prague,] to stand by its proposals on Karabakh's status... that is not about holding negotiations," added the top Russian diplomat.



INTERNATIONAL

Fearing Scandal, Air Force Blocked Two Generals' Consulting Deals with Azerbaijan

By Craig Whitlock and Nate Jones

WASHINGTON (*Washington Post*) — Two generals who oversaw US supply routes through corruption-plagued Azerbaijan sought to profit from their connections once they retired. An Air Force lawyer objected. The Post sued to make the case public.

During the height of the war in Afghanistan, US military leaders flocked to the Caspian Sea nation of Azerbaijan to embrace its president, Ilham Aliyev, despite a report from the US Embassy comparing the mustachioed strongman to mafia bosses in “The Godfather.”

Setting aside concerns about Azerbaijan’s culture of corruption, Pentagon officials persuaded Aliyev to open his country’s borders and airspace to critical US and NATO supply routes to Afghanistan. In exchange, US officials promised a closer diplomatic partnership with Aliyev and steered \$369 million in defense contracts to Silk Way Airlines, an Azerbaijan cargo carrier that US investigators say was controlled by the government.

Two US Air Force generals — Duncan McNabb and William Fraser III — who oversaw the supply routes from 2008 to 2014 later tried to cash in on their Azerbaijan connections. Upon retiring from active duty, the four-star generals negotiated valuable consulting deals with Silk Way Airlines, according to documents obtained by the *Washington Post* under the Freedom of Information Act. One of them stood to earn \$5,000 a day.

The Pentagon and State Department normally rubber-stamp requests from retired US military personnel to work for foreign powers or companies controlled by foreign governments, having approved more than 95 percent of applications since 2015. But when the Air Force learned about McNabb’s and Fraser’s business ventures in Azerbaijan, officials flagged them as a potential embarrassment and a risk to national security, the documents show.

The case triggered a prolonged internal battle between the retired generals and R. Philip Deavel, a civilian Air Force lawyer who feared that the consulting deals might trigger a scandal.

Other Air Force officials repeatedly sought to prevent the dispute from becoming public. Between 2016 and 2021, The Post submitted four separate FOIA requests that should have produced records about the case, but the Air Force either did not reply or said it could not find any documents.

This year, the Air Force finally released more than 400 pages of records — but only after the *Post* sued in federal court and presented written proof from another agency that the generals’ conduct in Azerbaijan had generated an investigation.

The files provide an unusually detailed look at how two high-ranking US military commanders tried to profit from foreign relationships forged during wartime, and at the Pentagon’s struggles to police such behavior.

The documents reveal that Air Force intelligence officials objected to the Azerbaijan business deals for reasons that remain classified. Meanwhile, Deavel, who as the director of the Air Force Review Boards Agency was responsible for reviewing such arrangements, raised ethical concerns because the US military had given extensive business to Silk Way Airlines while McNabb and Fraser managed the supply

routes through Azerbaijan.

In a 2015 confidential memo, Deavel warned his superiors that “we should do nothing that would cause Congress or the media to question whether the hundreds of millions of dollars flowing to Silkway are solely for valid national security needs.” The lawyer added that it might look like McNabb and Fraser knew “that a perk of office is a lucrative advisory contract from Silkway upon retirement.”

At one point, according to the 2015 memo, Fraser warned that if the US government prevented him from working for Silk Way, it would face “blow-back” from Azerbaijan, and that Aliyev’s government might even block US and NATO supply routes to Afghanistan in retaliation.

‘Azerbaijan Was the Key’

Two decades of US wars in Afghanistan and the Middle East have created a thriving job market for American veterans trying to profit from their overseas deployments.

Fraser and McNabb are among more than 500 retired US military personnel who have sought federal permission over the past eight years to accept jobs as consultants or contractors for foreign governments, according to a Post investigation. Most of the jobs originate in countries known for human rights abuses and political repression.

McNabb and Fraser, now both 70, accumulated a multitude of foreign contacts while leading the US Transportation Command (Transcom), the military’s giant logistics arm responsible for moving troops and supplies around the globe.

McNabb, an Air Force Academy alumnus, headed the command from 2008 to 2011. Fraser, a Texas A&M graduate, succeeded him and held the job until retiring in 2014.

As commanders, their primary challenge was transporting materiel to landlocked Afghanistan, a logistical nightmare. Iran blocked access from the west. Pakistan offered access from the south and east for truckers willing to drive arduous routes over mountains and through deserts, but sometimes closed its border checkpoints when tensions rose with Washington.

When McNabb took charge of Transcom, he told the *Post* in a recent interview, one of his first tasks was to try to open an alternative supply route to Afghanistan from the north that bypassed Russia. The only feasible option was to cross the territories of several former Soviet republics, including Azerbaijan.

In November 2008, McNabb made his first international trip as Transcom commander to Baku to see if he could win support from Aliyev and his government for new sea and ground supply routes as well as expanded overflight rights.

“Azerbaijan was the key,” McNabb recalled in the interview. “Folks don’t realize how critical that was.”

Aliyev had ruled Azerbaijan since the 2003 death of his father, Heydar, a former KGB boss who became president shortly after the breakup of the Soviet Union. Corruption flourished under the Aliyevs, with the CIA describing it as “pervasive” and the State Department calling it “systemic.”

In a classified 2009 diplomatic cable made public by the anti-secrecy group WikiLeaks, the US Embassy in Baku described Aliyev as “a mix” of Michael and Sonny Corleone, the fraternal mobsters of “The Godfather” novel and movie.

“His goal appears to be a political en-

vironment in which the Aliyev dynasty is unchallenged,” the embassy wrote. Aliyev later appointed his wife, Mehriban Aliyeva, as vice president. Both remain in their positions.

McNabb said Aliyev’s government was open to the proposed military supply routes but wanted something in return. At first, Azerbaijani officials insisted the United States would have to pay tariffs to use their country’s airspace, though they later relented. “I had to tell them we don’t pay anyone,” McNabb said.

The supply routes paid off for Azerbai-



Gen. Duncan McNabb

jan in other ways, however. Silk Way Airlines, seeking to break into the US market, received \$269 million in US defense contracts during McNabb’s three-year tenure at Transcom to transfer supplies from Europe to Afghanistan and Iraq, according to Air Force records.

McNabb did not play a direct role in the contracting process. But he met with Silk Way officials and said he once hosted a Silk Way executive for dinner at his home at Scott Air Force Base in Illinois. “They did do a lot of missions and they did do a lot of good work,” he said.

Retirement and a Job Offer

McNabb retired from the Air Force in December 2011 and settled in Arlington, Va. Eighteen months later, he said, officials with Silk Way Airlines contacted him about a possible business venture.

Silk Way wanted to modernize its operational control center at Heydar Aliyev International Airport in Baku. The firm invited McNabb to return to Azerbaijan in June 2013 for a visit and offered to hire him as an adviser, he said.

McNabb agreed. That month, he said, he set up a consulting firm, Ares Mobility Solutions, partnering with a retired Air Force colonel and a captain in the Navy Reserve who had worked in the airline industry. Ares signed a contract with Silk Way that paid a monthly retainer of \$10,000 plus expenses, documents show. Under the deal, McNabb was expected to travel to Baku every three to five months to work for a few days at a time.

According to federal law, retired US military personnel — defined as those who served at least 20 years in uniform — and reservists are required to obtain permission from their branch of the armed forces and the State Department before they accept anything of value from foreign powers or companies controlled by foreign governments.

Silk Way Airlines was one of 23 subsidiaries of a private holding company, Silk Way Group LLC, that had come to domi-

nate the aviation sector in Azerbaijan after the partial privatization of the country’s state-owned airline.

McNabb said he thought Silk Way Airlines was wholly private so he didn’t seek federal authorization at first. “This was not with the government,” he told the *Post*. US investigators would disagree.

Like McNabb, Fraser made Azerbaijan a priority during his tenure as Transcom chief.

A few weeks after taking command, he flew to Baku in December 2011 to discuss the Afghanistan supply routes with Aliyev and other Azerbaijani officials. Over the next three years, Fraser met with Aliyev twice in Azerbaijan and once in New York, according to Azerbaijan’s government.

Transcom also continued to do considerable business with Silk Way Airlines, with the firm receiving an additional \$100 million in US defense contracts, according to Air Force records.

In April 2014, Azerbaijan’s ambassador to the United States visited Scott Air Force Base in Illinois to tour Transcom headquarters.

The ambassador, Elin Suleymanov, met with Fraser, who was nearing the end of his time in command.

During the visit, the diplomat noted that “there are many opportunities for future military and commercial cooperation” between the United States and Azerbaijan, according to a US military press release.

A ‘Going Rate’ of \$5,000 a Day

Fraser retired from the Air Force two months later, on July 1, 2014. Within days, according to Air Force records, he received a job offer from Silk Way Group.

Unlike McNabb, Fraser sought advance permission from the Air Force to work for Silk Way.

Fraser said he sought authorization because a Transcom ethics counselor had advised him to do so. In a memo, the coun-



Gen. William Fraser III

selor noted that “the degree to which the Azerbaijan government owns and/or controls [Silk Way Group] has been the subject of media speculation in the past.”

The reference was to a 2010 investigation by Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty — an overseas broadcaster owned by the US government — that reported that Aliyev’s 21-year-old daughter was one of the owners of Silk Way Bank.

In his foreign-employment application to the Air Force, Fraser gave few specifics in describing his proposed duties with Silk Way Group, writing that he “would be a consultant/advisor providing subject matter expertise” and would “help develop see GENERALS, page 6



INTERNATIONAL

Air Force Blocked Two Generals’ Consulting Deals with Azerbaijan

GENERALS, from page 5
future business opportunities.” He said his “going rate” as a consultant was \$5,000 a day.

The application immediately drew scrutiny at the Pentagon. Deavel’s staff concluded that, contrary to Fraser’s assertion, there were strong indications that the government of Azerbaijan controlled Silk Way Group.

Meanwhile, the Air Force Office of Special Investigations conducted a separate review and submitted a classified report to Deavel. While details of the review remain a secret, the investigative agency said it had “national security concerns” about Silk Way, according to an unclassified memo summarizing the report.

That was enough for Deavel. He denied Fraser’s application on Sept. 30, 2014. “Ultimately, I cannot find the proposed relationship in the best interests of the United States,” he wrote.

Fraser didn’t give up. Two days later, he called Deavel and asked what he needed to do to persuade the Air Force to change its decision.

In a memo recounting the conversation, Deavel wrote that the discussion was “a little awkward,” partly because it was unusual for him to get a call from a four-star general, and partly because he had based his decision on the classified report.

On the phone, he told Fraser about the existence of the classified report, but said he couldn’t discuss details. He explained that the classified material “did cause me concern about the activities of his proposed employer and whether approving this compensated relationship posed risks to the reputation of the Air Force,” according to Deavel’s memo.

Still, Fraser pushed for approval. He told Deavel “that he knew the application was hazy and lacked specifics,” and asked if he could resubmit it with additional information that might make approval more likely.

Fraser also made some comments that Deavel took as a warning, documents show. The general said he believed there would be “blowback for the United States” if the Air Force didn’t let him work for Silk Way, according to Deavel’s memo.

In particular, Fraser noted that Azerbai-

jan had just renewed Transcom’s overflight rights and entered a strategic security relationship with the United States. He said Azerbaijani officials “would see a denial as inconsistent with those partnership agreements.”

Fraser also urged Deavel to contact the State Department’s desk officer for the Caucasus region, who he said would vouch that the general’s employment with Silk Way “was useful for American interests” in Azerbaijan.

Like Father, Like Son

Fraser resubmitted his application to the Air Force in November 2014. This time, he specified that he would consult for Silk Way West Airlines instead of the Silk Way holding company. One thing Fraser did not mention on his application was that his son, William Fraser IV, also worked in the aviation business in Azerbaijan.

William Fraser IV, a former US Marine sergeant who goes by the nickname “Mac,” had taken a job two years earlier as an assistant to the president of Azerbaijan Airlines, the state-owned carrier, as a public relations and strategic communications specialist.

Mac Fraser said he also worked part time for Silk Way West Airlines — the company that now wanted to hire his father for \$5,000 a day. Mac Fraser left Azerbaijan Airlines to accept a full-time job with Silk Way West Airlines as a Houston-based marketing manager in March 2015, according to his LinkedIn profile.

In an email exchange with The Post, Mac Fraser said he was unaware his father had received an offer to work for Silk Way West Airlines around the same time he did.

National Security Concerns

After Gen. Fraser submitted his second application, Deavel checked out his claim that the State Department thought his job with Silk Way would be “useful for American interests,” according to the case files.

State Department officials contradicted the general’s assertion and said they weren’t pushing for his job to be approved. They also said they “strongly disagree[d] with Gen. Fraser’s assessment” that there would be “diplomatic ‘blow-back’ from the Government of Azerbaijan” if US officials rejected his consulting gig, docu-

ments show.

The State Department surprised Deavel with a second revelation. Officials told him another retired four-star Air Force general — McNabb — had informed the State Department’s desk officer for Azerbaijan that he was working for Silk Way Airlines. It was the first time anyone had notified the Air Force about McNabb’s consulting job in Azerbaijan.

Deavel informed other Air Force officials that they had another potential problem on their hands. Not only had McNabb not applied for federal permission but the Office of Special Investigations’ national security concerns about Silk Way would probably apply in his case, too.

Deavel wanted to make sure he had the backing of his superiors. He wrote a “High Interest Notification” memo and sent it up the chain of command.

He noted that the State Department agreed that the government of Azerbaijan effectively controlled Silk Way and its subsidiaries. State Department officials, he emphasized, had expressed “disappointment that Gen Fraser, as a retired four star, would not voluntarily withdraw the request and seek post-retirement opportunities elsewhere,” according to the memo.

Deavel also reported that the Office of Special Investigations had shared its classified report with other federal intelligence agencies and that they all concurred with the national security concerns about retired US military personnel working for Silk Way.

Further, Deavel described how he had recently learned that McNabb was working as a Silk Way consultant without federal approval, which “causes me even greater concern” given Silk Way’s US defense contracts. Deavel reported that Transcom had awarded 2,230 cargo airlift missions to Silk Way during McNabb’s tenure, plus 1,117 missions while Fraser was in command, for a total cost of \$369 million.

On Jan. 9, 2015, Deavel wrote a terse letter denying Fraser’s employment with Silk Way as “not in the best interests of the Air Force.”

A Failure to Seek Permission

While that marked the end of Fraser’s push to consult in Azerbaijan, the Air

Force still needed to decide what to do about McNabb.

The case bounced around the highest levels of the Air Force until June 2015, when the Air Force inspector general opened an investigation to determine whether McNabb had committed misconduct by working for Silk Way Airlines without federal approval.

Three investigative officers interviewed McNabb at the Pentagon on Oct. 23, 2015. The retired general said that he hadn’t done anything wrong and that he had never come across any evidence that Silk Way Airlines was under the control of the government of Azerbaijan.

During his interview with investigators, McNabb was argumentative at times and questioned why no one in the Air Force had ever told him he should apply for federal permission to work for Silk Way.

“If somebody thinks I need to, please just tell me,” he said. “I’m chagrined that anybody would think that I would not try to live up to all of the ethics rules.”

Investigators noted that he had been briefed about the rules on foreign-government employment shortly before his retirement and that it was his responsibility to comply with the law.

In his interview, McNabb said that he was aware Fraser was also trying to work for Silk Way, but that they didn’t coordinate their efforts.

He denied that his consulting job was a reward for the US defense contracts awarded to the company when he headed Transcom.

The Air Force inspector general’s office completed its investigation into McNabb in November 2015 and concluded that he had violated the law by failing to seek permission for foreign-government employment.

There is no criminal penalty for breaking the law, but the military can withhold retirement pay from those who do so.

McNabb confirmed that the Defense Department docked his pension but declined to say how much.

“It was enough,” he said. “I paid.”

(This article has been shortened due to space considerations.)

French National Assembly Adopts Resolution Calling for Sanctions against Azerbaijan

FRANCE, from page 1
abuses allegedly committed by the Azerbaijani armed forces against Armenian soldiers and civilians. Invites, for this purpose, the Republic of Armenia to join the

It invites stakeholders, the Minsk Group, the International Alliance for the Protection of Heritage in Conflict Areas and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, to do their utmost to



A screenshot of the vote tally

International Criminal Court in order to fight against impunity.

Members of the Assembly invite the Government to consider the imposition of economic sanctions, should the attacks and occupation of the sovereign territory of the Republic of Armenia continue.

preserve, in a sustainable way, the Armenian cultural and religious heritage in the areas under Azerbaijani control;

It invites the government to increase France’s support for the Republic of Armenia, particularly with regard to humanitarian aid, and to study the strengthening of its



Hasmik Tolmajian, Armenian ambassador to France, at the Assembly (screenshot).

defense capacities;

Finally, the National Assembly emphasizes its unwavering commitment to the search for lasting peace, which alone will

ensure security and stability in the South Caucasus.

The French Senate adopted a similar resolution on November 15.



Community News

Veteran Priest in Worcester Retires with Lavish Sendoff

WORCESTER — On Friday, November 18, more than 350 guests attended a memorable event to honor Fr. Aved Terzian on his retirement from active service, after 38 years as the pastor and spiritual shepherd of the historic Armenian Church of Our Saviour.

First assigned to the parish as deacon in charge in 1982, and assuming the full role of pastor following his priestly ordination in 1984, Terzian has devoted his entire ministry to the service of the Worcester community. He is distinguished as the longest serving priest in the proud history of the very first Armenian Church in America.

His nearly four decades at the helm of the parish, and the leadership role he has played in the Eastern Diocese, were recalled in tributes from distinguished clergy, friends and parishioners throughout the evening at Pleasant Valley Country Club. These included Diocesan Legate Archbishop



Fr. Aved Terzian at the reception

op Vicken Aykazian, Diocesan Vicar Fr. Simeon Odabashian, Parish Council Chair Jay Kapur, and event chair Edward Atamian. Deacon Louis Mikitarian and Michael Mamishian read messages from retired pastor Fr. Garabed Kochakian and Fr. Arakel Aljalian of Watertown's St. James Church.

Fr. Terzian offered his own gracious, heartfelt remarks, recollecting his years of ministry in Worcester and giving counsel for the future. "As I have said nearly every Sunday for the past 38 years, may you continue to walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself for us, and continue offering our sacrifice to God," he concluded. "God's richest blessings on you all; I will dearly miss everyone, but I will carry you in my heart forever."

Tribute Message from the Primate

As the official representative of Diocesan Primate Fr. Mesrop Parsamyan, Fr. Odabashian read a special message from the Primate that expressed the evening's spirit of grateful admiration.

"It would be impossible to sum up Der Aved's importance to your community—indeed, to our entire Diocese and church—in just a few words," Fr. Mesrop wrote. "Even as a young man, newly arrived in this country, he left a lasting impression on our Diocesan Center and St. Vartan Cathedral, where people still fondly remember the young Deacon Onnik who brought such energy and see RETIREMENT, page 10



AAMA Board Members: Top row, left to right: Dr. Armineh Mirzabegian, Dr. Rosalynn Nazarian, Alexa Diranian, PA-C, Katrina Menzighian, Program Director; Bottom row, left to right: Dr. Hovig Chitilian, Dr. Vatche Minassian, Dr. Shant Parseghian, Dr. Armen Arslanian (Not pictured: Dr. Gail Guzelian and Dr. Viken Babikian).

Armenian American Medical Association Celebrates 50th Anniversary

BOSTON — The Armenian American Medical Association (AAMA) celebrated its 50th anniversary on November 12, with a gala banquet at the Sheraton Boston attended by more than 200 guests. The room was festive and the event surpassed original fundraising goals.

Guests included members of the medical community from across the eastern United States, including from leaders of sister organizations in New York, Washington D.C., and New England broadly.

Many supporters of AAMA outside the medical community attended, as did notable guests, such as the president of Winchester Hospital, Dr. Rick Weiner, who was accompanied by his wife, Janice.

Congratulatory letters were received from medical organizations in Armenia and Artsakh, including the former Minister of Health of the Republic of Artsakh, Dr. Mikael Hayriyan.

Dr. Rosalynn Nazarian, president of the AAMA, acknowledged past presidents, and thanked the board of directors, fellow members and friends for their service and continuous support. Nazarian emphasized AAMA's mission to promote excellence in the delivery of healthcare and medical education for Armenian communities from Boston and throughout New England to Armenia and Artsakh. The first President see GALA, page 11



Dr. Garo Armen delivered the keynote address and shared an inspiring message of hope and his vision for a better Armenia.



Dr. Viken Babikian (center) accepted an honorary award on behalf of the SIATA group for their efforts in stroke management in Armenia, presented by Alexa Diranian, PA-C (left) and Dr. Rosalynn Nazarian (right).

NAASR Holiday Open House to Feature Presentation by Khatchig Mouradian

BELMONT, Mass. — Dr. Khatchig Mouradian, the Armenian and Georgian Area Specialist at the Library of Congress, will be the featured speaker during the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) Holiday Open House on Thursday, December 15, at the NAASR Vartan Gregorian Building, 395 Concord Ave.

Mouradian will be part of a special youth program at 5 p.m., engaging in conversation with Harvard doctoral student Julia Hintlian and the audience on "The Books and Authors That Inspired My Journey," and at 7:30 p.m. will present an illustrated lecture, "Gas Balloons, Emperors, and Armenian Mapmakers: A Cartographic Journey through the Library of Congress's Collections," made possible by the support of the Dadourian Foundation.

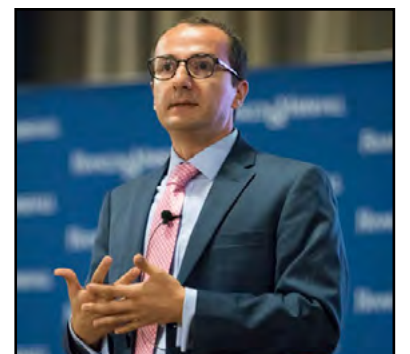
The Open House will run from 4 p.m. until the conclusion of the evening's programs. Light refreshments will be offered prior to the 7:30 program. There will be a one-day-only 20-percent discount for in-store and online sales of all items in the NAASR bookstore.

The youth program will be in-person only. The lecture will be both in-person and streamed live on Zoom and on YouTube. (Zoom Registration Link: <https://bit.ly/NAASR-Mouradian>) For those attending in person, NAASR recommends the wearing of masks to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 virus.

Mouradian is the Armenian and Georgian Area Specialist at the Library of Congress and a lecturer in Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies at Columbia University. He serves as co-principal investigator of the project on Armenian Genocide denial at the Global Institute for Advanced Studies, New York University, and is a member of the NAASR Board of Directors and on its Academic Advisory Committee.

Mouradian is the author of *The Resistance Network: The Armenian Genocide and Humanitarianism in Ottoman Syria, 1915-1918*, which received the Syrian Studies Association "Honourable Mention 2021." He is the co-editor of two forthcoming volumes, *After the Ottomans: Genocide's Long Shadow* and *Armenian Resilience and Handbook of the Late Ottoman Empire: History and Legacy*. He is the editor of the peer-reviewed journal *The Armenian Review*.

Admission is free and all are welcome.



Khachig Mouradian



COMMUNITY NEWS

In Throes of Armenian Genocide, His Mother Protected Him, Saved More Than a Hundred Others: Story of Sam Kadorian

By Julie Gruenbaum Fax

When Sam Kadorian was a child, Ottoman soldiers would conduct drills in a field near his home in Mezre (modern-day Elazığ, Turkey), adjacent to the fortress town of Kharpert. Sam would stand close by, mimicking their drills.

Just months later, it was Ottoman soldiers like these that forced Sam, his parents, his aunt, and three younger siblings to march into the desert, along with the rest of the Armenian residents of Mezre. His father was executed and his aunt and siblings starved to death in prison. Only Sam and his mother would survive, thanks to her ingenuity, determination, and the kindness of a Swiss doctor.

Between 1915 and 1923, amid the rise of Turkish nationalism and the chaos of World War I, an estimated 1.5 million Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire were killed through systematic massacres and death marches in what is now recognized as the first modern instance of genocide.

The government of Turkey continues to



Sam Kadorian (Khachadurian) in Iceland

deny that genocide occurred. In 2021 Joseph Biden became the first U.S. president to declare that the murder and deportation of Armenians was a genocide.

April 24, the day in 1915 that the Ottoman government first arrested, deported and then executed approximately 200 Armenian leaders in Constantinople (Istanbul), is observed as Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day.

Throughout Sam Kadorian's life, he often told his story and worked on behalf of the Armenian community. He recorded two audio testimonies for the Richard G. Hovannisian Armenian Genocide Oral History

Collection — in 1977 and 1996 — and in 1980 filmed a video testimony with the Armenian Film Foundation (AFF). The three testimonies are now contained in USC Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive, which over the years has partnered with both organizations to archive and index more than 1,400 testimonies and hundreds of documents connected to the Armenian Genocide. Some 600 testimonies are indexed and available in the Visual History Archive.

The Terror Begins

Sam Khachadurian (later changed to Kadorian) was born in 1907 in Husenig (now Ulukent), a village just outside of Kharpert. He was the oldest child of Garabed, a master cabinetmaker, and Vartanush (née Boyajian), a teacher who could speak, read, and write in Armenian, German and Turkish. Both his parents had been orphaned in massacres in 1895.

Garabed fought with the Ottoman Army on the Russian front in World War I, but managed to bribe his way back to his wife and four small children. He then moved his family from Husenig to nearby Mezre and began building storefronts and apartments for himself and his two brothers, who at the time were working in the United States.

Only one of the planned apartments had been completed when the terror began early in the spring of 1915.

First, Ottoman authorities demanded that Armenians surrender whatever weapons they had. Vartanush took the precaution of stashing jewelry and cash with the superintendent of a German orphanage in Mezre.

Sam believes it was late April when town criers arrived and announced that all Armenians were being relocated. The town's residents piled their belongings onto donkeys and were marched some 100 kilometers toward Malatya. When they arrived, Sam, who was 7, and his three younger siblings were sent with his mother and great aunt to an encampment for women and children. That night, they heard gunshots and explosions. Later, a 15-year-old Armenian boy who had escaped told them that all the men had been killed, their bodies dumped into the Euphrates River.

Then, Ottoman gendarmes forced the women and children to march another 200 kilometers toward Urfa, at the edge of the Syrian desert. Many starved to death on the march. Ottoman soldiers stole jewelry and valuables, and raped women and girls. Some women and children were taken as slaves or brides. Stragglers were shot or beaten.

Then, one night, Sam was rounded up.

"On the shores of the Euphrates River, they piled all of us boys from five to ten



Sam Khachadurian, on the right, with his parents, Vartanush and Garabed, and his little brother

years old in a pile and the gendarmes started with their swords, poking into the pile. I was lucky enough to be under the pile, and just the saber blade, the point, nicked me on the cheek," Sam recalled in his testimony, pointing to the scar, a shiny crater that stretched from the bag under his eye to the edge of his gray mustache.

The boys were left for dead, but that night Sam's mother came searching for him and pulled him out from under the pile of bodies.

The march continued past Urfa, into the desert and Sam's baby sister died. Vartanush was able to bribe a gendarme and escape back north to Urfa.

Refuge In a Swiss Hospital

In Urfa, Vartanush sought out Dr. Jakob Künzler, a Swiss doctor who directed

a hospital. She asked him to contact the German orphanage in Mezre to receive payment. Künzler hired Vartanush to work at the hospital and found housing for the family.

When the Armenians in Urfa heard about the fate of the men of Mezre, they mobilized a resistance in their neighborhood, a segregated section of the city surrounded by ancient walls. But, after a few weeks, the Turks smashed through the walls with heavy canons acquired from the German army, and Sam and his family, along the other remaining Armenians in Mezre, were again deported to the desert.

And again, Vartanush was able to bribe the guards and escape the desert, but this time the family was arrested as soon as they

continued on next page

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THE ARMENIAN MIRROR SPECTATOR

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Please note that our paper goes to our printer at the same time every week and is mailed out the same time every week. Nothing has changed.

The delivery problems all lie with the postal service, which is understaffed, and though we have contacted them repeatedly, we have not been able to resolve the problem.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

In Throes of Armenian Genocide, His Mother Protected Him, Saved More Than a Hundred Others: Story of Sam Kadorian

from previous page

arrived back to Urfa. They were thrown into a dungeon prison, with no beds, barely any food, and not even an outhouse. From the prison window, Sam watched cartloads of corpses be driven into the desert every day.

Sam's aunt, his brother and his sister starved to death in the prison.

Little by little, Dr. Künzler slipped Vartanush money with which to fund another bribe, and, after nine months, Sam and his mother made their escape. It took them the entire night to crawl the short distance, along a steep incline through a Turkish cemetery, to the Swiss hospital. At some points, Vartanush grabbed the back of Sam's neck with her teeth, pulling him forward as she crawled. They arrived hands and knees bloodied.

Sam was hospitalized for 2 or 3 months to regain weight and strength.

Saving Others, And Themselves

Dr. Künzler hired Vartanush to work in his home, and she and Sam lived with "Mama and Papa Künzler." Sam took on the identity of the doctor's son and joined Künzler's three daughters and a family next door to study geography, math, and science, along with German, French, English, Arabic, and Turkish. Sam had his own donkey and a dog that followed him wherever he went.

One day, Sam saw his mother pinned against a wall by Turkish gendarmes at the local police station. They demanded to know if she was working to save Armenians. She swore to them, in Turkish, that she wasn't involved. In Armenian, she mumbled repentance to God for telling a



Marthan Künzler, second from left, visiting with Sam Kadorian and family in Los Angeles in the 1980s

lie.

Working with Dr. Künzler, Vartanush had been visiting villages around Urfa to arrange for Armenians to escape to Aleppo, Syria, where the Armenian community were able to live in relative peace. Sam be-

lieves his mother helped rescue more than 100 people. Jakob and Elizabeth Künzler were later recognized for having transferred an estimated 8,000 Armenian orphans to Syria and Lebanon.

In 1918, Sam and his mother themselves stowed away on a train to Aleppo, where Vartanush became the head nurse at a French orphanage and Sam lived in a Catholic boarding school.

After World War I ended, neighbors from Mezre wrote to Vartanush telling her it was safe to return.

"And my mother wrote to them, saying, 'What am I going to do in my empty four walls? What is left there?'" Sam said.

Vartanush had a brother who lived in Watertown, Mass., and Garabed's two brothers were in Chicago. In April 1920, Sam and his mother, along with a woman Vartanush had saved and several orphans she was sponsoring, set sail for America. Sam celebrated his 13th birthday — with his first taste of ice cream — in the middle of the Atlantic.

A New Life

The family came through Ellis Island and eventually moved to Chicago, where Vartanush remarried and Sam graduated from Fenger High School in 1928. During and after high school, he worked dozens of jobs and developed a love of photography. He enlisted in the U.S. Army at the start of World War II and was sent to a base in Iceland, where he ran the photo lab.

In 1948 he married Mary Taylorson (changed from Tertzakian) and their son Gregory was born in 1952. In 1960, Sam and his family moved from Chicago to Los Angeles. Mary died of cancer in 1962 and Vartanush, then living in Fresno, died in 1965. Sam continued raising Gregory on his own, working for Technicolor in Hollywood studios.

Sam retired and became an active leader at the St. Peter's Armenian Church in Van Nuys and served as an unofficial spokesman for Armenian Genocide remembrance and recognition. In the 1970s and 1980s, he was featured in several documentaries and was honored by Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley. He also met with California Governor George Deukmejian, who himself had lost family in the Armenian Genocide.

Jakob Künzler died in 1949. His book, *In the Land of Blood and Tears: Mesopotamia during the World War (1914-1918)* was first published in 1921 and was reissued in 2007. His daughter, Martha Künzler, visited Sam in Los Angeles in the 1980s.

Sam Kadorian died in 2005 and is survived by his son Gregory and grandchildren Brian and Melissa.

(This story originally appeared on the website of the University of Southern California (USC) Shoah Institute on November 20.)

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Veteran Priest in Worcester Retires with Lavish Sendoff

RETIREMENT, from page 7
conviction to his service.”

“He had a special bond to the *arachnort* of that time: the great Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, later to become Patriarch of Jerusalem. And it was by his hand that Der Aved was ordained into the priesthood in 1984, receiving the priestly name that had once been Torkom Srpazan’s baptismal name. He has carried it with honor and dignity ever since.”

Noting the pastoral virtues of humility, charity, faith, courage and perseverance, Fr. Mesrop continued: “Under this spiritual vision, Der Aved undertook the leadership of this great parish in Worcester: the oldest in America, and still a supremely active and vital one. By God’s grace, Der Aved has seen his ministry blossom beautifully in four decades of service here.”

A Model of Christian Faith

The Primate also extolled the devotion of his wife, Vivian Terzian, whom he called “a true partner and support of *Der Hayr*’s ministry” through the years, leading the parish in many dimensions. “With grace and charity, Yeretzgin has been a model of Christian faith to people in this parish, and indeed throughout our Diocese. So many people regard her as a mentor and friend, and she has been a blessing in our community life,” wrote the Primate.

In the course of the evening, the parish revealed that a plaque in Yn. Vivian’s honor would be permanently mounted in the church’s Sunday School area, as a tribute to her devotion to the parish’s outreach ministry to children, and her foundation of its



Fr. Aved and Yn. Vivian Terzian, with their sons Raffi (left) and Onnig (right).

behalf. Subsequently, it was at the Primate’s invitation that Onnig, at the age of 19, came to the United States in February 1975.

With no family here in America, he lived at the Diocesan Complex in New York. Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem, who at that time was the Primate of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, played an influential role in Onnig’s life and decision to become a priest.

In 1978, on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of St. Vartan Cathedral, Onnig was ordained a deacon by Archbishop Manoogian. As time passed, he grew very close to Archbishop Manoogian who became like a second father to him by monitoring his education, social maturity, and spiritual development. Onnig then proceeded to earn his Bachelor’s Degree at Concordia College in Bronxville, NY, and in 1979, he continued his studies at the General Theological Sem-

As the longest serving pastor of the Armenian Church of Our Saviour, Der Aved has overseen many momentous occasions: the 100th Anniversary of the first Armenian Church in America, the 50th Anniversary of the Church being located on Salisbury Street, and the 1988 Armenian Earthquake Relief Effort which resulted in the collection of medical supplies, equipment, clothing, and \$850,000.

During his tenure, Der Aved coordinated the restoration and renovation of the Church and its facilities; he also served as a catalyst for the establishment of the Memorial Endowment Fund which has generated a continuous flow of income for the Church.

Terzian has worked with other Armenian clergy and lay leaders in the promotion of Armenian Unity which has resulted in the Armenian community coming together for Genocide Commemorations, Christmas Eve Services, and the creation of the Greater Worcester Armenian Chorale.

He has also worked closely with non-Armenian church leaders in order to develop an Ecumenical Spirit within our Church. He has established close relationships with the city’s mayors as well as Massachusetts state

legislators.

Terzian has nurtured and maintained a positive relationship with the church’s neighbor, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, at which he has offered commencement prayers and provided crisis counseling in the nearby fraternities. In 1984 he participated in a Task Force that would introduce Holocaust studies to the curriculum in the Worcester Public Schools.

He has served on the Community Partnership Committee for Police and Clergy, the City Manager’s Coalition on Bias and Hate, the St. Nersess Seminary Board, and as an advisor to the Dean of Students at Clark University.

Looking back over the past 25 years, Terzian believes that some of his greatest accomplishments have been the creation of a closer relationship between his congregation and God, a more widespread understanding of our Armenian Faith, an appreciation for our rich Armenian culture, and a spirit of cooperation in working for the church.

Never content with his ministry, he strives to welcome new ideas and foster new programs while keeping long honored traditions. Terzian said he is thankful that the people of Worcester have embraced him and his family, and have been generous with their love and respect.

Being a priest is not a job, but is a calling that is not easily described or understood. Archbishop Vicken Aykazian said in his sermon following a reception and banquet held on November 18 in Terzian’s honor, “Fr. Aved’s ministry will not end on December 31, 2022. He will no longer be your pastor, but his ministry will continue as an instrument of the Lord.”

His final service at the Church of Our Saviour will take place on December 24.



From left, Fr. Vasken Kouzouian, Archbishop Vicken Aykazian and Fr. Mampr Kouzouian

“Babies and Toddlers” program.

Onnig Terzian, son of Sima and Ara Terzian, was born in 1955 and resided in Istanbul, Turkey where he attended the Esayan Armenian elementary school and served as an acolyte (tbir) at the Holy Resurrection Armenian Church. He established friendships with several other Armenians and together they enjoyed playing soccer.

At the age of 14, he and 55 young Armenian boys departed their homes in Turkey to continue their education at the St. James Monastery of the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem. After graduating with high honors from the Jarankavorats (high school), he received a four-year scholarship to attend Haigazian College in Lebanon.

Having yet to make the commitment to become a priest, he planned to go to Lebanon with the aspiration of earning a teaching degree. Unfortunately, his plan was interrupted by the outbreak of civil war in Lebanon and consequently, with no choice, he returned home to Istanbul.

As he was no longer a student, Onnig was obligated by law to begin a two-year period of mandatory military service in the Turkish Army.

A close friend and fellow seminarian from Jerusalem, Deacon Bedros Sarkissian, who was enrolled at the St. Nersess Seminary in New York, spoke to the Primate on Onnig’s

inary.

While working on his Master’s Degree, he accompanied the Primate at many events and religious functions. During this time, he was appointed Director of the Avaks (Senior Citizens) program at the Diocese. This program served as a model for subsequent Avaks programs that were established throughout the Diocese. He was also appointed Deacon in Charge of the Northern Westchester Parish where he performed Sunday services.

He earned his Master’s Degree in Divinity from General Theological Seminary in 1982. After graduation, he came to Worcester with the then Very Rev. Yesnik Balian and began to serve the Armenian Church of Our Saviour.

On June 2, 1984, Deacon Onnig married Vivian (Vartoukian) at St. Vartan Cathedral with the Primate presiding. Six weeks later, Deacon Onnig was ordained into the Holy Priesthood by his spiritual mentor, Archbishop Manoogian. Following the tradition of the Armenian Church, the Primate was given the honor of choosing the newly ordained priest’s name. He named him Aved, which is a shortened version of the Primate’s own birth name Avedis. Father Aved and Yeretzgin have two sons; Onnig (given his father’s birth name), born in 1985, and Raffi who was born in 1988.



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COMMUNITY NEWS

Van Bakery Brings Taste of Armenia to Las Vegas

By Christine Vartanian Datian
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

LAS VEGAS — First, the honey cake. Then, business. At Van Bakery, the priorities are in order. And those priorities proved fortuitous one morning last month when a visitor stopped by to learn about the new Armenian bakery at 4375 S. Buffalo Drive. Because what better way to learn about a bakery than by tasting a signature baked good? The honey cake is served in bars that alternate thin strata of honey-flavored cake and sweet pastry cream, with a sanding of honeyed crumbs on top. The cake is moist but with body, sweet but not cloying, and wickedly habit-forming.

Asmik Yetaryan, her husband and a son, Ed, own Van Bakery, named for a historically Armenian city in eastern Turkey. This Armenian family opened its first bakery 30 years ago in Los Angeles to serve the city's large Armenian population. Over the years, the family opened two more bakeries, eventually serving not just Los Angeles customers, but also the handful of Armenian markets that had opened in Las Vegas.

"We were driving up products from L.A.," said Ed Halebian. "We figured it would be easier to open up a store here instead of keeping on driving back and forth."

The family, all now living in Vegas, launched Van Bakery last October. And the rest is honey cake.

Besides honey cake, Yetaryan and four Armenian assistants create from scratch about 50 Armenian breads and pastries. There are buttery crumbly khurabia - shortbread cookies - dusted with a flurry of confectioners' sugar; and braids of choreg, an

egg sweetbread traditionally made for Easter, just a bit dry as it should be; and bites of gata, a nut and sugar-filled pastry halfway between rugelach and croissants.

"It's in the oven; I'm gonna bring it in a minute," Yetaryan said of a fresh batch of gata headed for the table. Other items followed from the oven: pillowy pastry puffs, called khachapuri, filled with seven cheeses, and pastry turnovers - airy, flaky, crashy - with a hoard of green pepper and basturma, a spicy cured beef.

"It's like prosciutto for us," Halebian said of the basturma

A market and deli incorporates roughly half of the 5,000-square-foot Van Bakery. In the produce aisle, stacks of Persian cucumbers keep company with gnarls of ginger (an item added at the request of Chinese customers). Bottles of apricot compote - in this case, a juice, not a preserve - include sliced chunks of fruit.

"Apricot is big Armenian fruit," Halebian said. "You dump in the fruit, let it infuse, so you're not just relying on sugar for flavor."

Grains and pastas fill the shelves: rice, green lentils for soup, bulgur, orzo, vermicelli. To make one of her special dishes, Yetaryan boils basmati rice, vermicelli and orzo separately then heats to combine. She serves the dish alongside chicken breast sautéed in butter or olive oil.

The cheese case — Armenians adore cheese — offers braids of smoked chechil, a lean cow's milk cheese; Bulgarian sheep's milk cheese; labneh yogurt cheese, thick and tangy; and briny balls of Piknik white cheese that's sliced for eating with tomatoes, greens and flatbread. ("I don't eat cheese," Halebian admitted. "I'm the



Anahit Abrahamyan sets down freshly baked Armenian bread called puri at Van Bakery. (Richard Aston/Las Vegas Review-Journal)

only Armenian you'll find who doesn't eat cheese.")

One cold case contains oxtail for oxtail soup, Moldovan salami, lamb spare ribs, and thick cubes of pork belly marinated in Aleppo pepper. Another case offers containers of khash, a beloved soup of boiled cow's feet and other parts.

"It's something Armenians go crazy for, especially during the winter," Halebian said. "It was once a peasant dish; now, it's a delicacy."

The other morning, Yetaryan assisted customers while her assistants kneaded, rolled and baked. She spooned out salad by the pound (winner: tarragon chicken salad). She boxed cheese puffs and other pastries. She packed up choreg by the loaf and roll.

Many customers who were new to Armenian bakeries, she said, had asked her about her breads and pastries. She would share her culture, she decided, through instruction.



A box of fresh Middle Eastern pastries at Van Bakery (Richard Aston/Las Vegas Review-Journal)

"I want to soon start classes," she said. "People want to learn, so I don't mind to teach."

Interested in the secrets of honey cake and other Armenian products and baked goods?

Portions of this story were originally written by Johnathan L Wright at the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*; it was posted on May 6, 2022.

For this story, go to:

<https://www.reviewjournal.com/entertainment/food/new-bakery-brings-taste-of-armenia-to-las-vegas-2572666/>

VAN BAKERY

The Shops at Peace Plaza
4375 S. Buffalo Dr.
Las Vegas, NV 89147
vanbakerylv@gmail.com



Dried fruit and other Armenian specialties at Van Bakery (Richard Aston/Las Vegas Review-Journal)



Asmik Yetaryan, and son Ed Halebian (above), and Asmik's husband, own the Van Bakery. (Richard Aston/Las Vegas Review-Journal)

Armenian American Medical Association Celebrates 50th Anniversary

GALA, from page 7

of the AAMA, Dr. Paul Barsam, shared memories and remarked on how the organization has grown since it was first established.

Keynote speaker, Dr. Garo Armen, co-founder and chief executive officer of Agenesis, Inc., and founder and chairman of the Children of Armenia Fund (COAF), presented a brief history as well as the current state of affairs of the healthcare system in Armenia and Artsakh, and gave inspirational guidance on how Armenians can help improve healthcare delivery in Armenia.

An honorary award was given to the Stroke Initiative Advisory Task Force for

Armenia (SIATA), accepted by Dr. Viken Babikian on behalf of the group. Through its work, the group has improved acute stroke care in Armenia, raising it to the standard of Western countries.

The recipients of the AAMA's inaugural Armenia/Artsakh Healthcare Improvement Grants were announced. The first place grant was awarded to the "Artsakh Combat Casualty Care in 2022" program established by the Tufenkian Foundation. The program provides combat casualty care training to reduce deaths resulting from delays in treating traumatic injuries. The second place award was granted to the Viva Charity for a project to implement prenatal testing for pregnant women

in Gyumri.

Dr. Noubar Afeyan closed the evening by commending the AAMA on its history and achievements. He surprised the audience with the announcement of a generous donation to allow the AAMA to advance its efforts to improve healthcare delivery in Armenia and Artsakh.

Proceeds from the gala will directly benefit AAMA's annual scholarships for medical and allied health students in the New England area and support ongoing projects of the AAMA both locally and abroad.

AAMA is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. To join, donate, apply for a scholarship or learn more about the organization, visit <https://aamaboston.org>.



Dr. Noubar Afeyan congratulated the AAMA on their achievements and expressed his commitment to support a partnership to further improve healthcare delivery and education.



Arts & Culture

For Nora Armani, Acting Is A Way of Life

By Maydaa Nadar
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

ALEXANDRIA, Egypt — Armenian-Egyptian actress Nora Armani in October received the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 38th Alexandria Mediterranean Film Festival.

Armani relates what is the well-spring of her artistic career: “Being decisive is very important. Don’t expect that someone will fall from the sky to make your dreams come true. Do it regardless of where you are, at school, or at university. You can even start in the hall where we are sitting now, but first, you have to take the decision. The universe will not give you what you want unless you reveal it to it. Later, your choice must be backed up by persistence and continuity.”

At a very young age, she directed scenes from books they had at school. And serendipitously, she got her start right here in Alexandria. She says: “My aunt was living in Alexandria, so we used to spend the summers there. My brother, cousins, and I enjoyed acting in children’s plays. That’s where and how my artistic



Nora Armani at the 38th Alexandria Film Festival of Mediterranean Countries (photo courtesy of Nora Armani)

journey actually began.”
When she turned 15, she decided to be an actress and had the chance to perform at the Armenian Cultural Club in Cairo. After finishing school, she acted at the Theatre Group of the American University in Cairo (AUC), appearing in plays by Shakespeare and Camus among others. She continues: “I wanted to go to England because it is a good place for studying acting; however I was informed by the Royal Academy for Dramatic Art (RADA) that it was too late for that year to join but that they could give me an audition in January for the following September. At the age of 22, you think that a year is a long period of time. At the same time, I got an invitation from the London School of Economics, which is a top university in its field, to do a Master’s Degree in sociology, which see ARMANI, page 17



Souren Baronian

Souren Baronian, Fusing Cool Jazz and Middle Eastern Music

By Harout Arakelian
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

“World music is ‘in’ today, and I was at the bottom end of this thing, I was doing this music in the ‘50s! There was Latin fusion and Cuban stuff with jazz, but that was about it. I was one of the first ones to fuse Middle Eastern music with jazz. I was there, man!” - Souren Baronian

Pan-Africanist and pan-Islamist impulses among African-American musicians in 1950s New York City resulted in East-West fusion recordings by significant and seminal jazz artists like Randy Weston, Yusuf Lateef, and Ahmed Abdul Malik, parallel to recordings by immigrant entertainers like Eddie “The Sheik” Kochak and Mohammed El Bakkar, who, looking toward a Western audience, produced their own kind of blended Middle Eastern Americana. The music of Souren Baronian, meanwhile, organically synthesized his experiences as a second-generation Armenian-American with his devotion to supremely cool jazz.

A magnificently produced three-disc set released by Modern Harmonics titled “Souren Baronian - The Middle Eastern Soul of Carlee Records” includes all 12 of Baronian’s earliest recordings with the Nor-Ikes Band of 1949 to 1952 as well as two LPs he self-released on his own Carlee label accompanied by vocalist Bob (Boghos) Tashjian, Middle Eastern Soul featuring oudist Haig Manoukian and Hye Inspiration featuring oudist John Tarpinian. A carefully produced Record Store Day release in a limited edition of 1400 copies on colored vinyl with a new interview with Baronian in the notes, it is essential.

Born in Spanish Harlem in 1930, Souren grew up surrounded by music – the Latin sounds of his neighborhood, the ethnic Armenian music his parents played on a wind-up Victrola, and the fact of being geographically embedded in what he recalls as “the jazz center of the world.” In his early teens he was deeply devoted to Lester Young and Charlie Parker. He hung photos of them on his wall and, along with his friend and fellow Armenian-American jazz enthusiast Paul Motian (later a world-class and widely-recorded drummer) got himself into their gigs as well as performances by Coleman Hawkins, Billie Holiday, and many others of the jazz elite of the time and place. At the same time, Baronian was also enamored with the recordings of the Turkish clarinetist Sukru Tunar. At the age of 16 he sought out and studied with Turkish clarinet player Safet Gundeger, a performer in the 8th Avenue “oriental” clubs that catered to speakers of Turkish, Greek and Armenian.

Souren’s father Mesrob Baronian was born 1890 in the village of Nbshi in Palu, Historic Armenia. He married Heghnar (Helen) in 1908 and immediately welcomed their first child, Margaret. Mesrob planned to temporarily leave his new family and see BARONIAN, page 14



Souren-Baronian center

Houry Varjabédian: Presenting Armenian Literature to French Readers

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN — Last September, after several years of e-mail correspondence, I met French-Armenian translator and cultural figure Houry Varjabédian. Born in Casablanca, Morocco, in 1955, Houry has been living in Marseille since 1968, where she studied to become a pharmacist. She cooperates with “Parenthèses” publishing house in Marseille, is engaged in translations from Armenian into French, actively participates in the life of the Armenian community in Marseille and in the Armenian-French cultural dialogue.

Dear Houry, first of all please tell me about the Armenian editions of Parenthèses publishing house.

In the 1980s, architects Varoujan Arzoumanian and Patrick Bardou created Parenthèses, initially for the purpose of publishing the book they wrote together, but later they decided to publish others as well. Instead of constructing buildings, they gradually began to publish books, mostly about architecture and building materials, but also on music, urbanism



Houry Varjabédian

and photography. And since one of the founders is Armenian, an Armenian section was also created with the somewhat unusual name of “Collection of Armenias.” The first book in this series was the French translation of Avetis Aharonian’s *The Road to Freedom*, which was followed by other volumes over the years. Recently, the 31st book was published, *The Pains of Light* by Nicolas (Nigoghos) Sarafian, very beautifully translated by Ara Dandiguan. Our goal is to present Armenian literature, both old and new, to French-speaking readers. When the literature is not translated, it is as if the writers do not exist. When a few years ago, together with historian Anahide Ter Minassian, we published the collection *Lands of Our Childhood*, in which we collected the works of 40 Armenian writers about their childhood, it was very sad for us to hear from the French: oh, are there so many Armenian writers? Of course, there are much see HOURY, page 16

ARTS & CULTURE

‘Laughter for Life’ Comedy Fundraiser for Bone Marrow Registry Returns

LOS ANGELES — “Laughter for Life,” the annual comedy night of the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry (ABMDR), returns on Sunday December 11, featuring a lineup of renowned stand-up comedians, including Sam Tripoli, Maz Jobrani, Arman Oganessian, Antic, Amir K, Kira Soltanovich, and Jeff Dye.

The annual event had been on hold for the past two years, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The event will take place at the iconic Comedy Store in Hollywood.

“At last, we’ll be able to once more bring the talents of these great performers to comedy-lovers in Los Angeles, and we couldn’t be happier,” said ABMDR president Dr.



Sam Tripoli

Frieda Jordan. “It remains one of our most popular benefit events, as it promises to delight event-goers with cutting-edge comedy while benefiting the life-saving mission of our organization.”

““Laughter for Life’ represents the very best of our community, as everyone comes together for a wonderfully uplifting event and a great cause,” said Lara Yeretsian, Esquire, who chairs the Comedy Night Committee and is a member of the ABMDR Board. Yeretsian and Sam Tripoli co-founded “Laughter for Life” in 2002. Tripoli, who is also a noted podcaster, has hosted the comedy night ever since.



Kira Soltanovich

The 18th annual “Laughter for Life” will be held on Sunday, December 11, beginning at 7 p.m., with foods and drinks. The show will start at 8 pm. For tickets, please visit itsmyseat.com/ABMDR.



Maz Jobrani

Established in 1999, ABMDR, a non-profit organization, helps Armenians and non-Armenians worldwide survive life-threatening blood-related illnesses by recruiting and matching donors to those requiring bone marrow stem cell transplants.

To date, the registry has recruited over 33,500 donors in 44 countries across four continents, identified over 9,000 patients, and facilitated 39 bone marrow transplants. For more information, call (323) 663-3609 or visit abmdr.am.

‘Birth of Vahagn’ in 50 Languages

CAIRO — On November 19, the presentation of a new book, *‘The Birth of Vahagn’ in 50 Languages*,” compiled by Artsvi Bakhchinyan and Haig Avakian, took place at Bulukdanian Hall in Cairo, in the presence of the compilers. This is the 51st volume of Cairo’s *Tchahagir* Armenian-language weekly’s supplements, launched in 2016.

The most ancient extant Armenian song, known as “The Birth of Vahagn” and preserved due Movses Khorenatsi’s work *The History of Armenia*, is one of most beloved and popular examples of Armenian literature. An expression of the singing tradition of Goghtan province (currently in Nakhichevan, Azerbaijan), it depicts the birth of Vahagn, the deity of fire, thunder, and war worshiped in ancient Armenia. The literary original reached us without music.

“The Birth of Vahagn” is also one of the most frequently translated Armenian poems. For the first time we find it translated into the Latin language in 1736, published in London as a part of Movses Khorenatsi’s work prepared by the Whiston brothers.

Cairo musicologist and philologist Haig Avakian came up with the idea to collect all published translations of “The Birth of Vahagn” in a volume, as one of his numerous and varied literary projects. He is the main author or editor of various collections of materials published as the aforementioned supplements to *Tchahagir*. He collected all available hitherto published translations in 20 languages (Arabic, Bulgarian, Czech, English, Farsi, French, Georgian, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Latin, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Spanish and Turkish). Later his friend and colleague from Armenia, philologist Artsvi Bakhchinyan – author of number of studies in history and culture, with some

experience in multilingual publications – joined him providing three other published translations (Polish, Portuguese, and Swedish) and arranging new ones in 27 more languages, using his global network of friends and friends of friends.

There is a certain tradition of multilingual publications among Armenians. Already in 1810, the Mkhitarists of Venice published



The book cover in Armenian

the 12th century poet Nerses Shnorhali’s “In Faith I Confess” prayer in six languages. They then multiplied the number of languages which by 1871 reached 36. In 1986 in Yerevan the poem of the seventh century poet Davtak Kertogh was published in seven languages. On Artsvi Bakhchinyan’s initiative, Armenian writer Elda Grin’s short story “Hands” was published in 35 languages (2010) and English-language poet Hovhanness Pilikian’s poem “The Sea Scene on My Mother’s Day” in 19 languages (2012). In

2019, Yeghishe Charents’s famous poem, “I Love My Sweet Armenia’s Word” was published in 35 languages.

“The Birth of Vahagn” in 50 Languages includes not only translations, but also versions in Eastern and Western Armenian. With this edition, Armenian poetry has been translated into some languages for the first time, especially in the languages of the Far East (Thai, Laotian, Khmer), as well as in an African language (Lingala, the language of Congo).

The compilers of the volume are grateful to the people who willingly agreed to be part of the project. Among them are poets like Emil Asdurian (Albanian, USA); specialists involved in Armenian studies Andrea Scala (Romani, Italy), Shlomi Efrati (Hebrew, Israel), Bayarsaikhan Dashdondog (Mongolian, Mongolia); philologists Sjarhey Nikitko (Byelorussian, Byelorussia), Armine Piloyan Vrteska (Macedonian, North Macedonia) and Mery Sarkisian (Slovakian, Austria). Among the translators there are also people from various professions with Armenian interests like Gerda Davidian (Danish, Denmark) and Ingibjorg Porisdottir (Icelandic, Iceland), or of Armenian origin, such as sculptor Arsen Kljan (Estonia, Estonian), singer Sini Tuomisalo (Finnish, Finland), musicians Andi Roselund and Nakjung Kim (Korean, South Korea), boxing coach Garro Nanikian (Lingala, Congo) and artist Karen Nikgol (Norwegian, Norway).

Some non-Armenian specialists and native speakers participated by invitation of mutual friends like Andrea Lafuentek (Basque, Spain), poet Ahmed Swapan Mahmud (Bengali, Bangladesh), Dr. Vinodkumar (Hindi, India), Nuraysha Bekeeva (Kazakh, Kazakhstan) Natalia Spatar (Khmer, Russia), Welat Alp (Kurdish, France), Soutchai Khamphouxai (Laotian, Laos), Dr. Navamintr (Tom) Vitayakul (Thai, Thailand), Nigora Umarova (Uzbek, Uzbekistan) and Natalia Sandetska

(Ukrainian, Ukraine). Four translators from Armenia also took part in the project – native speakers Tahmina Tumasova of Assyrian, Nane Djerrahian of Dutch, and Olga Arzumanian of Lithuanian, as well as specialists of languages David Gritsenko of Chinese and Ruzan Khojikyran of Japanese.

The compilers of the volume address their special thanks to the following people and experts who, responding to their requests, provided the volume with new materials, or were mediators with the aforementioned translations: Victoria Minoian (Argentina) for Laotian, historian Mihran Minasyan (Armenia) for providing various information and checking, Anahit Khosroeva (Armenia-USA) for Assyrian, Felix Bakhchinyan (Armenia) for Lithuanian, Golam Rabbany Biplob (Bangladesh) for Bengal, Dr. Deize Crispim Pereira (Brazil) for Portuguese, Haig Utidjian, Milada Kilianova and Hakob Asatryan (Czech Republic) for Czech, Hovik Kassapian (Greece) for Greek, Bijaya Jena (India) for Hindi, Michael Stone (Israel) for Hebrew, Gulnara Mendikulova (Kazakhstan) for Kazakh, Valda Salmina for Latvian (Latvia), Anush Balayan (Serbia) for Serbian, Ivan Gaztanaga (Spain-USA) for Basque, Laura Daun Minasjan (Sweden) for Khmer, Lousia Adamian (Sweden) for Swedish, Elizabeth Romhild (Thailand) for Thai, Maral Aktokmakyan (Turkey) for Turkish, Umit Kurt (Turkey-Israel) for Kurdish, Viktor Solovka (Ukraine) for Ukrainian and Georgi Saakov (Uzbekistan) for Uzbek.

Without the loving support of all these people the present work would not have been possible. One can call this initiative a project of friendship, with different nationalities and specialists unified under the same umbrella for cultural reasons.

The book is published in a limited edition. It is not for sale or any commercial use. The Internet version is available here: <https://archive.org/details/tchahagir-supplement-no.-51/mode/2up>



ARTS & CULTURE

ATP Short Film ‘Antar’ to Premiere

BELMONT, Mass. — Since 1994, Armenia Tree Project (ATP) has planted 7 million trees in Armenia and Artsakh. The majority of those trees were planted by ATP’s forestry department, which to date has established 1,500 hectares of new forest in Armenia.

A new film by the renowned director Artak Avetyan examines ATP’s remarkable efforts to reforest the country and mission to use trees to improve the standard of living of its residents.



A shot of Antar

The English-language version of this short film will premiere on Wednesday, December 14, at 6:30 p.m. at the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) in Belmont. Tigran Palazyan, ATP’s chief propagator, will be present to answer questions after the film. Light refreshments will be served. Admission is free. ATP is a non-profit organization that revitalizes Armenia’s and Artsakh’s most vulnerable communities through tree-planting initiatives, and provides socio-economic support and growth. It is based in Yerevan, Armenia and has an office in Woburn, Mass. For more information, visit ArmeniaTree.org.

Souren Baronian, Fusing Cool Jazz and Middle Eastern Music

BARONIAN, from page 12

rived in the United States in 1909. But due to the horrific events of the Armenian Genocide, the Baronian family was separated. It would be nearly two decades when Mesrob would finally find his wife and daughter in a refugee camp in Aleppo, Syria.

By 1926, Helen and Margaret joined Mesrob in New York and soon after welcomed two sons, Harry in 1928 and Souren in 1930.

Mesrob was a community leader and a member of the Armenian Democratic League of America. Souren’s first gigs were at Armenian community events, where his



audience expected both Armenian songs and American dance music, laying the groundwork for the rest of his career. The Audubon Ballroom in Harlem, which held annual Armenian concerts where young Souren played, is now remembered as the location of Malcolm X’s assassination.

Souren arranged Armenian concerts and enlisted Paul Motian among others for the “American” part of the program. On one occasion Gerry Mulligan jammed with the group. Souren’s taste in jazz ran toward the avant garde saxophone player Lee Konitz, the pianist and composer Lennie Tristano and, in particular, Tristano’s sax player and protege Warne Marsh. He approached Tristano and ultimately studied with both him and Marsh. (Another amazing point of contact between Baronian and jazz royalty: During a military stint in Korea, he was in a band with Cannonball Adderley.)

“The Nor Ikes, along with the Vosbikians were the first bands made up of Armenians born in the United States. After a while we said, ‘Let’s make a 78!’” - Souren Baronian

In 1948 the oudist and butcher Charles “Chick” Ganimian approached Souren Baronian about forming a band. They took the name Nor-Ikes (“New Dawn” in Armenian) at Souren’s father’s suggestion. When the band entered the recording studio in late 1949, they consisted of Baronian, and Ed Malkasian on reeds, Chick Ganimian (who later played on some ‘60s Eastern-jazz fusion LPs by Herbie Mann) on oud, and Aram Davidian on drums. Their first record redefined Armenian-American music, delivering a fresh new sound. A re-interpretation of an Armenian folk song, “Khun Dzorin Dzar” (The Apple Tree), the Nor-Ikes produced a uniquely jazz-inflected Armenian-American style. The Nor Ike recording sessions were halted when Souren was drafted in the US Army. Later recordings by the Nor Ike band included Steve Bogoshian on the clarinet. The band resumed their recording sessions upon Souren’s return in 1951 with songs such as *Chem oo Chem*, *Dari Lo Lo* and *Shek Mazer Ov*, derived from their immigrant parents’ generation, swung hard for a new generation.

In addition to the Nor Ikes material on the new Middle Eastern Soul set, highlights include Baronian’s compositions with lyrics by Bob Tashjian – the exciting and playful *Eench Anem* (What Shall I Do) and the smoothly flowing *Siroon* (Beautiful). *Groovin’ Hye* lives up to its name – a groovy dance tune that combines Armenian, Anatolian, American, and Balkan sounds while being wholly original. The final number on the compilation is another dance tune composed Baronian, named for his father, “Mesrobi-Bar” (Mesrob’s Dance).

Modern Harmonics, which produced the 3 LP/CD set, specializes in eclectic reissues. Among them, last year, they reissued the 1969 classic Middle Eastern Rock by John Berberian and the Rock East Ensemble, a band in which Souren Baronian also played. Through his journey, Souren Baronian became a trailblazer in Armenian-American jazz and folk music. A master of the saxophone, clarinet, and dumbek, he added duduk and kaval to his repertoire after a trip to Armenia.

Currently, in his early 90s, Souren can be heard performing in New York City and the surrounding areas with his band Taksim.

Jivan Avetisyan Wants to Bring Story of Artsakh to the World

ARTSAKH, from page 1

Continuing with the theme of the “Gate to Heaven,” Avetisyan explains that the critical points of the film take place through the development of the main characters’ stories. “There are several critical points, because there are different characters with different fates and different stories. The first one is when the man confesses his sins and comes close to the ‘Gate to Heaven.’ The second one is that the girl is trying to find her father, find her roots and feel completed. The third one is that silence is the same as crime.”

Echoing a common sentiment, Avetisyan explains that the film is intended to be a wake-up call to the world in regard to the situation of the Armenian people in Artsakh and Armenia. “The world was witness to what is happening,” said Avetisyan, “but there are silent.”

At the same time, the film intends to show the struggle of the suffering Armenian people against all odds, while depicting Europeans as relatively well-intended,

cluding the United States, to promote it. It was shown by AMC Theaters in the US in California, Las Vegas, Michigan, and Boston, and then in three Canadian cities as well. Avetisyan is currently raising funds



Director Jivan Avetisyan for his next film project, “Revival,” which will be in Armenian. The film is produced by Masis Bagh-



Richard Sammel performs as German photojournalist Robert Sternvall in “Gate to Heaven”



Tatiana Spivakova performs as Armenian opera singer Sophia Marti (Martirosyan) in “Gate to Heaven”

but focused on their own interests and ultimately ignoring Armenia. The realization that the main German character has in the end of the film is evidently the same realization that Avetisyan wants Western powers to come to; that they are tied by history to Armenia and there is a moral obligation to come to the country’s aid.

This year, the film was re-released and Avetisyan has been touring the world, in-

dasaryan, Kestutis Drazdauskas and Adrineh Mirzayan (executive producer). It is a joint production of Armenia, Lithuania, Germany, France, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Italy and the US. It stars Richard Sammel, Tatiana Spivakova and Sos Janigekyan. Artavazd Yeghiazaryan (Armenia) and Mko Malkhasyan (US) wrote the script.

For more information on the film, visit <http://gatetoheavenfilm.com/>

ADVERTISE IN THE MIRROR



ARTS & CULTURE

Recipe Corner



by Christine Vartanian



Carrie Nahabedian's Sou Boreg (Photo courtesy Carrie Nahabedian)

On the Menu: Sou Boreg (Cheese Casserole)

Carrie Nahabedian's mother ushered her out the door to her flight to Washington, D.C. for the 2018 Smithsonian Folklife Festival, this was her advice to the Michelin-starred chef, "Don't brown the sou boreg too much."

Armed with her beloved grandmother's original rolling stick, Nahabedian blew into the Hatsatoun prep kitchen along with the end of a storm on our opening day, ready to demonstrate her Grandma Rose Nahabedian's recipe for sou boreg, a cheese-filled, layered noodle dish. She had prepared it once the previous evening,



Chefs Carrie Nahabedian and Gayane Khachatryan in the Hatsatoun kitchen at the 2018 Smithsonian Folklife Festival. Photo by Jurban

teaming up with Chef Michael Costa at <https://www.zaytinya.com/location/washington-dc/> Zaytinya to serve alongside roasted leg of lamb and fasoulia (braised green beans), topped with fresh herbs, chive oil, and lamb jus.

Nahabedian credits her Grandma Rose from Chicago for teaching her all about Armenian cooking and preparation. "My grand-

mother cooked every day," she says. "She made her own homemade yogurt, her own bread, her own phyllo dough. I believe that our beloved moms and grandmothers are the people who learn and who teach and pass on these unique family food traditions and customs to their children."

Nahabedian began cooking in high school, when she would go to Grandma Rose's house each week and learn a new dish until she had cooked through her grandmother's repertoire. She would measure her grandmother's hand to learn the amounts of salt or olive oil used. When it came time to choosing a dish to demonstrate for the Smithsonian Folklife Festival visitors, everyone in her family and at church had an opinion: from crème kadayif (a cream-filled pastry made with crispy phyllo) to boreg (a rolled version of baklava). But the fact that Nahabedian had her grandmother's rolling stick, which itself is almost 75 years old, cemented the decision to make sou boreg.

Nahabedian says, "My mother Helen cooks tremendously, and my Grandma Rose, who passed away in 1991, was famous in Chicago as the queen of Armenian cooking. I learned how to make pilaf, yalanchi and other dishes from Grandma Rose, and I have clipped recipes from both these women to the back of my favorite Armenian cookbook (Armenian Cooking Today by Alice Antreassian [St. Vartan Press, 1989]). Everyone in our family cooks and entertains with great style and flourish. I don't like shortcuts or not putting your best foot forward all the time."

The most time-consuming part of this dish is making the noodles from scratch, but as Nahabedian attests, once you've had it with fresh noodles, you can't go back to mock sou boreg, a variation using purchased dried egg noodles.

INGREDIENTS:

Dough:

- 3 large eggs
- Nice pinch of kosher salt
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 cups all-purpose flour for kneading and rolling

Filling:

- 1/2 cup butter, melted
- 2 pounds Muenster or Monterey Jack cheese, grated
- 1 pound small-curd cottage cheese
- 4 large eggs, beaten
- 1/2 cup parsley, chopped

PREPARATION:

To make the dough, crack the eggs into a large mixer bowl and beat until fluffy with a whip. Add the salt and olive oil. By hand, knead in the flour. It should be sticky. Knead in more flour until it is soft and makes a smooth ball. Do this on a smooth surface for best results.

Divide the dough into six equal portions shaped into balls. Place on a sheet pan or counter; cover with a towel and let rest for at least two hours. This will make it easier to roll out later. Do not let the dough balls touch each other.

Preheat the oven to 350° F. Generously butter a 9 x 13-inch ovenproof pan. Set aside.

Boil a large pot of lightly salted water on a high flame. Have a bowl of lightly iced water ready next to it.

Roll the dough with additional flour, making sure it does not tear. This is a very fragile dough. Roll into a thin round, approximately 10 inches wide.

Drop the dough round into the boiling water for approximately 30 seconds. Carefully remove the cooked dough and drop into cold water. Make sure there is not too much ice — it can tear the noodles. Remove quickly. Pat dry with paper towels and set aside. (Carrie likes to drizzle it with a bit of olive oil to prevent sticking.)

In a large bowl, mix the grated and cottage cheeses together with the beaten eggs. Taste for seasoning; it will vary based on the cheese. It most likely will not need any salt due to the nature of the cheese.

Divide the cheese into two bowls. Into one bowl, add the parsley, and leave the other plain.

Place one noodle sheet in the prepared pan. Brush with melted butter. Next, add the cheese-parsley mix. Add the rest of the noodle sheets and the remainder of the plain filling. Take care not to put cheese on every layer: this is not a lasagna. Dot the top of the dish with small pieces of soft butter.

Bake for 35 minutes or until the top is nicely golden brown, puffy and bubbly. Let it cool before cutting into squares.

Note: The dough can also be made ahead of time and rested overnight. The whole dish can be made up to the baking step, then covered in plastic wrap and refrigerated to prevent drying. Alternatively, the dish can be baked, chilled, and reheated for the next day.

(Author Kathy Phung is a foodways coordinator for the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, who also manages the demonstration kitchen at the National Museum of American History. Armed with a degree in anthropology and baking and pastry arts, she has worked in various food enterprises in the D.C. area as an oompa loompa, pastry cook, and butcher.)

For this story and recipe, go to: <https://festival.si.edu/blog/armenian-recipe-sou-boreg-cheese-casserole>

Also see:

https://www.si.edu/object/armenian-recipe-sou-boreg-cheese-casserole%3Aposts_1432036f94ec604fac672de2c8bab88d

For more Armenian recipes, see:

<https://www.jamesbeard.org/chef/carrie-nahabedian>

Chef Nahabedian opened Chicago's Brindille in the spring of 2013 along with partner and cousin Michael Nahabedian. While her former restaurant NAHA served to highlight her Armenian roots, Brindille's refined Parisian fare celebrates the Nahabedian cousins' favorite spots in Paris:

Brindille
534 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL, 60654
For reservations, call: 312) 595-1616
<https://brindille-chicago.com/>
<https://www.instagram.com/carrienaha/>

Social media: Facebook: Carrie Nahabedian or NAHA Restaurant or Brindille; Twitter: @cnaha or @naha-chgo or @brindille-chgo

For Carrie's Armenian Shish Kebab and Rice Pilaf recipes, go to: <https://www.jamesbeard.org/chef/carrie-nahabedian>

For "Carrie Nahabedian, The Michelin-starred chef, 62, on post-riot rehabbing, the two types of line cooks, and the best advice she ever got," Chicago Magazine, October 2020, go to:

<https://www.chicagomag.com/Chicago-Magazine/October-2020/Carrie-Nahabedian/>

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ARTS & CULTURE

Houry Varjabédian: Presenting Armenian Literature to French Readers

HOURLY, from page 12

more! Among the books published by “Parenthèses,” I would like to mention Axel Bakunts’s *Mtnadzor*, Charents’ *From Yerevan House of Correction*, Zabel Yessayan’s *My Soul in Exile*, Kostan Zarian’s *An Island and a Man*, Nigoghos Sarafian’s *The Bois de Vincennes*, Zareh Vorpouni’s *The Candidate*, Perch Zeytuntsyan’s *The Saddest Man*, Vahe Berberian’s *In The Name of The Father and The Son*, Krikor Beledian’s *Thresholds* and others. We would like more Armenian books to be published, but we can’t get our hands on them. We publish the Armenian books with our own funds, as they are difficult to sell, the readers are few, we have few or almost no sponsors. I should mention that the French Cultural Center has sponsored us several times. However, when strangers tell us at the book fairs they have read an Armenian book, they loved it very much, even if have forgotten the title (of course, it is difficult for a French to pronounce *Mtnadzor*), this is the greatest appreciation for us.

I once read that 100,000 books are published annually in France. It must be very difficult to ensure an Armenian presence in this huge sea — or ocean.

In the French book market, we are looking for a tiny place to present Armenian writers alongside the literature of Japanese, Croatian, Vietnamese and other cultures. But we Armenians, are few and there are also few translators from Armenian. Very important works were done by the late Pierre Ter-Sarkissian, who very beautifully translated Shirvanzade, Kostan Zarian and others. Our plans are many, but time is short. We are very interested in Parajanov’s works. When he was imprisoned, Varoujan Arzoumanian formed a defense group for himself in Marseille. We went to the Cannes festival, other places, collecting signatures to release Parajanov. Years ago, at the Parajanov Museum in Yerevan, we saw his letters and other materials and decided to translate them. The late Alice Der-Vardanian translated Parajanov’s letters from Russian: we hope we will be able to publish them one day. Next year, we plan to publish Vahan Tekeyan’s *Caesarea* in French, as well as a volume from Teotig.

The values of the past are very important, but today also there is good prose being created in Armenia.

We have not forgotten that, it is important for us to publish and introduce our living authors. A few years ago, we published an anthology of poetry, works of 20 authors, mostly from Armenia. Nune Abrahamian was the translator, Krikor Beledian and others also participated in translation. When we published that book, we made presentations, Hovhannes Grigoryan, Armen Shekoyan, Violet Grigoryan, Tigran Paskevichyan were invited to different cities in France, Nune was also invited to Bordeaux for residency. When we read Aram Pachyan’s novel *Goodbye, Bird*, we really wanted to translate it and it was published right before the covid. We intend to translate others as well, because we have many good young authors, both men and women, who have very original writing. We are very happy when we publish a writer who can

come to the presentation and talk.

This time you came to Yerevan following the footsteps of French-Armenian female writer Lass, a member of the French Resistance movement, a victim of the anti-Nazi struggle.

Yes, I came with Marie Chartron from the French “France Culture” radio and Anouschka Trocker from the German radio to study Lass’s archives and prepare a radio program and an exhibition about her. Before this, Marie and Anouschka has gone to Germany and found her case in the archives of the concentration camp, where in a document it was described how she was dressed, what she had with her, her shirt, her bag, etc. We translated a short essay from Louisa Aslanian into French, and foreigners were very interested in this subject, especially when they learned the story of his life. Born in Tabriz and studied in Tiflis, Louisa Aslanian-Lass went to France with her husband, Arpiar, with the intention of becoming a pianist, but their means were insufficient. She was admitted to the Sorbonne and studied literature. Her first novel, *By the Way of Doubt*, was published in *Hayrenik* (Homeland) newspaper of Boston, and in 1936 it was published as a two-volume book. She was involved in activities of Committee of Assistance to Armenia and became a columnist in their newspapers. When World War II broke out, Lass joined the Resistance movement. It is very interesting that this delicate young lady who was writing, living in her dreams, became a Resistance movement activist, never scared of danger. She used to transport weapons and print leaflets. Together with her husband they translated the leaflets into German so that Nazis would be morally depressed and know they would be defeated. Lass collaborated with poet and future French Resistance figure Misak Manouchian and his wife Meliné, as well as with Hamlet Vardapetian. He was a great scientist, who worked with Irene and Frédéric Joliot-Curies at the radium institute. Vardapetian later repatriated to Soviet Armenia, but we learned that he did not tell much about his participation in the Resistance Movement. Lass distributes leaflets also with his mother; that old woman filled the leaflets under the vegetables in his bag and distributed them. Unfortunately, before the liberation of Paris, Lass and Arpiar were arrested and sent to the German camps. Lass was sent to Leipzig and Ravensbrück concentration camp. The French public figure Lise London was also in the same camp, who later testified that Lass, who was weak and sick, always wanted to write, and the other girls would take out pieces of paper from the trash can and give them to Lass. In the camp, she wrote the poem “Mala.” The other women worked in the lamp factory, but Lass refused to work for the Germans. When she realized she was going to be taken away, she handed over her writings to Lise London and said that if she survives, she would go to Paris and give those papers to her friend Rouben Melik. Fortunately, Lise London lived (she died ten years ago, at the age of 96) and fulfilled Lass’s request. I think there is a photo from that meeting where Lise London is with Rouben Melik, Archak Tchobanian and Achod Malakian (Henri Verneuil). At least that little part of Lass’s writings was saved, because the Nazis, having captured Lass, burned all the manuscripts in the house. Now there will be a radio program about this amazing woman in French and German, as well as an exhibition in Berlin. We plan to present the exhibition in France as well and we will dream of bringing it to Armenia one day.

You are also one of the lively figures of the Armenian cultural life of Marseille. This year marks the 100th anniversary of the massive settlement of Armenians in Marseille. What are you doing in this direction?

There is a lot to do, we would like to achieve everything, but there is no time. At the beginning of November, we will hold a book festival at the Hamazkayin School in Marseille. We collected Armenian books from Armenia, Istanbul, Beirut, as well as French books with Armenian topics. We will organize readings with the participation of young people. It is a great pleasure for us, we are very proud of this school. Again in November, we will open an exhibition of our Armenian cultural house, based on the materials of the Armenian archives of the ARAM (French: Society for the Study of Armenian Memory) organization in Marseille. ARAM was established by Garbis Artin, the son of Sebastien immigrant Sahag Artin. This person who reached Der Zor during the Armenian genocide and then found shelter in Mosul, Iraq, later established himself in France, and in new country he always was keeping everything written in Armenian. The archive grew so much that Garbis rented a garage to store the papers there. And one day he created an organization to continue the work to keep the books, photos, and old passports. Now ARAM is in a two-story office in Saint Jerome district. The president is Garbis’s daughter, Astrid Loussikian, who is a historian. We all work there for free, everyone does what they love, about 15 people regularly attend there. We usually work on Wednesdays and Fridays, but this summer we worked every day because of preparation of this exhibition. Exactly one century ago, a few weeks after the Smyrna disaster, the ship named “Tourville” took off from Constantinople and brought the first large group of Armenian immigrants to Marseille. There was already a small Armenian community in Marseille, mainly merchants, who had survived the pogroms in Ottoman Empire in 1890s. Mr. Tigran Mirzayantz, who was the representative of the first republic of Armenia in Marseille, along with other nationals helped the newcomers. In the first days, they gave some cash to refugees, who lived in cheap inns, then Mirzayantz appealed to the French government, and the Armenians were placed in a military camp (Camp Oddo), where about 5,000 Armenians remained until 1927. These old Armenians opened a private office and helped the emigrants in preparing their documents. The secretary of this camp, Alexander Arabadjian, has kept the lists of Armenians, which we can also look at online today. It is very important that people do not forget their history.

Houry, we met on occasion of my research on the history of African Armenians. It is very nice to see that an Armenian woman born in Morocco speaks Armenian so well and translates from Armenian.

I would like to speak much better. The Armenian atmosphere in France is difficult, we talk more in the family.

Where were your ancestors from and how did they appear in Morocco?

My paternal side is from Caesarea (now Kayseri in Turkey) and Talas. They came to Constantinople very early, my great-great-grandfather, Hambardzum, was an engineer, he worked in a car branch in Iraq, lived in Zahle and Beirut before the pogroms. His son, my grandfather Vahram, was educated by the Jesuits, knew Armenian, Arabic and French very well, collaborating with Armenian and French-language newspapers. He participated in the Armenian life in Beirut, wrote a book in French about Armenians in Syria and Lebanon, as well as a volume about Beirut. His wife, my paternal grandmother Hnazant Mesjian, was from Mersin. She taught us to read and write Armenian, also knew Greek very well, as the family lived often on Greek islands, and she read Greek until the end of his life.

My maternal grandfather, Kévork Kerk-

iacharian, was from Hacin (now Saimbeyli in Turkey), and his father was the priest of the Church of St. Jacob in Hacin. Many of the family were victims of pogroms, but my grandfather was not killed because he was a dentist in the Ottoman army, they needed him. He reached Gaza, Palestine, with the army of Jemal Pasha. Then, when the British defeated the Ottoman army, they released the Armenian soldiers. The founder of the Samuelian bookstore in Paris, Hrand Samuel, was also among those survivors. My maternal grandmother, Marie, was from Adana. Her father was a lawyer there, very well-known, and thus they were able to get free and go to Beirut. My two grandfathers knew each other from Beirut. I would also like to remember my mother’s godfather, Dr. Garegin Vardapetian, who was also the best man at my parents’ marriage. He was the one who freed Reverend Krikoris Balakian, as he was a doctor, had German education, and the Germans had given him a position in the hospital, where he was able to keep Reverend Balakian.

My parents, Berdj Varjabédian and Herminé Kerkiacharian, were born and raised in Beirut. My father came to France to study, he himself worked at the radium institute with Irene Joliot-Curie. Then, on the desire of my grandmother, he left that dangerous job and acquired a specialty in rubber and came to work in Morocco. My brother Vahram, who is deceased, and I, were born in Casablanca. There were several Armenian families there, we all always spoke Armenian and were very close to each other. When I went to the French school in Morocco at the age of six, I didn’t know a single word of French. I have never been to an Armenian school. When we came to Marseille in 1968, I participated in the Armenian lessons organized by the AGBU, then I was lucky enough to take lessons from Robert Dermerguerian, who taught adults, later I followed his Armenian lessons at the University of Aix-en-Provence. Robert lived in Armenia, speaks both Armenians and is a very good teacher.

And you also formed a family with an Armenian born in Africa.

Yes, Varoujan was born in Algeria. The story of his parentage is very interesting. His father, Boghos Arzoumanian, wrote in the *Haratch* daily of Paris under the pen-names of Anshen Vorbuk (Homeless Little Orphan) and Anshen Garodouni (Homeless Nostalgic). There was a very important organization formed by the writer Shavarsh Nardouni, the Adult Orphans Union, which Boghos Arzoumanian was a member of.

We speak Armenian and French at home, it depends on what. Armenian is very important for us, both Western and Eastern. My concern is orthography problem. We have dreamed for years, we have fought for Armenia to be independent, we are interested in Armenia. Independence took place, many buildings of the Soviet Union were demolished, but some forced Soviet changes still hold. I know it is difficult, but 30 years ago, we had to give up the Soviet orthography. Excuse me for saying this, but the Azeris changed the entire alphabet from Cyrillic into Latin, while the Armenian government did not want to change some spelling rules. Armenians are an intelligent people, they would quickly learn the correct spelling, so we could change the general spelling little by little. Many people do not agree with me, but perhaps we should have brought back our classic orthography for long time. Fortunately, today we are independent, we hope that Armenia will find its peace, as so many things we have to present to the world: very good writers, artists... and we long always to work together.

And we will work, dear Houry! Thank you very much for the interesting conversation.



ARTS & CULTURE

For Nora Armani, Acting Is A Way of Life

ARMANI, from page 12

was my subject of study at the AUC. I didn't hesitate and took the offer. Acting was put to the side, but not completely forgotten, as, throughout the year that I was doing the Master's Degree, I was also acting."

It is interesting how she utilizes sociology to support her art. In her opinion, artists are also teachers, and in fact it is also the artist's duty to teach the public, delivering information and experiences and bringing them what can improve their lives. In this regard, she comments: "Entertainment just as a pastime has its place too, but for me art should not only be limited to entertaining people. My type of entertainment is the one that enriches people's lives. I hope to leave a legacy and present a work that stays in their minds and encourages them to think.

Acting on Stage

One can clearly sense her love of theatre. "Cinema is more the field of the director, whereas, based on the actor's direct communication with the audience on stage, theatre is where the actor shines more and has immediate communication with the audience," Armani says.

She starred with the famous Egyptian actor Mohamed Sobhi in the Egyptian version of "The King and I," and starred with Gamil Rateb in the Egyptian TV series "Al Asdiquaa" [The Friends], directed by Ismail Abdel Hafez.

Born in Egypt, it is inevitable that Egyptian culture has had a strong influence on her. However, she explains, "We Armenians kept quite an insular existence in Egypt and were much more Western-in-

ence in November, on New York's Theatre Row where Armani had performed her self-penned solo show "Back on the Couch with Nora Armani" in November 2021.

She likes doing monologues because she sees that it is a very personal way of telling your story, even when you are doing a character, like she was in "Mercedes and Zaruhi," contrary to "Back on the Couch with Nora Armani," where she essentially played herself. Nora says that that this form creates an immediate communication with the audience, and her imagination as a performer has to be much more alive in order to create an entire world on stage all by herself. "I love that challenge," she exclaims. "I enjoy doing solo shows, even though keeping the audience's attention focused is a huge responsibility. It is challenging to not let them disconnect or get bored. The only way I can do this is by being 100-percent present, focused and in the moment. Otherwise, it does not work and I can easily lose them."

When asked whether this type of performance in front of a large audience scares her, the answer came: "Of course, it is like

tightrope walking only there is no safety net to fall into. So you need to be very sure of your lines and not have to think about them. It has to become second nature. It is a challenge also because there is no other partner on stage to help you out if you get stuck or if something goes wrong. I wouldn't say it scares me because if it did, I would not do it. I think I like the adrenaline rush which gets me going. Also, the urgency of wanting to tell a story and share intimate moments with the audience is a strong incentive."

From sharing intimate moments with theatergoers to rehearsing alone, Nora's practical point of view is that it is easier to rehearse and work on her own, as she is not bound by anyone else's schedule and can take the shows on the road too. "I rehearse alone, at first, learning my lines by dividing the script into parts because it is not possible to memorize the entire play at once. Then I rely on the help of family members who check the lines as I recite them. I also have worked with directors, on my own solo pieces, and I like the help of an external eye looking in because it is difficult to see yourself perform or be objective."



The Armenian-Egyptian actress was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award at the festival (photo courtesy of Nora Armani)

This is the purpose and function of the theatre and cinema, I believe."

She goes on to say: "Sociology, which is the study of society and what is happening in it, gives you a depth of knowledge and a way to approach things, but let's not forget the entertainment part. If I just come lecturing and teaching, I will be a lecturer/professor at a university, not an artist, so art is the combination of both. It is balancing between entertainment and enlightenment."

Connecting sociology with art, Armani runs the annual Socially Relevant Film Festival New York, which has screened 600 films, including shorts, feature-length ones and documentaries. The event's tenth anniversary is going to be celebrated in March.

Social dimensions and its themes are always present in her films and plays, and this festival is no exception. "It is fantastic because the event brings together all that I am — an actress, a director and a producer. I love theatre, cinema and sociology," she continues. "I have dedicated the festival and one of the awards to the memory of my cousin, Vanya Exerjian, who was a victim of a crime of violence along with her father, Jack Exerjian (my paternal uncle)."

fluenced than Arab or Egyptian-influenced culturally. The choice of plays, characters, and performances at the Armenian Cultural Club, and later at the American University in Cairo where I performed as a student, were not of Arab or Egyptian works, but of the Western canon. It is years later when I came back to Egypt to do the TV series 'Al Asdiquaa' and stage work for 'The King and I' that I was more exposed to and involved with Egyptian and Arab actors, directors, and the culture. This said, as a child, growing up in Egypt, and having seen Egyptian films, I was definitely influenced by actresses such as Faten Hamama [who was married to Omar Sharif], Soad Hosni, and Mervat Amin, as well as their male counterparts Hussein Fahmy, Nour El Sherif, and Gamil Rateb, who I had the honor to co-star with, in 'Al Asdiquaa.'"

Armani recently appeared in "Mercedes and Zaruhi," a one-woman play by Anush Aslibeyan, as part of the United Solo Theatre Festival. The play revolves around an important period of Armenia's recent history, the repatriations to Soviet Armenia in the late 1940s during Stalin's reign. The performance took place before a packed audi-



The Armenian-Egyptian actress in Gyumri (photo courtesy of Nora Armani)

CALENDAR

OF EVENTS & PROGRAMS

CALIFORNIA

JANUARY 28 — The Tekeyan Cultural Association Metro Los Angeles Chapter presents "An Evening of Comedy III featuring Harout Soghomonian" on Saturday, at 8 p.m. at Phoenicia Restaurant in Glendale. Special guest appearance by Antic and guest appearance by Tsoghig Samuelian. Admission \$100. For reservations call or text 818.730.1100. No tickets will be sold at the door.

MASSACHUSETTS

DECEMBER 11 — Candlelit Labyrinth Walk: In Peace & Harmony, a co Collaboration of the City of Boston Age-Friendly Boston, Greenway Conservancy and Friends of Armenian Heritage Park. Sunday, 4.45 p.m. Armenian Heritage Park on the Greenway. Share the Warmth: Bring a winter hat, scarf or gloves for the ABCD Drive. 5 p.m. Boston Children's Chorus. Walk the candlelit labyrinth, enjoy hot chocolate and sweet treats.

DECEMBER 11 — Holy Trinity Armenian Church presents a Christmas Holiday Concert by Erevan Choral Society in memory of Fr. Oshagan Minassian on what would have been his 90th birthday, at the Sanctuary of Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle St, Cambridge, MA. Sunday, 7 p.m. Conductor will be conductor/composer Konstantin Petrossian and will feature soloists Rosy Anoush Svazlian, soprano, and Giovanni Formisano, tenor. The free concert is open to the public.

NEW YORK

DECEMBER 10, 11 — A Holly Jolly Big Bad Armo Show coproduced by Tekeyan Cultural Association Greater New York, written and created by Lory Tatouljian, Dec. 10 8 p.m. and Dec. 11 2:30 p.m. at Symphony Space Leonard Nimoy Thalia, 2537 West Broadway at 95th Street, NYC, \$75 at symphonyspace.org, call (212) 864-5400.

OCTOBER 14-DECEMBER 9 — Cultural Committee of the Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church presents:

•November 4 - Biblical music from the Louvre, Paris by Edouard Barseghian, Dr. of Philosophy (Musicology), 7:30 p.m.

•December 9 - Christmas concert at Church sanctuary, Friday at 7.30 p.m.

Armenian Cultural Hour: Whether or not you have a Facebook account, you can find the LIVESTREAM of the event through the parish's Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/pg/armenianchurchprovidence/videos/>

RHODE ISLAND

DECEMBER 28 — Cultural Committee of the Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church presents "David Ayriyan - Memorial concert" at Church sanctuary featuring Armenian Chorale of Rhode Island, Junior Choir, soloist Friday at 7 p.m., free. Armenian Cultural Hour: Whether or not you have a Facebook account, you can find the LIVESTREAM of the event through the parish's Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/pg/armenianchurchprovidence/videos/>



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**MIRROR
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EDITOR
Alin K. Gregorian

MANAGING EDITOR
Aram Arkun

ART DIRECTOR
Mark (Mgrditchian) McKertich

SENIOR EDITORIAL COLUMNIST
Edmond Y. Azadian

STAFF WRITER
Harry Kezelian III

CONTRIBUTORS
Christopher Atamian, Artsvi Bakhchinyan,
Florence Avakian, Christine Vartanian
Datian, Dr. Arshavir Gundjian, Philippe
Raffi Kalfayan, Ken Martin, Gerald
Papasian, Benjamin Poghosyan, Suren
Sargsyan, Harut Sassounian, Hagop
Vartivarian

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LOS ANGELES: Ani Duzdabanyan-
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BERLIN: Muriel Mirak-Weissbach
PARIS: Jean Eckian
SAN FRANCISCO: Kim Bardakian
CAIRO: Maydaa Nadar

PHOTOGRAPHERS
Jirair Hovsepian, Ken Martin

VIDEO CORRESPONDENT
Haykaram Nahapetyan

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E-Mail: editor@mirrorspectator.com
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COMMENTARY

Results of US Midterm Elections and Their Impact on Armenia

By Suren Sargsyan
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

On November 8, the US midterm elections took place. Although in some states the votes are still being counted as of the date of the writing of this column (California’s 13th Congressional District and Colorado’s 3rd Congressional District), and in some cases there will be a runoff vote (Georgia on December 6), the picture is already clear, and it won’t undergo serious changes. In the 118th US Congress, the Republicans will form the majority in the House of Representatives and the Democrats will keep the majority in the Senate. Thus, the Democrats, who previously controlled both houses, were only able to retain control of the Senate – which is actually a good result.

The pattern that usually applies to midterm elections in the United States was also true for this election. This pattern is an established practice implying that if the president is elected from the Democratic Party, then the Republicans win the majority in midterm elections and vice versa. In this way, voters try to maintain a balance between the two parties, preventing the concentration of power in the hands of one party.

Still the predictions for the outcome of the midterm elections were only partially borne out, as the Democrats managed to maintain the majority in the Senate. President Joe Biden has also commented on this. During his first press conference following the midterm elections President Biden stressed that despite all the predictions by the press and pundits, the so-called giant “red wave” did not happen. According to the president the Democrats “lost fewer seats in the House of Representatives than any Democratic President’s first midterm election in the last 40 years. And [the Democrats] had the best midterms for governors since 1986.”

One of the active supporters of the Republican’s success in the midterm elections was Donald Trump, who took a specific stance on this election. First of all, he claimed that he should get all the credit in case the Republicans win. However he should not be blamed for their defeat. Trump was most probably also expecting the red wave, as on the eve of the midterm elections, he said that he was going to make a very big announcement on November 15. It was obvious what the former president implied by that. That was his decision to run for president. Although the result was not a total victory for the Republicans, on November 15 Trump announced his candidacy for president of the United States “to make America great again.”

In these elections there were candidates who had received direct support from former President Trump. Among them, the most problematic candidate for Armenians was Mehmet Oz, a Turkish national, who was running for Senate as a Republican candidate from Pennsylvania. Dr. Oz is a surgeon by profession, and now a famous TV star, who managed to get Trump’s support during the spring primaries. Oz’s opponent in this state was the Democratic candidate John Fetterman. There was a really serious battle between the two, in the framework of which millions of dollars were spent on advertisements by Oz. Despite his great efforts, Oz lost to the Democratic candidate by 51.2% to 46.4% of the vote. Given that Dr. Oz is also a citizen of Turkey and has deep ties to Turkish business elite and political circles, which in turn are connected to Erdogan, Oz’s defeat was particularly important to the Armenian community and its lobbyists, who had worked relentlessly to prevent Oz from entering the Senate.

The Impact of the Midterm Elections on US Policy towards Armenia

Although the Democrats were able to maintain their majority in the Senate, they lost their majority to the Republicans in the US House of Representatives, which in turn may have an impact on US foreign policy-making by complicating the implementation of the policies adopted by the Biden administration. Thus, it is important to analyze how US foreign policy towards Armenia will change with the new Congress.

It should be noted that no significant changes are expected in this regard. Most of the members of the Congressional Armenian Caucus will continue to serve in the upcoming Congress.

It also should be noted that some of the members of the Congressional Armenian Caucus will no longer continue to serve as representatives. They can be divided into three groups: those who had announced beforehand that they would not run again, Caucus members who lost in the election, and those who ran for other positions.

Thirteen members of the Caucus had announced that they would not run in the upcoming midterm elections. Among them was Jackie Speier, a representative with Armenian roots and the co-chair of the Congressional Armenian Caucus. In 2021 Speier announced that she would not seek reelection in the Congress.

Speier stated: “It’s time for me to come home — time for me to be more than a weekend wife, mother and friend...It’s been an extraordinary privilege and honor to represent the people of San Mateo County and San Francisco at almost every level of government for nearly four decades.” Her move will be a great loss, because she has always actively fought to advance the interests of Armenians in Congress, introducing and co-sponsoring many pro-Armenian resolutions and initiatives. In addition, in 2019 Speier was among the representatives who visited Artsakh.

Speier supported the provision of aid to Artsakh, the limitation of military aid to Azerbaijan, and the return of Armenian prisoners of war and civilians held captive in Azerbaijan to Armenia. She was also part of the Congressional delegation led by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi who visited Armenia this year.

Still, the other co-chairs of the Congressional Armenian Caucus, Gus Bilirakis and Frank Pallone, will continue to serve in the upcoming Congress. The co-chair of the Armenian Caucus is not the only leader of a Congressional caucus leaving her post. Steve Chabot, co-chair of both the Congressional Caucus on US-Turkey Relations and Turkish Americans, and the Azerbaijan Caucus, lost to his Democratic competitor in the state of Ohio.

It is also important for Armenians that Bob Menendez Jr., the son of Senator Bob Menendez, who is a good friend of Armenians and always raises Armenian issues in the Senate, was elected as the Representative from New Jersey.

It is also worth mentioning that Speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi, a member of the Congressional Armenian Caucus and a great friend of Armenians, will continue to serve as representative despite losing the position of speaker after the victory of the Republicans. In spite of her previous announcements to leave Congress and the rumors of her assuming the post of ambassador, Nancy Pelosi has announced that she will continue to be in the House of Representatives, remaining as a member of the Congressional Armenian Caucus.

A number of Representatives of the Armenian Caucus, in their turn, decided to run for other positions instead of seeking reelection in the Congress. Among them is Congresswoman Karen Bass, who won the mayoral election of Los Angeles, becoming the first female mayor of Los Angeles. Another member of the Armenian Caucus, Anthony Brown will assume the position of Maryland’s attorney general. Congressman Tom Suozzi was nominated for the post of governor of New York, but failed to win the election.

It should also be noted that three members of the Armenian Caucus of the House of Representatives failed to win the election. Their terms in office ends in January 2023.

Although some representatives of the Congressional Armenian Caucus will no longer serve after the midterm elections, the Armenian community in the US will try to attract new members to the Caucus. Traditionally, the Armenian community and Armenian lobbyists work more effectively with representatives of the Democratic Party as most Armenians in the US live in blue states such as California, Massachusetts, New York and New Jersey. Thus, the House of Representatives with a Republican majority should be considered as an opportunity, not an obstacle, to establish closer ties with the representatives of the GOP as well. The results of the midterm elections will not affect foreign policy related to Armenia. The decision maker of the policy is the administration, the principles of which will not change regardless of the electoral results. The Biden administration will continue to support the normalization of Armenian-Azerbaijani relations as well as Armenian-Turkish reconciliation. So that there will be no significant changes in US-Armenian relations as well as the mutual agenda.

(Suren Sargsyan is an expert on US foreign policy, researcher and author. He is a graduate of Yerevan State University, American University of Armenia and the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. Suren Sargsyan is a founder of the Armenian Center for American Studies, a research center based in Yerevan.)



COMMENTARY

MY TURN



by Harut Sassounian

Armenia Should Bring Back Skulls of Five Genocide Victims from Museum in France

The New York Times published on November 28, 2022, a shocking article by reporter Constant Méheut, titled: “A Paris Museum Has 18,000 Skulls. It’s Reluctant to Say Whose.”

The article reveals that the Musée de l’Homme (Museum of Mankind) in Paris, France, holds a “vast collection of human remains.” Stored in the basement of that museum are “18,000 skulls that include the remains of African tribal chiefs, Cambodian rebels and Indigenous people from Oceania. Many were gathered in France’s former colonies, and the collection also includes the skulls of more than 200 Native Americans, including from the Sioux and Navajo tribes. The remains, kept in cardboard boxes stored in metal racks, form one of the world’s largest human skull collections, spanning centuries and covering every corner of the earth.” Five of the skulls belong to Armenian Genocide victims. The museum has not made public the information about the identities of the 18,000 skulls, fearing restitution lawsuits.

I read the December 15, 2021 report of a French Senate Committee on its discussion of a proposed law about the fate of the remains at the museum. During that meeting, Sen. Catherine Morin-Desailly, co-author of the proposed law, stated: “amazingly, we find in our collections skulls dating from the Armenian Genocide.” Sen. Pierre Ouzoulias, another co-author of the proposed law, added: “I was overwhelmed learning that five Armenian skulls of victims of the Armenian Genocide, which were recovered in Deir-ez Zor [Syria], are still in the collections of the Museum of Mankind.”

Since the New York Times reporter Méheut mentioned in his article that he had obtained confidential documents about the human remains in the museum, I wrote to him asking if these documents contained any details about the skulls of the five Armenian Genocide victims. He informed me that they were female skulls which were collected by Emmanuel Passemard, a French prehistory specialist, during his explorations in Syria in 1925-1926. The Bulletin of the French Prehistoric Society reported that Passemard gave a lecture at the Sorbonne University in Paris on February 16, 1927, during which he described his trip to the banks of the Euphrates River in Syria.

Méheut wrote in his article that “while France has led the way in Europe in investigating and returning colonial-era collections of artifacts — cultural objects, made by human hands — it has lagged behind its neighbors when it

comes to remains.” The claimant of the remains has to prove an ancestral connection. However, “French legislation has made any return a cumbersome and time-consuming process.”

Méheut added: “As with other 19th-century museums, the Museum of Mankind was initially a repository for items gathered from around the world. The skulls were collected during archaeological digs and colonial campaigns, sometimes by soldiers who beheaded resistance fighters. Prized by researchers working in the now-debunked field of race science, the remains then fell into relative oblivion. In 1989, Philippe Mennecier, the curator [of the museum], put together the first electronic database of the collection. It enabled him to identify hundreds of what he called ‘potentially litigious’ skulls -- remains of anticolonial fighters and Indigenous people, collected as war trophies or plundered by explorers -- that could be claimed by people wishing to honor their ancestors.”

Christine Lefèvre, a top official at the Museum of Natural History, which oversees the Museum of Mankind, and Martin Friess, who is responsible for the museum’s modern anthropology collections, told Méheut the information was withheld because of privacy concerns, fear of controversy and because of uncertainties around some remains’ identities. “But several scholars and lawmakers said the museum’s stance stemmed from a greater concern: that transparency could open the floodgates for restitution claims,” Méheut wrote. “Over the past two decades, France has returned only about 50 sets of remains, including to South Africa, New Zealand and Algeria.”

Méheut explained that “to make matters more complicated, objects in public museum collections are the property of the French state and cannot change ownership unless the return is voted into law — a cumbersome process that has sometimes led France to lend remains instead of ceding possession. A representative for France’s culture ministry said officials were working on a sweeping law to regulate future returns of human remains.” The French government has yet to accept “a bill passed by the Senate in January that would remove the need for Parliament to approve every restitution.”

During the French Senate committee hearing, referring to the skulls of victims of the Armenian Genocide, Sen. Ouzoulias told his colleagues: “This is intolerable. We risk a major diplomatic conflict with certain countries when they become aware of the content of our collections. It is time to stop this. We can no longer live with corpses in our closets.”

Now that Armenians have learned about the storage of the skulls of five Armenian Genocide victims in a French museum, I suggest that the Armenian government, through its embassy in Paris, make an immediate request for the return of these skulls to Armenia to be buried near the Armenian Genocide Memorial complex in Yerevan. These victims deserve a respectful burial after being stored in a box in the basement of a French museum for a century.

What Azerbaijan Wants and What It May Do Next

By Benjamin Poghosyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

November 2022 was not the best month for the Armenia–Azerbaijan negotiation process. After the promising developments of late September–October 2022, when Armenia and Azerbaijan endorsed the Prague statement, and both sides even started to discuss the possibility of signing a peace agreement by the end of 2022, Azerbaijan has returned to its usual rhetoric of threats and intimidation.

On November 8, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev stated that all Armenian border towns were within the reach of Azerbaijani weapons, a thinly veiled threat of new aggression against Armenia. On November 25, while meeting with participants of an international conference on the “Middle Corridor” held in Baku, Aliyev moved further, stating that Armenia was a satellite state and that Armenians needed psychological support as a nation. However, the use of non-diplomatic language was not the primary feature of that speech. The Azerbaijani president once more rejected any possibility for establishing an international mechanism to launch negotiations between Azerbaijan and Nagorno Karabakh (Artsakh).

Thus, Azerbaijan refused to accept the US vision for normalizing Armenia and Azerbaijani relations. It was based on Armenia’s recognition of Azerbaijani territorial integrity within Soviet Azerbaijan borders and the simultaneous launch of Azerbaijan–Nagorno Karabakh negotiations within an international framework to guarantee the security of Armenians. Meanwhile, the Azerbaijani leadership continues to issue threats against Armenia and the Nagorno Karabakh Republic, hinting that if Armenia does not sign an agreement based purely on Azerbaijani terms, Azerbaijan will launch a new aggression against Armenia and/or Nagorno Karabakh. To prepare a suit-

able information environment for the “justification” of new aggression, the Azerbaijani Ministry of Defense issues daily statements about shootings against Azerbaijani troops, accusing Armenia and the Nagorno Karabakh Republic of ceasefire violations. This Azerbaijani behavior repeats the patterns of late July and early September 2022. In both cases, large-scale Azerbaijani aggression followed, on August 1 and 3 against the Nagorno Karabakh Republic and on September 13-14 against Armenia.

Simultaneously, Azerbaijan took steps to ruin the Brussels format of negotiations. During his November 25 speech Aliyev stated that he would not take part in the planned December 7 summit in Brussels with Prime Minister Pashinyan. Aliyev cited the participation of President Emmanuel Macron as a primary reason for his decision, accusing France of pro-Armenian and anti-Azerbaijani positions. However, France has kept its position the same since the 2020 Nagorno Karabakh war ended. Moreover, it did not prevent President Aliyev from negotiations with the involvement of President Macron in December 2021 and on October 6, 2022.

Thus, most probably, Azerbaijan is not satisfied with the recent developments in the negotiation process. Probably, Baku hoped that after the signature of the Prague statement on October 6, Armenia would be ready to sign a peace agreement with Azerbaijan accepting Azerbaijani claims that Nagorno Karabakh did not exist anymore. Few details are available about negotiations that took place in Washington on September 27, 2022, between the secretary of Armenia’s security council Armen Grigoryan and top foreign policy aide to President Aliyev Hikmet Hajiyev, as well as on November 7, 2022, between Armenian and Azerbaijani foreign ministers. However, given Azerbaijan’s increasingly aggressive rhetoric, Baku was not satisfied by the results of these meetings.

Meanwhile, Russia re-inserted itself into the negotiation process by organizing a trilateral summit on October 31, 2022. On December 1, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov revealed interesting details about the negotiation process. According to him, Russia shared its version of the peace agreement with Azerbaijan and Armenia in spring 2022, which envisaged the postponement of the status of Nagorno Karabakh for future discussions. Lavrov said that Armenia and Azerbaijan preliminarily

agreed to this option, though Azerbaijan argued that the issue of the status of Nagorno Karabakh needed future clarifications. However, Armenia and Azerbaijan signed a Prague statement on October 6, 2022, recognizing each other’s territorial integrity based on the Alma-Ata declaration of 1991, which fixed the administrative borders of former Soviet republics as international ones. According to the Russian foreign minister, this meant that Armenia recognized Nagorno Karabakh as part of Azerbaijan, as during the Soviet Union, Nagorno Karabakh was an autonomous unit within Soviet Azerbaijan.

There are different interpretations of the meaning of the 1991 Alma-Ata declaration for the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. Nagorno Karabakh declared its independence on September 2, 1991, and organized an independence referendum on December 10, 11 days before the signature of the Alma-Ata declaration on December 21. Nagorno Karabakh declared its independence following Soviet and international law, and on December 21, 1991, was not part of Soviet Azerbaijan. Thus, recognition by Armenia of Azerbaijani territorial integrity in the framework of the 1991 Alma-Ata declaration does not mean that Armenia recognizes Nagorno Karabakh as part of Azerbaijan.

Regardless of the different interpretations of this issue, in recent weeks, Azerbaijan has taken steps to ruin European Union (EU) mediation efforts and rejected the US’s idea of launching an international mechanism for conducting Azerbaijan–Nagorno Karabakh negotiations. On December 3, Azerbaijan closed the Goris–Stepanakert highway for several hours, creating another crisis for Nagorno Karabakh Armenians and putting pressure on Russian peacekeepers. In other words, Azerbaijan is on a clear path toward a new military escalation. In the current situation, one of the tangible tools to prevent Azerbaijan from sowing further instability in the region is the extension of the EU monitoring capacity in Armenia beyond 2022 and further discussions about the potential deployment of other monitoring missions (Collective Security Treaty Organization, Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe), along the Armenian–Azerbaijani border.

(Benjamin Poghosyan is chairman of the Center for Political and Economic Strategic Studies in Yerevan.)

Dr. Myron Allukian, Jr. Honored with Paul Revere Award for Leadership and Lifetime Achievement in Public Health

BOSTON — The Massachusetts Public Health Association (MPHA) on November 7 presented its highest honor, the Paul Revere Award for Lifetime Achievement, to Myron Allukian, Jr., DDS, MPH, in recognition of his unwavering commitment to public health. The award was presented at a reception as part of the American Public Health Association’s 150th Anniversary Meeting and Expo in Boston. Allukian is a past president of both the Massachusetts Public Health Association and the American Public Health Association. He is the

first dentist to receive the Paul Revere Award.

“Dr. Myron Allukian, Jr. has been a true luminary in the field of public health,” said MPHA Executive Director Carlene Pavlos. “He has worked tirelessly throughout his professional life to advance the importance of oral health as a public health priority. Millions of Massachusetts residents, and millions in other states, have better oral health as a result of his leadership for community water fluoridation, a safe and effective public health measure.”

“I am delighted to accept this honor from the Massachusetts Public Health Association,” said Dr. Allukian. “The challenge of promoting community health and health equity – particularly when we take seriously the challenges faced by underserved populations, including people of color, people who are low income, or may not speak English, people with disabilities, and others – are complex and evolving. There is no magic pill. It takes commitment and the 3 Ps: patience, perseverance, and persistence. It also takes data so that we can

better understand the challenges we face, and it takes education and organizing to build a vigorous, community-based constituency to make an impact on the health of a community.”

Allukian is a widely respected public health expert who served as Dental Director for the City of Boston for 34 years. He has worked in municipal, state, national and international venues to advance the importance of oral health as a critical public health priority.

A Boston Latin School graduate, Allukian received his BS in psychology from Tufts University, a DDS from the Univer-

Merry Christmas

& A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR



To Our Readers


The *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* is the first English-language Armenian weekly published in the US, and this year it celebrates 90 years of serving the community. Readers can learn of the most important developments in Armenia, as well as international politics, art and culture throughout the world in a convenient and concise format.

The *Mirror-Spectator* has covered the violence and political uncertainty affecting Armenia and Artsakh, supported efforts at humanitarian fundraising, and secured new young correspondents in Armenia, Artsakh and the US as well as two prominent political columnists from Armenia. We continue to provide periodic video reports online. Send us your email if you wish to regularly receive links to articles and videos.

We continue with our annual tradition of publishing your Christmas and New Year’s wishes, and greetings to relatives and friends in the final issue of the year. In case you wish to give gift subscriptions of the *Mirror-Spectator* for Christmas, for your convenience, we are placing a gift subscription form in the newspaper as well as one below.

Sincerely,


Alin K. Gregorian
Editor


Aram Arkun
Managing Editor

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ADDRESS -----



Dr. Myron Allukian Jr. at the event

sity of Pennsylvania and a Master of Public Health from the Harvard School of Public Health. He is also a Vietnam veteran, having served in the 3rd Marine Division during the Vietnam War.

Allukian is a faculty member at the Harvard School of Dental Medicine, Tufts University, and Boston University’s School of Dental Medicine. He is also a member of the National Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Medicine and a Consultant to NYU Langone Health, Dental Medicine. He served as Chairman of the U.S. Surgeon General’s Work Group on Fluoridation and Dental Health for the 1990 Prevention Objectives for the Nation, and the Dental Advisory Committees for Healthy People 2000, 2010, and 2020, as part of the development of the National Health Objectives. In addition, he serves on the Executive Committee of the Oral Health Working Group within the World Federation of Public Health Associations.

The Massachusetts Public Health Association (MPHA) is a nonprofit organization that promotes a healthy Massachusetts through advocacy, community organizing, and coalition building. We are leaders in the movement to create health equity by addressing the root causes of health and wellness. We promote policies that impact the major drivers of health outcomes, such as access to healthy food, safe affordable housing, and transportation. We also advocate for equitable public health services throughout the Commonwealth. To learn more, visit www.mapublichealth.org.