

Yerevan Warns Ankara against Linking Ties With Karabagh

YEREVAN (ArmeniaNow) – In a rare reaction released by Armenia’s Foreign Ministry late on Friday, Minister Eduard Nalbandian warned Turkey that linking the continuing rapprochement between the two countries with progress in a separate Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over



Foreign Minister
Eduard Nalbandian

Nagorno Karabagh could ruin both.

Nalbandian was reacting to the most recent statement made by Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan that the Armenian-Turkish border will not be opened until the Karabagh conflict is solved.

“The Turkish side is informed, and we are confident that they realize that we exclude the conditioning of the normalization of Armenian-Turkish relations by the steps towards the settlement of the Nagorno Karabagh conflict,” Nalbandian said in his reply also posted on the Ministry’s official website (www.armeniaforeignministry.com).

“Trying to link those two processes could ruin one and the other. A number of countries, including the Minsk Group co-chair countries, have expressed the same position. They have repeatedly stated that the normalization of the Armenian-Turkish relations must be without preconditions.”

Nalbandian said that “with this mutual understanding we have started and see WARNING, page 3

Sargisian Explains Negotiations to Armenian Parties

By Irina Hovannisian

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – President Serge Sargisian acknowledged that his conciliatory policy toward Turkey is fraught with pitfalls for Armenia on Thursday as he discussed it with leaders of more than 50 Armenian parties mostly loyal to his administration.

The five-hour meeting, held behind closed doors, was part of “internal political consultations,” which the Armenian and Turkish governments have pledged to hold before signing fence-mending agreements next month.

“I, too, see risks; I too have concerns,” Sargisian said in his opening remarks publicized by the presidential press service. He nonetheless defended Armenia’s dramatic rapprochement with Turkey that began shortly after he took office in April last year.

“Let us judge together,” continued Sargisian. “Are we sacrificing our convictions and our belief in truth with these documents, or are we paving the way for driving them home instead of confining ourselves to secluded purity? Let us understand that together.”

see POLICY, page 3



President Serge Sargisian

Armenia Celebrates 18th Anniversary

YEREVAN (ArmeniaNow) – President Serge Sargisian sought to emphasize the link between “all generations” and “all Armenians” in the accomplishment of sovereign Armenia as he addressed the nation on the 18th anniversary of independence Monday.

Describing the anniversary of the September 21, 1991 referendum in which Armenians overwhelmingly pronounced in favor of living as an independent nation as a holiday that “all generations of the Armenian nation coveted and sensed deep in their hearts,” Sargsyan emphasized that all of those generations of Armenians, without exception, were guided by the same vision: “Independent Armenia that epitomizes freedom, human and national dignity and, ultimately, the right and historical ability to create good and beauty.”

see ANNIVERSARY, page 2

Journalists Gormus and Haas Receive International Dink Award

ISTANBUL (*Today’s Zaman*) – Turkish journalist Alper Gormus and Israeli journalist Amira Haas became the first recipients of the Hrant Dink International Award this past week, given in the name of Hrant Dink, a Turkish-Armenian journalist who was murdered in 2007 by an ultranationalist youth allegedly for insulting Turkishness.

Ali Bayramoglu, the head of the award committee of the International Hrant Dink Foundation established by the Dink family, said at the ceremony that “what we are looking for is what Hrant symbolizes,” in reference to his ideals, which were “purified out of discrimination,” and people who follow those ideals taking risks for a more just world.

Gormus, a columnist for the *Taraf* newspaper and a faculty member at Bilgi

University, said after receiving the award that he carries a great responsibility because he has fears that he could do something improper to undermine the meaning of the award.

“I saw Hrant Dink right after the Supreme Court of Appeals upheld a lower court’s decision to convict him. I had gone to *Agos* for an interview with him. During the whole interview, he spent all his energy explaining why it was impossible for him to ‘insult Turkishness,’” Gormus said.

The award committee recalled that Gormus, the former editor-in-chief of the now-defunct *Nokta* weekly, was acquitted last year in April of charges of libel for running a story that featured excerpts from a diary, allegedly penned by a former naval

see AWARD, page 4



NEWS IN BRIEF

First Memorial to Armenian Genocide to Be Built in Israel

PETACH TIKVA, Israel (PanArmenian.Net) – The Ararat Union of Armenians of Israel has initiated building the first memorial to the Armenian Genocide here. The head of the Union of Armenians of Israel Ashot Martirosyan said the group already has an agreement with the municipality of Petach Tikva.

The monument, which will be dedicated to the 95th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, is “one more step toward restoring the historical justice,” according to Martirosyan’s letter to all Armenians in Israel, in which he asked for their financial support.

New Ambassador to Greece Appointed

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – President Serge Sargisian has appointed Gagik Ghalachyan ambassador to Greece.

Vahram Kozhoyan has resigned from his position as ambassador to Greece, Albania, Croatia, Cyprus, Serbia and Slovenia.

ArmSwiss Bank Opens in Yerevan

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The opening ceremony of the ArmSwissBank took place here on September 17 with the participation of the Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargisian and other officials.

Executive Director of the bank Gevorg Machanian noted the bank was the result of four years of work, while Sargisian expressed hope that the bank will increase competition in the banking system.

The owner of ArmSwissBank is Vardan Sirmakes, who is also the founder of Franc Muller, a Swiss watch company.

Sargisian Awards Baroness Cox Medal

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – President Serge Sargisian recently received Vice Speaker of the Great Britain’s House of Lords, Baroness Caroline Cox.

The presidential press service said Cox has been awarded the Order of Honor for her contribution to the development of Armenian-British.

“This award shows the gratitude of the Armenian people,” Sargisian said at the meeting.

The two also discussed the Turkey-Armenia Protocols and Sargisian’s trip abroad to discuss them with diasporan communities.

INSIDE

Armenian Robin Hood
See page 12

INDEX

Armenia	2,3
Arts and Living	11
Calendar	16, 17
Community News	6
Editorial	18
International	4



ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Catholics Receives Russian Ambassador

ECHMIADZIN (Armenpress) — Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II recently received Russian ambassador to Armenia Vyacheslav Kovalenko.

An official from the Holy See of St. Echmiadzin said in greeting the newly appointed ambassador in the spiritual center of Armenia, the Catholicos wished success to Kovalenko in his mission.

Karekin II also referred to the warm relations between the Armenian Apostolic Church and Russian Orthodox Church.

Nairit Chemical Plant to Restart Production

YEREVAN (Noyan Tapan) — Production is set to begin again at the Nairit chemical plant following an incident there in May.

Chief Engineer Hovhannes Hakhinian said repairs and preparations to reopen the plant are underway, with about \$250,000 being spent on the work so far.

He said much of the money has been spent on reconstruction of the damaged areas, with some being allotted for retraining of the plant's staff.

Hakhinian said that the plant had not suffered from the lack of production because of the worldwide economic crisis.

"We have not suffered losses due to the global economic crisis as the international market of rubber has also fallen into decline," he said.

Sargisian Meets Singapore Senior Minister

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Upon the invitation of President Serge Sargisian, Singapore's Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew is in Armenia on an official visit.

Yew was Singapore's first prime minister and headed the executive power of the state for 31 years. Lee Kuan Yew is known as the founder of Singapore's model of economic reforms.

Sargisian gave Yew Armenia's Medal of Honor for his working toward the establishment of relations between the two states.

Sargisian and the Minister exchanged thoughts on the Singapore's development model and discussed the opportunity of conduction of consultations on the achieved experience.

Armenian Ambassador Meets Egyptian Minister

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Armenian Ambassador to Egypt Armen Melkonyan met September 7 with the Egyptian International Cooperation Minister Fayza Abul Naga.

The Armenian government's press office said the officials discussed prospects of development of trade — economic cooperation between Armenia and Egypt as well as plans for the fifth session of the Armenian-Egyptian inter-governmental commission scheduled for 2010 in Yerevan.

Exhibition by Edward Sasun Opens in Yerevan

YEREVAN (PanArmenian.Net) — An exhibition of works by the artist Edward Sasun opened in the Hay Art Cultural Center, with support of the Diasporan Ministry, on September 18. Fifty-five works by the artist are in the exhibit.

"Most of my works are in private collections, so it was difficult to create an exposition. Visitors can see my works of first years and paintings that I have created over the past two years," Sasun said.

"I have been away a long time from my homeland, and this exhibition is a statement that I have returned," Sasun said.

Sasun was born in 1955 in Armenia and has lived in Thailand for the last eight years. After receiving a degree in cybernetics from Yerevan State University, in 1980 he entered the Academy of Fine Arts. He has created about 700 paintings, most of which are in private collections. The artist's first solo exhibition was held in Armenia in the late 1980s in Kamo.

Armenia Celebrates 18th Anniversary

ANNIVERSARY, from page 1

Sargisian congratulated all Armenians on the Independence Day.

"What does Armenia preach to its offspring all over the world after having resurrected from the genocidal hell? Pure and simple concepts: unity, collective will and effort, the state's determination to pursue and protect the interests and goals of Armenians, filial love of and dedication to the homeland of all Armenians, and a happy possibility to build up the Armenia of our dreams by joint efforts. And Armenia says them: 'Welcome back to native home,'" said Sargisian.

The address timed to the anniversary of Armenia's independence comes at a time when Armenia is seeking to reconcile with its big neighbor and historical foe, Turkey. The majority of today's worldwide Armenian Diaspora are descendants of survivors of the 1915-1918 Armenian Genocide in Ottoman Turkey.

Sargisian initiated a rapprochement process last September by inviting his Turkish counterpart to Yerevan on the formal occasion of watching a FIFA World Cup 2010 qualifier between the two countries' national soccer teams. He is likely to pay a return visit to Turkey next month to attend the return match of the soccer team and likely to sign a document on establishing diplomatic relations and developing bilateral

relations.

Authorities in Yerevan have insisted that the Swiss-brokered Armenian-Turkish draft protocols unveiled three weeks ago provide for an unconditional normalization of ties. But the local opposition, and notably the Diaspora-linked nationalist party, Armenian Revolutionary Federation, contend its several key provisions are potentially damaging to national interests. Parts of the Armenian Diaspora appear to share this concern as the main bone of contention is Armenia's perceived compromise on the process of international recognition of the Genocide by agreeing to establish "an intergovernmental sub-commission to implement a discussion on the historical dimension." Another major concern lingers over Armenia reaffirming its current border with Turkey that was drawn by Russian Bolsheviks and Turkish Kemalists in the Treaty of Kars in 1921. The treaty is widely viewed in Armenia and its Diaspora as treasonous.

Remembering in his Monday address of the hardships that the nation has been challenged to overcome by joining hands following the all-national referendum on independence, the president said that "the main choice is already made."

"From now on independence is our fortune and destiny, our onus and responsibility, our weapon and instru-

ment, our might and right, from now on, irrevocable and eternal," Sargisian said.

The Armenian leader further stated the "pure and simple" concepts that Armenia preaches "having reemerged on the international political arena": peace, stability, good neighborly relations, multilateral economic and other kinds of cooperation in all spheres."

"We have been sufficiently patient and wise to take that approach even towards those who for years have attempted and still attempt to hinder our progress by all kinds of blockades and Armenophobic propaganda," said Sargisian.

Also extending congratulations were US President Barack Obama, who issued a special statement and a congratulatory message to his Armenian counterpart.

"The people of the United States join the people of Armenia in celebrating Armenia's day of independence today," Obama said in a statement posted on the White House website. "We deeply value the many cultural and historic ties that bind our two countries."

"The United States gains strength as a nation from the contributions of so many Americans of Armenian ancestry. We congratulate the people of Armenia on their national day," he added.

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev also extended his congratulations.

Opposition Leader Levon Ter-Petrosian Vows Not to Run if All Are United against President Sargisian

YEREVAN (ArmeniaNow) — Armenia's opposition leader has promised not to run for president if other political forces help his movement topple President Serge Sargisian in what appears to be a veiled attempt to win the backing of political forces (potentially) opposed to both.

Speaking before thousands of supporters in downtown Yerevan on September 18, Sargisian's nemesis Levon Ter-Petrosian reiterated his earlier assurances that he considered himself "only a tool in the matter of restoring the constitutional order in Armenia" and was ready "to perform this role until the end."

Ter-Petrosian's similar platform in the wake of the disputed February 2008 presidential election failed to present a challenge to Sargisian's official first-round win, resulting in Armenia's worst street violence in its history.

In his nearly hour-long speech at the Friday rally, Ter-Petrosian focused on the current Armenian-Turkish rapprochement and the Armenian-Azerbaijani talks over the Karabagh conflict. He harshly criticized the current administration for failing in both negotiations and, in particular, rejected as pro-Azerbaijani the latest peace plan for Karabagh proposed by the international mediators that Sargisian and his Azerbaijani counterpart Ilham Aliyev appear to agree on in principle following their several meetings this year.

Reiterating his support for normalization with Turkey, Ter-Petrosian, however, charged that despite "Sargisian's sacrifice of the Genocide" Turkey will not agree to open the border and establish diplomatic relations until the Karabagh conflict is resolved.

Sargisian's opponents have insisted that several points in the draft protocols on establishing diplomatic ties

and developing bilateral relations unveiled by Yerevan and Ankara on August 31 are potentially damaging to Armenian national interests. Among their concerns is the provision about setting up an intergovernmental sub-commission "to implement a discussion on the historical dimension" that could be construed as agreement to discuss, i.e. "question" the 1915-1918 Armenian Genocide in Turkey.

Ter-Petrosian's opposition alliance was among those forces that, despite welcoming normalization with Turkey, criticized these points of the protocols. Ter-Petrosian's Armenian National Congress, however, indicated it was more worried about developments in the Karabagh conflict that has largely been linked with the Armenian-Turkish process.

"The Congress alone cannot avert the danger that Karabagh faces today, even through mobilizing all its efforts," Ter-Petrosian said. "Some doubt this bitter truth and sometimes accuse the Congress of avoiding decisive action and, instead, waiting for Serge Sargisian's failure in the Karabagh issue. The Congress does not need power gained at the cost of losing Karabagh."

Ter-Petrosian also pledged not to run for president if Sargisian steps down.

"If Sargisian resigns from the president's office, I will not run for this office, unless [former president] Robert Kocharian is nominated as a candidate," he said.

Several political forces, including the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaktsutyun), oppose both the current administration and the movement of Ter-Petrosian, who led Armenia from 1991-1998.

Despite being both opposed to several points in the government-backed

protocols with Turkey, Dashnaktsutyun and the Ter-Petrosian camp have not yet reconciled their political feud stemming from Ter-Petrosian's controversial decision to ban the Diaspora-linked party in Armenia in the 1990s. Also, for 10 years Dashnaktsutyun supported the government of Robert Kocharian, who effectively forced Ter-Petrosian to resign over his perceived conciliatory stance in the Karabagh settlement and support for the international mediators' 1997 peace plan.

Dashnaktsutyun, now as a nationalist force spearheading the protests against the current Armenian-Turkish plan, refuses to call for President Sargisian's resignation, instead holding his Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian responsible for what it views as "diplomatic failures."

On one occasion, however, a senior Dashnak representative acknowledged that a possible scenario of Ter-Petrosian's coming to power was one of the deterrents that kept the party from demanding that Sargisian step down.

"Our problem is that if a leadership change implies the coming of several figures of the Armenian National Congress to power, then we have no guarantee that these forces will not pursue an even more conciliatory policy than the current ones," Dashnaktsutyun's chief foreign policy spokesman Giro Manoyan said in July when his party first formally moved to seek Nalbandian's retirement.

Another addressee of the Ter-Petrosian offer could be the pro-government Prosperous Armenia party, known for its firm views on national issues but, like Dashnaktsutyun, also known to have been ex-president Kocharian's support base in the previous government.



ARMENIA

First International Conference of Armenian Libraries a Success at Mother See

YEREVAN — The Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin served as the site for the first-ever “Global Armenian Library Conference,” which took place from August 25-27 in Armenia, attracting heads of the most prestigious Armenian libraries in the world.

Under the auspices of Karekin II, the Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians and with the support of Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), Rachel Goshgarian, PhD, director of the Krikor and Clara Zohrab Information Center and Rev. Asoghik Karapetian, head of Archives at Holy Echmiadzin, organized an event that fostered dialogue and discussion about library organization and cataloguing as well as book preservation and digitization, among other relevant topics. The conference was the first of many cultural programs to take place in Armenia as part of the 500th anniversary of the establishment of the Armenian printing press.

The goals of the conference were: to formulate standardized methods of library organization and cataloguing, create opportunities for discussion of book preservation and digitization, develop an international book exchange between libraries, and establish a universal internet portal for Armenian collections. The conference participants adopted a resolution and established a working group to spearhead the creation of an Internet website, which will provide information on Armenian and other-language publications in the field of Armenian studies in Armenia and diaspora.

The three-day conference was held in the Old Theological Seminary at Holy Echmiadzin. The first day of the conference consisted of brief presentations by the gross majority of participants on their specific collections, detailing the history and contents of each collection, their current cataloguing system, digitization program and acquisitions methods. Formal academic presentations were made on the second day, and covered topics including: library organization, book distribution, digitization and preservation. Participants traveled to Noravank monastery on the third day where they participated in a round-table discussion led by Prof. Kevork Bardakjian.

A final dinner in Yerevan provided another opportunity for participants to discuss many of the concerns and ideas raised during the session in a more casual atmosphere. Karekin II attended the final dinner and praised the participants and their works. Remembering the importance of the libraries of his childhood, the catholicos reflected upon the holy nature of books. At the dinner’s conclusion,

Karapetian thanked all participants for attending and sharing their knowledge and experience and spoke enthusiastically about future, concrete collaboration between libraries.

“I think it’s time well spent simply to get us all in one room at one time to meet each other face to face and talk to each other. That in and of itself was groundbreaking work and extremely worthwhile,” said Michael Grossman, a library assistant in the Middle Eastern division of the Widener Library at Harvard University.

Hasmik Poghosyan, the minister of culture, and Hranush Hakobyan, the minister of diaspora, welcomed and participated in the conference. Both ministries pledged their support for future endeavors. On the evening of August 25, Marie Yovanovitch, US ambassador to the Republic of Armenia, held a reception in her Yerevan home for participants in the conference.

Very Rev. Nareg Louisian of the Bzommar Armenian Catholic Clergy Institute in Lebanon, concurred that it was unprecedented to have a conference that attracted heads of Armenian libraries from around the world.

“This was indeed a historic conference and greatly useful to all of us. In addition, I am enthusiastic in working with fellow heads of Armenian libraries around the world,” said Louisian.

Aside from participants coming together for the first time to discuss important issues and challenges they face in their respective libraries, the event set the stage for future cooperation among these organizations.

“After attending this conference, I have a greatly renewed sense of hope of cooperation among Armenian libraries and of someday everyone having access to materials that have been for far too long completely inaccessible,” said Edward G. Matthews, representing St. Nersess Armenian Theological Seminary.

In the coming months, both a list-serve for conference participants and a general website for Armenian libraries and collections will be created.

Below are excerpts from an interview with Rachel Goshgarian, conference co-organizer and director of the Krikor and Clara Zohrab Information Center. Taleen Babayan is a program manager at the center, who also assisted with preparations for the conference.

Taleen Babayan: Why did you organize the conference?

Rachel Goshgarian: When I started as director of the Zohrab Center a little over two years ago, I benefited greatly from discussions with my colleagues who were heading similar libraries in the United States. Little by little, I

realized that many of the heads of Armenian libraries and collections were not in contact with one another although I was sure we could all benefit greatly from conversations with one another. I started asking my colleagues if they thought a conference would be a worthwhile endeavor and everyone agreed that it would.

TB: What were the objectives of the conference?

RG: At the most basic level, the objective was to create better links between Armenian-oriented libraries in the diaspora and in Armenia, and to create a forum in which we can discuss issues of importance to all of us. At the conference this first step was realized, and we began to discuss issues such as book preservation, digitization, the exchange of duplicate books and how to send books from the diaspora to Armenia and from Armenia to the diaspora. The conversation has just begun. Now we must ensure that our links remain strong and that all of these issues continue to be discussed in detail.

TB: What were the steps you took in organizing the conference?

RG: When I first proposed the idea to Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Eastern Diocese, he was very enthusiastic. When I suggested the conference take place in Armenia at the Mother See, Archbishop Barsamian discussed this idea with His Holiness Karekin II, and he was not only interested, he gave us his blessing to proceed with preparations. He then appointed the Rev. Asoghig Karapetian, who is the head of the archives at the Mother See, to organize the conference with me and the two of us began preparations.

TB: What was the significance of the conference?

RG: It was a major first step. One of the most interesting realizations we made was that most of the people who head up Armenian libraries or collections have no training whatsoever in library sciences. Most are highly educated individuals with a background in history or literature, and most of us have learned about organizing libraries and preserving books etc., either through our own individual research or through conversations with trained librarians.

The Armenian tradition of printing goes back many centuries. Even the smallest of our library collections has a very impressive range of books and publications. All of the heads of these libraries and collections care deeply for Armenian heritage and culture, and for that reason, this meeting was both useful and reassuring. Oftentimes, it seems that not only in Armenia, but in the diaspora, and amongst

non-Armenians, books and reading have taken a second seat to other forms of learning and technology. But sitting in a room with other individuals who have dedicated their lives to books and to making Armenian literature and history available was a powerful experience, especially since we were there together at the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin.

TB: Who helped you organize the conference?

RG: Putting together this conference was the result of great efforts by many people. First, His Holiness Karekin II offered his enthusiasm, his blessing and his inspiration for the conference. Archbishop Barsamian championed this idea from the very beginning. I am truly impressed by our church leadership in that it continues to recognize the importance of Armenian learning.

At the Zohrab Center, I was not alone in organizing the conference. My colleague Taleen Babayan from the very beginning brainstormed with me and undertook a lot of the organizational preparation for the conference. One of the best things about this conference was working with the members of the brotherhood of Holy Echmiadzin, and realizing just how capable this newly-trained generation of priests is. Father Karapetian was extremely organized and did an excellent job of managing the participation of the Mother See. Very Rev. Mushegh Babayan provided excellent support and enthusiastic direction. This conference truly was a team effort and one that all of us are proud to have organized together.

The following libraries were represented at the conference: the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin, the Catholicate of Cilicia, the Patriarchates of Constantinople and Jerusalem, the Mkhitarian Brotherhoods of Venice and Vienna, Bzommar Armenian Catholic Clergy Institute, the Mesrob Mashdots Manuscript Repository, the National Library of Armenia, the National Archives of Armenia, the Fundamental Library of the Armenian Academy of Sciences, Yerevan State University, Harvard University’s Widener Library, University of Michigan (Ann Arbor), the British Library, the Bibliotheque Nationale de France, the Yeghishe Charents Museum of Literature and Art, the Abovian Armenian National Library, the AGBU Nubarian Library, American University of Armenia, the National Children’s Library of Armenia, the Avedik Isahakyan Central Library, Armenian Library and Museum of America, National Association of Armenian Studies and Research, Armenian Cultural Foundation, Armenian Prelacy and many of the regional libraries of Armenia.

President Explains Turkey Dialogue to Parties

POLICY, from page 1

The president referred to two draft protocols regarding the establishment of diplomatic relations between Armenia and Turkey and the reopening of their border. Local opposition groups, notably the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaktsutyun, ARF), strongly object to some of their key provisions such as formal recognition of Armenia’s existing border

with Turkey.

The ARF was represented at the meeting by one of its top leaders, Armen Rustamian. He said he reiterated the nationalist party’s concerns and pressed Sargisian to clarify whether the protocols can be altered before their signing by the two governments.

“It emerged that major changes in them could be made only during the [parliamentary]

ratification phase,” Rustamian said after the meeting. “This means that if there are really important and serious views [voiced on the subject] the negotiating party must take them into consideration but will be free to decide whether or not to back them ... This is simply unacceptable to us.”

Rustamian added that the ARF’s concerns were echoed by other party leaders and seemed to have influenced Sargisian’s thinking. “I think that as a result of the discussions, some changes occurred in the president’s attitudes,” he said. “Thank God, there were also other political forces that had the same concerns and expressed them in one way or another.”

According to Aram Karapetian, the leader of the opposition Nor Zhamanakner party who also attended the meeting, most participants agreed that the protocols are “flawed.” He said they were also worried that the planned formation of a Turkish-Armenian commission of historians would thwart greater international recognition of the Armenian Genocide in the Ottoman Empire. “Serge Sargisian looked a different person after the meeting,” claimed Karapetian.

“He had the same concerns which the others had,” said Vazgen Manukian, the veteran leader

of the National Democratic Union, a once-influential party loyal to Armenia’s current leadership. But, he said, Sargisian at the same time, made a convincing case for the continuation of the Turkish-Armenian dialogue.

“When you lock yourself in a room, you won’t have any concerns,” Manukian said. “But when you get out, walk the streets and start talking to others, there will always be problems. That’s what makes life interesting.”

Meanwhile, the opposition Armenian National Congress (HAK) and Zharangutyun party defended their decision to boycott what they see as a meaningless discussion. HAK spokesman Arman Musinian also said that the opposition alliance led by former President Levon Ter-Petrosian will not cooperate with the authorities on any issue until the latter release all of the opposition members arrested following the February 2008 presidential election.

For his part, Zharangutyun leader Armen Martirosian insisted on the party’s demands for a national referendum on the Turkish-Armenian agreements. “Besides, the foreign minister said in the National Assembly yesterday that nothing will be changed in the finalized protocols,” said Martirosian. “So what are we supposed to discuss?”

Yerevan Warns Ankara against Linking Ties With Karabagh

WARNING, from page 1

conducted negotiations and came to agreements reflected in the initialed protocols.”

“If the Turkish authorities have problems with the signing of documents, they should not try to solve them by distorting the spirit, essence and goals of the initialed documents. The signing and implementation of agreed documents is a difficult process. Nevertheless, Armenia is ready to respect the agreements and go forward.”

In his statement Nalbandian also reacted to Erdogan’s remarks made during an interview with a number of Turkish media editors-in-chief on September 17 that “Armenia must be freed from the influence of its powerful diaspora.”

Nalbandian said: “If the authorities of modern Turkey are not ready today to recognize the fact of the Genocide perpetrated in the Ottoman Empire, they are at least obliged to respect the survivors of the Armenian Genocide and their descendants.”



INTERNATIONAL

International News

Rights Groups Express Concern Over Russian Hate Crimes

MOSCOW (Interfax) – Human rights groups have expressed concerns about the attacks based on xenophobia and ethnic intolerance, which continue in Russia.

“In the period between January and mid September, 169 attacks occurred, in which 53 people were killed and at least 218 were injured,” said Alexander Brod, director of the Moscow Bureau for Human Rights.

In the same period in 2008, at least 92 people died at the hands of nationalists and at least 300 were injured, and in 2007 at least forty were killed and some 230 were injured, Brod said.

Victims of racist attacks this year were mostly Uzbeks (13 killed and nine injured), Russians (five killed and nine injured), Kyrgyzis (four killed and 10 injured), Tajiks (five killed and 13 injured), Armenians (two killed and nine injured), Dagestanis (two killed and four injured), Vietnamese (three killed), and Azerbaijanis (two killed and 12 injured), Brod said.

Rights groups believe that most hate crimes are committed by skinheads and members of various radical nationalist organizations. Most victims of such attacks are people with origins in the Caucasus and Central Asia, and also sexual minorities and members of young people's subcultures.

President Receives Russian President's CIS Representatives

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Armenian President Serge Sargsian received this week the special representative of the president of Russia in CIS countries, Farid Mukhametshi, who is in Armenia these days within the framework of “Russian Language Days,” which is sponsored by the presidents of Armenia and Russia.

The presidential press service said that Sargsian noted with delight that the event has become a tradition of sorts in Armenia. The parties specially pointed out the role of the Russian language as an important means of inter-cultural communication. The president of the country said that teaching of Russian in all the secondary schools in Armenia is considered obligatory.

Vice Prime Minister Takes Part in ‘Sochi 2009’ Opening Ceremony

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – A delegation headed by the Armenian Vice Prime Minister Armen Gevorgyan took part in the September 20 opening ceremony of the “Sochi 2009” eighth international investment conference.

Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin participated in the conference, according to government officials.

Gevorgyan met the representatives of Olympstroy, a development company that presented plans for a hotel that will be located in Sochi's Imiritian valley.

Armenian President's Visit To Syria Is Postponed

DAMASCUS, Syria (Syria News Station) – Armenia's President Serge Sargsian has postponed a visit to Syria until the beginning of 2010 due to his schedule.

The head of the Armenian diplomatic corps at the Foreign Ministry, Levon Sargsian, told al-Watan newspaper last week that the Armenian president's visit, which had been scheduled for mid-October, had been postponed. He noted the warm relations between Syria and Armenia, were enhanced by the visit of President Bashar al-Assad's to Armenia last June. Last week, Economy and Trade Minister Amer Lutfi opened the Syrian-Armenian Businessmen Council's meeting in Yerevan where the joint investment and economic cooperation relations were on the table. Lion Zaki who chaired the Syrian side in the council, said the Armenian side expressed its desire to export mineral water and drinks to Syria, and import cotton and raw materials.

Tbilisi Accused of ‘Dragging out’ High-Profile ‘Armenian Activist’ Case

By Karine Ionesyan

TBILISI, Georgia (ArmeniaNow) – The family and supporters of an Armenian activist in Georgia sentenced to a lengthy jail term earlier this year have accused the Georgian court and prosecutors of “dragging out” the appeal hearing and called for more attention to the case from Armenia and the local sizable Armenian community.

Vahagn Chakhalyan, the leader of the United Javakhk Democratic Alliance, was arrested along with his father and underage brother in July 2008 following a car bomb blast near the home of the chief of police in Akhalkalak, the provincial center of the Armenian-populated region of Samtskhe-Javakheti in southern Georgia.

In April, the court found Chakhalyan guilty of several crimes under the Criminal Code of Georgia, including “acquisition and possession of firearms and ammunition,” “organizing a group action which grossly disrupted public order” and “hooliganism” and sentenced him to 10 years in prison.

Chakhalyan has all along protested his innocence and claimed to have been targeted for his political activities and advocacy of Armenian minority rights in Georgia. His lawyers appealed the verdict and the hearing of the appeal began in July this year.

On Friday, Chakhalyan's defense lawyer asked the appeals court to postpone the hearing of his client's appeal to allow experts to conduct a crucial case examination in relation to weapons. This examination, the defense counsel argued, should have been completed within the period between the first hearing that took place on July 27 and the next one which had been scheduled for September 18, during which its results were to have been presented, while materials for other two examinations were provided only in September, which left little time for a review.

The explanation for this omission given in court was that they “had failed to find people to transport the weapon.” Prosecutor Irakly Bardzimadze, however, promised to “solve this issue within five days.”

“We do not believe in any change. As always, everything is being dragged out and the scenario has already been written. The end will be at the European court,” Chakhalyan's mother Gayane said. (Chakhalyan's father and brother were fined by the court about \$4,250 and released.)

Lawyer Stepan Voskanyan insisted that the charges on which his client was

found guilty and sentenced to 10 years in jail were fabricated.

According to him, during the search in Chakhalyan's house following the car bomb explosion “task force” police officers themselves planted arms. He also rejected the other charges as fabricated and claimed that the authorities decided to hear the case in capital Tbilisi “in order to keep tension.”

“It is impossible to call these actions of the Georgian authorities other than political persecution. This persecution that began still in 2000 with attempted murders against his [Chakhalyan's] family members, has now reached its climax,” Voskanyan said.

No protests against the court action could be seen either inside or outside the court in the Georgian capital.

Special Advisor to the Chamber of Advocates of the Republic of Armenia in Charge of European Affairs since

2005 Raffi-Philippe Kalfayan, who intends to lobby the Chakhalyan case internationally, through Armenian-Diasporan communities, said he was surprised that “Armenia and the Georgian-Armenian community are silent.”

The hearing of the Chakhalyans appeal in Tbilisi proceeds against the backdrop of growing tension on the Armenian-Georgian border.

The Chakhalyan case has been widely viewed by advocacy groups in Armenia and Javakhk as a litmus paper for Tbilisi's alleged attempts to stifle dissent in the restive region.

According to Chakhalyan's lawyer Voskanyan, if authorities in Tbilisi ever decide to release his client, they will demand that he stop his political activities.

The next hearing in Chakhalyan's appeal case is scheduled for October 23.

Hariri Accepts Re-Nomination For Lebanese Premiership

BEIRUT (Monsters and Critics.com) – Saad Hariri on September 16 accepted re-nomination for the post of Lebanese prime minister after getting backing from 71 MPs of his majority party and two from the opposition Armenian Tashnag party.

His nomination for the second time since the June parliamentary elections was sure to restart the debate between opposition groups and the majority over the planned makeup of the cabinet.

“I have accepted the task of forming a new cabinet,” Hariri said after meeting President Michel Suleiman.

“I promise I will commit to the constitution, work to secure the participation of all parties in the cabinet and adopt dialogue as the sole means to solve political disputes,” Hariri said.

He added that his deliberation with the various parliamentary blocs will start after post-Ramadan feasting ends at the weekend.

“My decision to step down last week took the country out of political stalemate and gave way to a new round of political dialogue,” Hariri said.

He stepped down September 10 after accusing the Hezbollah-led opposition of hampering his efforts to form a national unity government.

According to the lineup Hariri presented before he stepped down, 15 ministers would be from the majority, 10 from the opposition and five indepen-

dents loyal to President Michel Suleiman, in order to give the president the tipping vote.

But, during deliberations for the past two days between parliamentarians and Suleiman, opposition parties and their ally, Christian leader Michel Aoun, withheld support from Hariri because, they said, Hariri “did not commit to form a cabinet based on the 15-10-5 formula.”

According to the Lebanese constitution, Hariri has to name a cabinet, which includes all the rival Lebanese factions and have a balanced representation in accordance with the country's religious system.

Since Hariri's holds a parliamentary majority, his party has the upper hand in naming a premier, usually a Sunni Muslim according to the constitution.

On September 13 Hariri said, “when I get appointed I will start negotiating, and [then] I would assess the level of cooperation by political parties.”

Hariri's allies said that it was up to the new premier-designate to decide upon the continued validity of the 15-10-5 formula, stressing the need to resume deliberations on the cabinet issue from scratch.

“I have kept my hand extended but [the opposition] has always rejected our open approach,” he said.

Saad Hariri, is the son of late premier Rafik Hariri, who was killed in a car bomb blast in 2005, along with 20 others.

Journalists Gormus and Haas Receive International Dink Award

AWARD, from page 1

commander, revealing plans by some generals to stage a military intervention. Gormus said that he was not satisfied with the court's decision, even though he was acquitted of all charges.

Haas, a correspondent for Israel's Ha'aretz newspaper, expressed her regret over Dink's death and that the award was named “after a murdered man.” Born in Jerusalem, she is the daughter of Holocaust survivors. Reporting on the Palestinians since 1991 when Ha'aretz sent her to Gaza, she became the first and only Israeli journalist to settle in Ramallah in the West Bank to live among Palestinians.

Dink's murder trial has been continu-

ing, and the Dink family lawyers frequently refer to the series of mistakes made by the police in handling the case and official attempts to protect those who plotted the crime as previously reported by the press. Dink was shot dead outside the offices of the Agos newspaper, of which he was the editor-in-chief.

Dink's wife, Rakel, said in her emotional speech that Dink would have been 55 on September 15, if his life had not been “usurped.” She said establishing the foundation was a result of efforts from many “friends” and that it was difficult to heal the wound.

“The wound was deep in 1915; how is it going to be dressed?” she said, referring to the killings of Anatolian

Armenians perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire during World War I, which Armenians claim constituted genocide. Among the attendees of the award ceremony were State Minister Egemen Bagis, Parliament's Human Rights Committee head Zafer Uskul, independent deputy Ufuk Uras, British Consul General in Istanbul Jessica Hand, journalists Nadire Mater and Leyla Umar, author Adalet Agaoglu, conductor Cem Mansur and actress Lale Mansur.

Kardes Turkuler, a well-known folk music ensemble praised for its repertoire of ethnic music from Anatolia, and Arto Tunçboyacıyan, an internationally-acclaimed Turkish-Armenian avant-garde folk musician, gave a short concert at the ceremony.



NATIONAL NEWS

Armenian Assembly Statement on Nagorno Karabagh Developments

[Editor's Note: The Armenian Assembly of America issued the following statement in regard to the Nagorno Karabagh peace process.]

On the occasion of the July 17-18 meetings of the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan in Moscow, in regard to the Nagorno Karabagh peace process, under the auspices of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Minsk Group (OSCE), the Assembly reiterates its long-standing position that any resolution must be acceptable to the people of both Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh.

The meetings follow the joint declaration by the presidents of the United States, France and Russia on July 10, at the recent Group of Eight conference in Italy, in which the presidents instructed the "mediators to present to the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan an updated version of the Madrid Document of November 2007, the co-chairs' last articulation of the Basic Principles," and urged the parties to "resolve the few remaining differences ..."

The issues are complex and will require time to reach a solution that is acceptable to all parties, and most specifically to the citizens of the Nagorno Karabagh Republic.

Throughout the ongoing negotiation process, and again on July 16, the Armenian government has stated that no agreement can be reached without the concurrence of the government and citizens of Nagorno Karabagh. We fully endorse that policy and urge the Minsk Group co-chairs to ensure that the government of Nagorno Karabagh joins the negotiation process as soon as possible. We note that the OSCE co-chairs have repeatedly, and as recently as July 8, called for the inclusion of Nagorno Karabagh.

We urge the United States, in particular, to ensure the fulfillment of President Barack Obama's campaign pledge "to work for a lasting and durable settlement of the Nagorno Karabagh conflict that is agreeable to all parties, and based upon America's founding commitment to the principles of democracy and self determination." The Assembly also recalls the leadership of the United States Senate and the passage of S.J. Res. 178 in 1989, which expressed US support for "the fundamental rights and the aspirations of the people of Nagorno Karabagh."

Moreover, the Assembly strongly supports the fundamental rights of the people of Nagorno Karabagh, and its independence

from foreign rule and oppression. To that end, we support the efforts of the governments of Nagorno Karabagh and Armenia.

For more than two decades the Assembly has committed its resources to the pursuit of the just cause of the Armenian people of Nagorno Karabagh. We have played an instrumental role in Congress, from the Senate adoption of S.J. Res. 178, to the enactment of Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act, which prohibits US assistance to Azerbaijan until its dual blockades of Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh are lifted. We will continue to strongly support maximum assistance and aid to Nagorno Karabagh to further promote its democratic development and overcome the consequences

of Azerbaijan's aggression.

Therefore, we call upon the presidents of the United States, France and Russia, whose nations collectively serve as the OSCE's Minsk Group co-chairs, to denounce Azerbaijan's ongoing war rhetoric and its threats for a resumption of military action. A new war will not only undermine the peace process, but will also lead to the destabilization of the South Caucasus.

The Assembly stands united with all Armenians to protect the freedom and security of the Nagorno Karabagh people in the face of these most serious external threats. The suffering endured and the sacrifices made by Armenians since the Armenian Genocide deserves nothing less.

Assembly Internship Applications Now Being Accepted

WASHINGTON – The Armenian Assembly of America (Assembly) announced this week that application deadline for the 2010 Terjenian-Thomas Assembly Internship Program in Washington, DC is December 10. Additionally, applications for the Assembly's internship program in Armenia will also be accepted through February 15, 2010.

The Terjenian-Thomas Assembly Internship Program, an eight-week summer program, now entering its 33rd year, is designed to provide college students of Armenian descent the opportunity to intern in the nation's capital, while taking part in a full schedule of educational, social and cultural activities. Students accepted to the Washington program will be placed in congressional offices, think tanks, media outlets and government agencies based on their educational background and interests.

Interns will have the opportunity to discuss Armenian-American issues during meetings with Members of Congress and other government officials and noted academics through the "Capitol Ideas and Lecture Series" programs. Over 900 students have taken part in the popular program since its inception in 1977.

Partial and full housing scholarships for the Terjenian-Thomas Assembly Internship Program in Washington, DC are available to qualified students on a competitive basis. Applications are available on the Assembly's website at www.aaainc.org.

The Assembly also offers a similar internship program in Yerevan, Armenia. Now entering its 10th year, the Yerevan program provides students the opportunity to live and work in one of the most historically and culturally rich coun-

tries in the world. Students will work in Armenian government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), medical centers, media outlets and more, as well as meet with Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh officials and tour historical sites in and around the country.

For more information on the internship programs or assistance with the application process, contact Internship Coordinator Joseph Piatt in Washington, DC at jpiatt@aaainc.org.

The Terjenian-Thomas Assembly Internship Program is made possible by memorial funds established by Aram Terjenian, Annie Thomas and Florence Terjenian of Belmont, Mass.

Officials Visit Millennium Challenge Sites in Kotayk and Aragatsotn

KOTAYK/ARAGATSOTN, Armenia – On September 16, US and Armenian officials went on a working visit to the Arzni-Shamiram main canal section rehabilitated under the Millennium Challenge Account Program (MCA).

The project site represents a test area used to determine engineering and construction best practices to be used during subsequent main canal rehabilitation works. More than 30 communities and 60,000 people in both provinces will benefit from the improvements in this canal.

The delegation included US Ambassador Marie Yovanovitch, Armenian Deputy Prime Minister Armen Gevorgyan, Armenian Minister of Agriculture Gerasim Alaverdyan, Aragatsotn provincial leader Sargis Sahakyan and Kotayk provincial leader Kovalenko Shahgeldyan.

The Arzni-Shamiram canal is one of six main canals within the main canal network that will be rehabilitated under the MCA Irrigated Agriculture Project (IAP). Rehabilitation and construction works are contracted to a consortium led by the French company SADE and its Armenian subcontractor SHMSH-23 of Vayots Dzor. Rehabilitation and reconstruction works focus on canal sections and water-management structures.

The delegation continued their trip to the community of Karbi in Aragatsotn marz for a tour of the new agricultural technologies being utilized by a farmer who underwent water-management training. MCA-Armenia funded the installation of the drip irrigation system, which has allowed the farmer to transition to more efficient and cost-effective irrigation practices.

Sponsor a Teacher in Armenia and Karabagh 2009



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Clinton, Sargisian Discuss Turkey in Another Call

YEREVNA (RFE/RL) – US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton telephoned President Serge Sargisian at the weekend to again discuss Armenia's ongoing rapprochement with Turkey facilitated by the United States.

A one-sentence statement issued by Sargisian's office on Sunday said the two touched upon "issues related to the current stage of the normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations. It gave no other details. There was no word on the conversation, the second in a month, from the US State Department.

Clinton has regularly talked to Armenian and Turkish leaders this year in an effort to push forward their fence-mending negotiations. Her previous phone call with Sargisian was reported on September 21, ten days before the publication of two draft agreements envisaging the establishment of diplomatic relations between Armenia and Turkey and reopening of their border.

Their latest conversation came the day after official Yerevan accused Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of acting against "the letter, spirit and aims" of those agreements. Erdogan reportedly stated on Friday that Turkey would not reopen the Armenian border as long as the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict remains unresolved.

In a late-night statement, Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian warned that Ankara risks "ruining" the Turkish-Armenian dialogue by again linking it to the Karabagh peace process.

None of the draft protocols unveiled by the two governments on August 31 makes any reference to the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict. The State Department was quick to welcome those documents and urge Ankara and Yerevan to "proceed expeditiously" in implementing them.

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Community News

Chicken Charlie:

Southern California's Deep-Fry King

By Elina Shatkin

LOS ANGELES (*Los Angeles Times*) – If the image of slender, sunblocked yoga moms carefully selecting organic kale at the local farmers market has become a cliché of “California living,” then the county fair in all its sticky, sugary, deep-fried glory is the wildly excessive opposite.

For 26 years, one man has been doing his best to bolster the fortunes of anti-cholesterol drug makers by tantalizing fair-goers with some of the most imaginative – and most gluttonous – deep-fried concoctions at local fairs.

They call him Chicken Charlie, and at his eponymous stand he has offered deep-fried pickles, olives, s'mores, peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, Twinkies, cheesecake, cupcakes, frog legs, White Castle cheeseburgers and more. Name it, and Chicken Charlie has probably battered and fried it.

Plenty of vendors offer breaded, oil-soaked concoctions, but few have so thoroughly dedicated themselves to the Way of the Deep Fryer.

“There are many other fried foods at the fair, but I specialize in it. I make it my life,” he says.

An immigrant with a yen to become a police officer, he took a slight detour and through hard work and innovation ended up as Southern California's deep-fry king.

Born in Syria to Armenian parents, Charlie Boghosian arrived in the United States at age 11 with his family. They eventually settled in San Diego, where at age 14 he got a summer



Chicken Charlie Boghosian

job from local vendor Bob Jackson selling char-broiled corn at the San Diego County Fair. “I worked it that summer, and I really enjoyed it,” says Boghosian, 40. “I enjoyed cooking and selling corn. I enjoyed the people at the fair. I enjoyed the atmosphere.”

One summer led to another, and 12 summers later Boghosian had worked his way through high school and college selling fried food. In 1996, he and Jackson bought a trailer specializing in broasted chicken, a method of “pressure-frying” chicken. Jackson suggested the name “Chicken Charlie” for its alliterative appeal, and the seeds of a dynasty were sown.

One day while working a fair in Miami, he noticed a vendor selling deep-fried Twinkies. “I liked the idea, but I didn't like the way it tasted,” Boghosian says. “It had been dipped in a very thick, wet batter and you could barely taste the cream inside. I decided to dip it in an egg wash and roll it in dry, sweet flour, creating a thin crust that was very crispy and crunchy. You could taste how nice and warm the Twinkie was.” The year he debuted it at the LA County Fair, 2001, he sold 10,000 pieces.

“After that, everyone asked: ‘What will you do next year?’ That question stayed in my head. When the season was over, I bought some portable fryers for my kitchen at home and

see CHICKEN CHARLIE, page 8



Armenia's UN Ambassador Garen Nazarian speaks at the Diocesan Center

At the Diocesan Center, Armenia's New UN Ambassador Meets Armenian-American Community

NEW YORK – On Monday, September 14, a reception was held at the Diocesan Center to welcome Garen Nazarian, the new representative of Armenia to the United Nations (UN).

Organized by the Eastern Diocese and the Fund for Armenian Relief, the evening was attended by some 150 people, who gathered to meet Nazarian and to hear him speak about his delegation's goals at the UN.

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), called Nazarian “especially well-practiced in the arena of international organizations, having served as Armenia's UN ambassador in Geneva, Switzerland, and on several influential international bodies.”

Barsamian also noted Nazarian's “ability to stand on principle, as well as his eagerness to engage others and seek common ground.”

Acknowledging that he assumes his position at a critical moment in history, Nazarian said the Nagorno Karabagh peace process and Armenia-Turkey relations will be two central issues for Armenia's UN mission.

He stressed that the delegation would treat each matter independently, and would work toward both the continuation of Nagorno-Karabagh negotiations and the normalization of relations with Turkey.

Nazarian said Armenia plans to extend its involvement in global agenda issues and strengthen its international presence.

“Protection of peace in our complex region is another vital issue,” he said. “We consider that the key to it is multilateral cooperation among all countries of the region and among the neighbors.”

Also speaking during the evening's program, Diocesan Council Chairman Oscar Tatosian reflected on the Diocesan Center's prominent role in Armenian-American life, as the hub of major community events.

“So many great and influential figures of our generation – Armenian and otherwise – have come here, to meet the people, and address our concerns,” he said.

Dr. Movses Abelian, Armenia's past UN ambassador, said he experienced a warm reception at the Diocese when he first came to New York 17 years ago. He recalled how Armenia's diplomats occupied an office at the Diocesan Center even before Armenia became a member of the UN in 1992, and thanked Archbishop Barsamian for his assistance and encouragement.

Abelian – who currently serves as the secretary of the UN General Assembly's Administrative and Budgetary Committee and as a member of the Committee on Programme and Coordination – also thanked Kevork and Sirvart Hovnanian for donating the brownstone in Midtown Manhattan, where the offices of Armenia's UN Mission are housed.

see AMBASSADOR, page 8



Ambassador Garen Nazarian and Archbishop Khajag Barsamian speak with members of the Armenian-American community during a reception at the Diocesan Center held to welcome the ambassador to New York.

Community Rallies Behind Incarcerated California Man Accused Of Molestation

By Mike Rosenberg

BELMONT, Calif. (*San Mateo County Times*) – Throughout the mid-1990s, Sara Galloway said she and her teenage friends spent plenty of time alone with Michael Kazarian, the former Belmont chamber of commerce president facing child molestation charges.

Kazarian made frequent overnight visits while dating Galloway's mother, when Sara was 14- to 16-years-old, and often took care of her while her mother worked odd hours.

Kazarian, now 50, never made the slightest of awkward or sexual comments, Galloway said. In fact, Galloway still relies on Kazarian as a father figure, even though her mother and Kazarian split up years ago.

“So Michael kind of stepped up to the plate and he was pretty much my second dad,” said Sarah Galloway, now 27 and a speech therapist in Richland, Wash. “Stupid things, like I went on a date, and he gave me a 20-questions drill. He would never, ever even think about anything nasty like that. That's just not Michael.”

Sarah Galloway and her mother, Kim, are just a few of many friends, church members, business colleagues and community members who are rallying in support of the incarcerated former chamber head. They recently helped lower his bail by \$500,000.

But prosecutors are standing their ground, and next month the owner of Beau Monde Flooring in Belmont will stand trial in San Mateo County Superior Court. Prosecutors say he repeatedly fondled and spanked in a sexual manner the daughter of his former girlfriend from 1999 to 2002, when the girl was 8- to 10-years-old.

Prosecutors filed 18 child molestation-related felony charges against Kazarian in May and, if convicted, he could spend the remainder of his life behind bars.

Kazarian's court-appointed attorney, South San Francisco-based Steve Chase, said he had a courtroom packed with well-dressed people in their 30s to 70s supporting Kazarian during a recent court hearing in which a judge lowered his bail from \$1.5 million to \$1 million. Chase had filed 10 declarations of support from community members and friends.

“I left him there with (Sara) all the time, and it was never a problem,” said Kim Galloway. “If I had a little child, I would trust Michael 100 percent with that child at any time.”

Another likely witness is John Dahlberg, a longtime friend who was on the parish council with Kazarian at St. John Armenian Church in San Francisco. Dahlberg, who spent eight years as a part-time officer at the Oakland Police Department, said Kazarian fits no profiles he knows for molesters.

Dahlberg, Chase, the Galloways and others interviewed for this story described Kazarian as a well-liked community and church leader. He installed flooring at the Armenian Church a few years ago and refused to charge anything beyond material costs.

“It was unthinkable that he would mistreat or hurt anyone, especially a child,” Dahlberg said. “I've never heard a negative word about Michael Kazarian in 10 years.”

Prosecutors still believe they have a strong case. In addition to the girl's claims, San Mateo police set up two phone calls between her and Kazarian to monitor their conversations.

“Many, many people who we prosecute are otherwise in their lives good members of the community,” said Chief Deputy District Attorney Steve Wagstaffe. “The allegations are that they did something, they acted wrong, not that they're bad people.”

His supporters are still hoping his reputation can be turned around during the trial, slated to start October 16.



COMMUNITY NEWS

AGBU Manoogian School Unveils New State-of-the-Art High School Building

DETROIT — Tuesday, September 8, will be engraved in the Manoogian School's history as a memorable day. In the presence of the school's current and former board of directors, Greater-Detroit Armenian community members, teachers and students, the opening ceremony of the new high school occurred in the atrium of the building.

A donation from Richard Manoogian and Louise Simone made this building possible.

Elementary and middle school principal, Dyana Kezelian, welcomed the Manoogian School family and friends. She announced that 40 years ago, no one could have anticipated that this school, which opened its doors with 10 students and two teachers, would have endured to find such a place in the educational world. Today, however, with the continuing efforts of its staff, dedication of the past principals and teachers, as well as the visionary guidance of the board members, the school is thriving with its more than 400 students and 45 faculty and staff.

Kezelian thanked especially the Manoogian family members for their support. "Our founders and benefactors, Mr. and Mrs. Alex and Marie Manoogian, are delightedly watch-



Board of Directors Chairman and Vice Chairman Dr. Richard Marburger and Edmond Azadian, respectively, together with both principals, cut the ceremonial ribbon.

begun our journey from good to great."

Torossian concluded his talk by thanking the Manoogian teachers for their unmatched dedication to the school.

High school social studies teacher Michael Huff, on behalf of the faculty, read a letter of appreciation addressed to benefactors Richard Manoogian and Louise Manoogian Simone.

Board of Directors President Dr. Richard Marburger congratulated the audience starting his remarks by saying, "It's a great day for us Armenians." Marburger thanked the Manoogian family for their gift and continuous support of this school. Enumerating the school's past successes, Marburger praised the current administration: "Dr. Hosesep Torossian is an engineer who brings unusual technical expertise to his post as principal of the high school. Dyana Kezelian is an effective academic leader whose long experience is of enormous value as she serves as principal of the Elementary and Middle Schools. They work as a team, each realizing that the other's success enhances the performance of the entire school."

Board of Directors Chairman and Vice Chairman Dr. Richard Marburger and Edmond Azadian, respectively, together with both principals, cut the ceremonial ribbon, reminding school family and friends that the grand opening ceremony of the high school building will take place on October 10.



Board of Directors Chairman Dr. Richard Marburger

ing our ceremony from heaven, being fulfilled on what we have achieved in these past 40 years," she said.

After welcoming the audience, Principal Dr. Hosesep Torossian of the high school, thanked Kezelian for her devotion and support and added, "Today, on this festive occasion, the Manoogian spirit soars as we collectively celebrate not only the 40th anniversary of the founding of our school, but the grand opening of this breathtaking building." He extended his special gratitude to the great humanitarian, Alex Manoogian. "Alex Manoogian's passion for giving did not end with his passing. As torchbearers of their parents' dreams, Richard Manoogian and Louise

Manoogian Simone continue their unwavering support of our school." Torossian added, "we will uphold the Manoogian name by delivering excellence in education. We have

Family of Valedictorian Student Still Faces Deportation Challenges

FRESNO, Calif. (KFSN) — A valley student facing deportation to Armenia just 15 months ago, is now getting ready to start his second year of college and embark upon a dental career.

Arthur Mkoyan graduated as valedictorian from Bullard High School in June of 2008. He'd been accepted to the University of California, Davis, his first college choice, but he and his family were facing immediate deportation to Armenia.

Asmik Karabedian, Arthur's mother said: "We try to do everything right. We did everything for our kids to be safe and sound. It just didn't work out that way."

Karabedian said she and her husband came to the United States more than a decade ago on tourist visas. They began seeking asylum in this country in 1992. The courts rejected their many appeals and they were scheduled for deportation.

But Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D) stepped in and introduced a bill to allow the family to stay in the country until their immigration status is resolved.

Just weeks after that, a generous benefactor from the bay area stepped in to pay for Mkoyan's college education.

"I couldn't believe it; it's incredible," Mkoyan said. "If you asked me that a couple of months before it happened I would have said, 'no way, there's no chance of that happening.'"

Mkoyan spent last year studying at UC Davis and interned this summer at a local dentist's office; Dr. Robert Garabedian had been taking Armenian language lessons from Mkoyan's mother when he learned of the family's plight.

"It's difficult when you see a great family who's contributing to our society," Garabedian said. "The mom's going to school, the son's going to school, the dad's working, the mom's working and we can't find it in our hearts to give them amnesty?"

Feinstein's bill could lead to permanent residency for Mkoyan and his family. But there's always the possibility they will have to go back to Armenia — it's something Arthur Mkoyan ponders every day.

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AMAA Children Helping Children October 29 at Belmont Country Club

BELMONT, Mass. — The Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) Orphan and Childcare Committee announced recently that the 14th annual Children Helping Children luncheon will take place this year on Thursday, October 29, at the Belmont Country Club.

This popular annual event offers an opportunity to enjoy an afternoon of fun, and at the same time, help needy children in Armenia.

In addition to the luncheon, this year's event will feature silent and live auctions, as well as a special guest auctioneer. Items to be auctioned include box seats to Red Sox and Patriots games, a framed Armenian alphabet, a pearl necklace, an amethyst ring and many other items.

Guests will be entertained by a colorful children's costume parade featuring child models. All proceeds from the event are donated to the AMAA Orphan and Child Care Fund.

For additional information, visit amaa.org.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Tekeyan, in Search of God

By Kevork Keushkerian

GLENDALE, Calif. — Poet Jaque Hagopian’s book presentation, *Tekeyan, In Search of God*, took place on Sunday, September 13, at the Glendale Public Library. The event was organized by the Tekeyan Cultural Association’s (TCA) Los Angeles Chapter.

Mistress of Ceremonies Lora Kuyumjian welcomed the audience and pointed out that this book was the 12th publication of Tekeyan Cultural Association, sponsored by the newly-established Yervant Azadian Literary Endowment Fund. She then invited to the podium the first speaker of the evening, Parsegh Kartalian, to introduce Jaque Hagopian, the author.

Kartalian had known the author early on, from the days when they were both in Cairo, Egypt. He noted that Jaque Hagopian was born in Jerusalem in 1917 and once in Cairo, he mastered the Arabic Language to be able to be admitted to the Fouad I University. He graduated from that prestigious institution with a degree in pharmacy.

Kartalian then dwelled upon the close relationship the author had with the prince of Armenian poetry, Vahan Tekeyan. It was this intimate acquaintance that eventually gave birth to the idea of writing this book, he mentioned.

Kartalian noted that he had also known the author’s brother, Yervant Hagopian. Finally, painting a clear picture of the author’s character, he said that love sticks out as its main feature. Love towards God, love towards the Armenian language, love towards mankind and especially love towards Vahan Tekeyan, he concluded.

Ovsanna Rakoubian, a former student of Jaque Hagopian’s Armenian language class in Beirut, Lebanon, fondly recalled the first day

her teacher had entered the class. She then read two pieces from his book, one of which was about the passing on of Vahan Tekeyan.

Dr. Marzbed Margosian, author, educator and a former scientific researcher at Harvard University in Cambridge, was called upon to present the book. He said that the book is composed of three sections. He then presented those sections in detail, analyzing and evaluating them. He pointed out that Hagopian had started writing in French, before he ventured into writing in Armenian.

The first section of the book deals with Vahan Tekeyan. He is a humble, communicative and humoristic human being, contrary to the general impression that he had been gruff. This section also deals with his beliefs on God and his constant struggle to find Him, as revealed through his poetry. A good example would be his famous poem, “The Armenian Church.” In short, Margosian noted, it is a research depicting his perception of religion.

The second section is a journalistic diary of events taking place from 1937 to 1945, when he passed away. Jaque Hagopian’s acquaintance with poet Vahan Tekeyan had started in 1938, stated Margosian. This section deals with Vahan Tekeyan’s agony, pain and misery, especially towards the end of his life when he fell sick. He was a lonely man, no one to go to and no one to open up to, as he was not married and had no family members surrounding him.

The last section looks like a parade of the well known in the Armenian literary, political, cultural and religious arenas that have touched upon the life of Vahan Tekeyan, said Margosian. In a film version of this section, this would have been a list of guest appearances that come and go, well woven in the plot of a true life story of a giant in the Armenian literary world of the 20th century, concluded Margosian.

When the author took to the podium, he mentioned that he wanted the publication of

his book to coincide with the 40th anniversary of the establishment of Tekeyan Cultural Association’s Los Angeles Chapter. He first thanked God for his full and rich life, and then he thanked the association for sponsoring the publication of his book and the various people who had taken part in the program. Finally, he thanked the general audience for being there for him.

The final speaker of the evening was Very Rev. Dajad Yardemian, vicar general of the

Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America. He said that the struggle to believe or not to believe in God is not unique to Vahan Tekeyan; it is rather universal and every reasoning individual is engulfed in this dilemma until a satisfactory resolution surfaces and gives that inquisitive person a lasting peace of mind.

A light reception followed the presentation and the members of the audience had a chance to meet with the author.

Southern California’s Deep-Fry King

CHICKEN CHARLIE, from page 6 started experimenting.”

In 2002, Boghosian introduced deep-fried Oreos, which he dips in pancake batter, deep-fries, drizzles with chocolate syrup and dusts with powdered sugar. The next year, he deep-fried avocados using fish-and-chips batter. The year after that, he invented his infamous Krispy Kreme chicken sandwich: a raspberry jelly-filled doughnut, sliced in half, stuffed with a seasoned chicken breast and topped with honey sauce. “We have sold tens of thousands of those,” he says. This year at the Orange County Fair, he debuted the Zucchini Weenie, a turkey frank tucked in a hollowed-out zucchini that’s dipped in corn dog batter and (what else?) fried.

It’s not as easy as it looks, according to Boghosian. “There is an art to frying food. What type of batter to use, whether you’re going to use it wet or dry, how thick it should be, how much time it spends in the oil. And we get rid of our oil every day. That makes a big difference in the flavor.”

He also uses different batters — six to be exact — for the more than 20 items he sells. One for vegetables, one for broasted chicken, one for chicken wings and frog legs, a sweet pancake batter for some of the desserts, a corn dog batter and a dry batter just for the Twinkies.

These days, Boghosian is looking to expand beyond county fairs. He hopes to open his first restaurant in the San Diego area in 2010 and wants to have a chain of restaurants stretching from San Diego to L.A. within five years. He’s also working on a line of deep-fryers and cooking equipment, and he’s halfway through a cookbook tentatively titled, *Chicken Charlie’s at the Fair: 101 Ways to Blow Your Diet*. No one can accuse him of dishonesty.

But Boghosian, who still loves working behind the counter at his booths, won’t be giving up the fair life any time soon, especially the LA County Fair, which runs through October 4. It has a special place in his heart, he says. “I like it the best, and I started a lot of my inventions there. I love people’s reactions when they come up to the stand and see that we’re frying something like frog legs. They say: ‘Are you crazy?’ Then they say: ‘Let me try one.’”

St. Peter Armenian Church Anniversary Dinner Dance Gala

WATERVLIET, N.Y. — On Saturday, October 24, the Anniversary Dinner Dance Gala celebrating the 110th anniversary of St. Peter Armenian Apostolic Church and the 95th anniversary of the Women’s Guild of St. Peter Armenian Church will be held. The event will take place at Michael’s Banquet House, 1019 New Loudon Road, Latham, from 7 p.m. to midnight, featuring The Philly Kef Band. Dinner dance ticket prices include cocktail hour, salad and choice of three dinner entrees, dessert and coffee. Children’s dinner dance tickets are available also. Dance only tickets are available with admission beginning after 9:30 p.m. A 50/50 raffle drawing will be held; a sponsorship booklet is also available.

For more information, contact the church office.

At the Diocesan Center, Armenia’s New UN Ambassador Meets Armenian-American Community

AMBASSADOR, from page 6

Addressing Nazarian, Abelian said he was hopeful that Armenia would continue to build on its diplomatic ties and overall development.

“I’m sure the coming months and years will show that it is a time for peace; it is a time for prosperity for Armenia,” he said.

Barsamian spoke about the close relationship between the diaspora and Armenia.

“The existence of the Republic of Armenia is not merely important to us, as members of the diaspora: it is our other half, as it were. And the success or failure of the Armenian people as a whole depends on the strength and mutual support, the good will and trust, of both the diaspora and our homeland,” the Primate said.

“With such thoughts in mind, it is a pleasure to be able to look to a man like Ambassador

Nazarian — well-educated, accomplished, experienced in diplomacy — as Armenia’s official representative here in the United States.”

Nazarian most recently served as Armenia’s ambassador to Iran. Prior to that, he acted as the advisor and chief of the cabinet to the foreign minister of Armenia; as ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva and held a staff position in Armenia’s embassy in Moscow.

He has also served as a member of the United States Intergovernmental Commission and as a vice president of the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance.

Nazarian is a graduate of Yerevan State University and the Diplomatic Academy of Moscow. He is married, with a daughter and son.



From right, Randy Sapah-Gulian, chairman of the FAR Board of Directors; Dr. Movses Abelian, secretary of the UN General Assembly’s Administrative and Budgetary Committee and member of the Committee on Programme and Coordination; Garen Nazarian and his wife; Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Eastern Diocese; Oscar Tatosian, chairman of the Diocesan Council and Arto Vorperian, program manager at FAR

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New York
METRO

Holy Cross Church of Armenia in Washington Heights Celebrates 80th Anniversary

WASHINGTON HEIGHTS, N.Y. — On Sunday, September 13, Holy Cross Church of Armenia marked the 80th anniversary of its establishment in the uptown Washington Heights neighborhood of New York City. The celebration coincided with the parish name-day, the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross.

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), celebrated the Divine Liturgy, with assistance from St. Nersess seminarians, their dean, the Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan, and the Gomidas and Zvartnotz choirs.

“Over the centuries, we have borne Christ’s cross with faith, hope and love. What was once an instrument of torture and death, has become for us the symbol of salvation, and victory over death,” the Primate said.

Barsamian added that Holy Cross Church has expressed the message of the cross throughout its history.

“In profound ways, the Holy Cross Church symbolizes the entire story of our people in America,” he said. “This sanctuary has been a place of deep sorrow, but also great rejoicing. It has known hardship, but has also become a genuine place of pilgrimage for our people.”

Archbishop Yeghishe Gizirian read the pontifical encyclical issued to the church on the occasion of its anniversary.



The “Blessing of the Fields” service at Holy Cross Church of Armenia. The church marked its 80th anniversary on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross.

encyclical. “Its 80 years of history attest to the strong faith and commitment of those who have gathered in this house of worship for so many years.”

A luncheon followed services. Program high-

Schools, a renowned choir, a Women’s Guild and other organizations.

By the 1950s, the parish had outgrown its facilities, and leaders began to make plans for building a new church. That dream was realized on October 17, 1954, when Archbishop Mampre Calfayan, Primate, consecrated the church building still in use today. The community also enjoyed a new parish house, complete with a church office, classrooms and living quarters for the parish priest.

“Armenians would travel from Long Island, from New Jersey, from upstate New York — all to come to this parish,” said Leo Manuelian, 80th anniversary committee member and a former Holy Cross Church parishioner. “It was the focal point of the Armenian community in New York City.”

In 1960, Holy Cross Church welcomed Catholicos of All Armenians Vasken I, who became the first Armenian catholicos to visit the United States. The catholicos celebrated the Divine Liturgy at Holy Cross in July of that year — making it the only church in America where he celebrated badarak during his visit.

During that decade, many parishioners at Holy Cross were involved in the building of St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral. They also welcomed former Primate, Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan, who moved into the parish house and offered his guidance and support to the community.

Through the 1970s, the parish marked a number of milestones, including the 100th birthday of longtime parishioner and benefactor Haik Kavookjian, and the parish’s golden anniversary in 1979, when the auditorium was dedicated in honor of Simon and Lusaper Kachajian.

Even as many parishioners moved to the suburbs, they continued to visit Holy Cross Church regularly. In fact, it was their experience at Holy Cross Church that gave root to the new parishes established in Long Island and Westchester, N.Y., and New Jersey — parishes which today comprise the Armenian community of the New York-metro area. These newly-built churches “benefited from the expertise of the parish councils that matured and developed through” Holy Cross Church, Manuelian said.

In 1986, Archbishop Shnorh Kalloustian, then-Patriarch of Constantinople, visited Holy Cross Church to consecrate the icon of Charkapan Soorp Asdvadzadzin — a reproduction of a 15th-

century icon located in Istanbul, Turkey. The shrine of Charkapan Soorp Asdvadzadzin remains an important site at Holy Cross Church.

In 1995, thanks to Dolores Zohrab Liebeman, a fund was established for Holy Cross Church.

“Every Sunday, we celebrate the Divine Liturgy, we pray together, and then we come together and enjoy fellowship and being part of one another’s lives,” said Parish Council Chair Charlene Simonian. “That’s a big part of the mission here at Holy Cross Church — to provide that sense of community for all Armenians.”



Altar servers raise up the cross during a procession to the altar at Holy Cross Church of Armenia on Sunday, September 13.



The faithful gather for services at the original Holy Cross Church of Armenia sanctuary, which was established in 1929.

“For eight decades this holy shrine has had its doors open to our faithful, nourishing them with God’s word,” Karekin II, the Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, wrote in the



Archbishop Yeghishe Gizirian reads the pontifical encyclical issued to Holy Cross Church on the occasion of its 80th anniversary.

lights included a musical performance by Ani Kalayjian and Sophya Melikyan, and remarks by Findikyan, who spoke about the church’s rich heritage and the warm welcome it has extended to many deacons and young priests over the years.

“May God inspire many more young people to come forward to serve our Holy Cross Church as priests, as deacons, as choir members, as leaders in every way,” Findikyan said.

The parish also presented the Mabel Fenner Scholarships to five students and eight St. Nersess seminarians.

Haik Hovnanian and family donated Sunday’s meal.

A Focal Point of the Armenian Community

Holy Cross Church opened its doors on January 6, 1929. The original building — a small edifice on West 187th St., formerly a Lutheran church — served the congregation for 23 years.

In those years, the young parish faced its share of hardships, including the financial burdens of the Great Depression and the aftermath of the 1933 murder of then-Primate Archbishop Ghevont Tourian, who was stabbed to death during a procession to the altar.

But despite setbacks, the community persevered, establishing vibrant Armenian and Sunday



The present-day building of the Holy Cross Church of Armenia.



Parish Council Chair Charlene Simonian and Virginia Carbone cut the anniversary cake at Holy Cross Church of Armenia. The cake was donated by Virginia Carbone.



New York METRO

Tufenkian Foundation Unveils New Kashatagh Initiative

HAK VILLAGE, Nagorno Karabagh – September 17 was a day of celebration as residents of Nagorno-Karabagh's remote Hak village joined political dignitaries and members of the international community to mark the re-opening of Hak's historic St. Minas Church.

The church blessing was combined with the unveiling of a new drinking water supply for the village, making the ceremony a momentous occasion reaffirming Armenians' commitment to restore and protect their ancient heritage in this war-torn enclave.

The afternoon began with the blessing of the church by Archbishop Parkev Martirosian, Primate of the Artsakh Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church. He emphasized the importance of reopening St. Minas and other churches like



Archbishop Parkev Martirosian leads a service for the blessing of St. Minas Church.

it, calling them "a symbol of the continuation of the Armenian Christian faith on these lands."

Hak village sits in a remote corner of Kashatagh (formerly Lachin), the strategically vital area connecting Karabagh with Armenia. With a continuous Armenian presence dating back to the 12th century, Hak was ethnically cleansed of Armenians by Azeri forces in 1918, only to be reclaimed in 1992 during Armenia's victorious struggle for self-determination. Since then, Azerbaijan has repeatedly claimed the Kashatagh region for itself; however, the presence of Armenian churches, cemeteries and other monuments – some dating as far as back as the fourth century – refute these claims and reaffirm the case for Armenian sovereignty over these lands.

The Hak project is the latest initiative of the New York-based Tufenkian Foundation. Through a range of social and economic projects, the foundation has fostered the development and resettlement of Kashatagh since the war. In parallel, the foundation is working to restore and preserve the Armenian monuments found throughout this land. Virginia Davies of New York City tendered the support that allowed the foundation to restore St. Minas Church and establish Hak's water supply. Having flown in especially for the ceremony, Davies spoke boldly and proudly about the project, which she has dedicated in loving memory of her grandmother, Virgine Mouradian, a survivor of the Genocide.

"This is only the beginning," Davies said. "After Hak, we will start projects in the next two villages – Mirig and Hochants." Those projects, like the work in Hak, will consist of restoring ancient churches that had been desecrated



An exterior view of Kashatagh's St. Minas Church, which has been recently restored and re-consecrated.

by Azerbaijan, alongside development and infrastructure projects for the current resettlers there. "After these two villages, there will be another two, and it will go on for the entire area."

Numerous dignitaries attended the ceremony, including NKR President Bako Sahakyan, NKR National Assembly Chairman Ashot Ghulyan, Armenia's former Foreign Minister Raffi Hovannisian, representatives of numerous political parties and NGOs and other former ministers including Davit Lokyan and Levon Mkrtchyan.

Yervant Zorian Discusses Launch of AGBU's Armenian Virtual College

NEW YORK – The AGBU Armenian Virtual College (AVC) went online earlier this year for a summer trial session that attracted hundreds of eager students from every corner of the world. They logged on to learn more about this innovative Internet-based accredited distance learning program that provides courses in Armenian history, language and culture while allowing students to choose from six languages of instruction: Western and Eastern Armenian, English, Russian, French and Spanish.

The driving force behind this school is AGBU Board Member and AVC founder, Yervant Zorian. Zorian is the vice president and chief scientist of Virage Logic, an IT company operating both in Armenia and the US. He was elected to the AGBU Central Board of Directors last year during the organization's 85th General Assembly. He serves as a trustee of the American University of Armenia and chairman of AGBU Silicon Valley, and was recently elected to be a Foreign Member of Armenia's National Academy of Sciences.

His passion and vision for AVC has ensured that the original idea continues to grow as the school and students work together to develop a system that can revolutionize the way Armenians preserve and promote their cultural heritage.

On September 22, AVC formally launched its first full semester.

AGBU: Now that the first trial session of AGBU's Armenian Virtual College has concluded, how would you gauge the outcome?

YZ: The first term of AVC successfully attracted approximately 150 e-learners through courses in Eastern Armenian, Western Armenian, and Armenian History. One of the purposes of this term was to evaluate the e-learning method at the heart of the college.

At its core, the AVC is aimed to become not merely a library of individual electronic courses, but a full-scale academic institution, with fully equipped virtual classrooms, effective student-teacher communication, peer-to-peer collaboration, and an authentic university environment. The success of our first trial term confirmed not only the academic quality of the courses' content but also the effectiveness of our overall online learning methodology. In fact, this term helped us realize the extent to which the two complement each other in order to create the optimal learning experience for Armenian education.

AGBU: What has been the response of the students involved in this inaugural session?

YZ: Upon the conclusion of the first term,

every student completed three surveys, each assessing a key component of the AVC: the content and methodology, the technical quality and ease of use, and the online instructors. The overwhelming majority of students were satisfied with their learning experience with AVC and plan to continue taking courses through the program in the future. Moreover, all survey respondents expressed their intent to recommend AVC to others. The majority of students highly appreciated the opportunity to interact with one another and found this peer-to-peer collaboration to be beneficial for their learning experience, especially for those participating in the Armenian history courses. Students were satisfied with the technical aspects of the program and were impressed by the professional level of the multimedia components. Furthermore, they appreciated the enthusiasm, approachability, and responsiveness of the online instructors, who helped create engaging classroom environments. While the students in each of the six language groups – Eastern Armenian, Western Armenian, Russian, English, French and Spanish – varied greatly in their background and their style of online interaction, they all shared an appreciation for the mission of the AVC and its role in the global Armenian community.

AGBU: Have there been any unanticipated surprises?

YZ: Throughout the first term, we continuously adapted the college's features and our learning methodology in order to address the unanticipated challenges and surprises that arose. Even during the earliest stage of the term – the registration period – we were surprised by the demographics of the student body. The number of learners registering for each course far surpassed our expectations. Moreover, we were amazed by the span of their ages and their backgrounds. We were quite pleased to find that despite this wide range, learners of all ages were eager to communicate with one another through the discussion forums and peer-to-peer collaboration activities. Moreover, the variety in students' academic background and prior knowledge actually enhanced the level of classroom discussion and allowed for a richer experience for all. As the term progressed, we were impressed by the number of hours students spent on the lessons per week, which surpassed our expectations. In fact, students often viewed the multimedia lessons multiple times each week and the level

of online activity on the AVC portal necessitated repeatedly increasing our bandwidth on the host server throughout the term.

AGBU: How do you view AVC fitting into AGBU's larger educational mission?

YZ: AGBU's lifelong dedication to Armenian education is a well-known reality. As we all know, throughout the past century, AGBU has supported Armenian educational programs primarily through traditional schools and universities in Armenia and in the diaspora. Through the Armenian Virtual College, its newest teaching institute, AGBU, will further its mission to promote education in the globally dispersed Armenian communities, using an entirely innovative approach. Through online education, the AVC provides learners around the world the opportunity to receive the same full-fledged Armenian education, regardless of their age, country of residence, or knowledge level. In this sense, the AVC not only reinforces the educational objectives of AGBU, but also widens their reach. Though unprecedented in its scope, the AVC neither replaces the traditional Armenian school system, nor serves as an alternative to the educational institutions AGBU has supported in the past. On the contrary, the new virtual learning community bridges the gaps in the current system – both bringing Armenian education to those in the diaspora who do not have access to traditional schools and complementing the curriculum of existing Armenian schools through multimedia resources. In fact, several day schools and Saturday schools, including some from the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Argentina and Uruguay, have already expressed interest in using AVC courses to supplement their current curriculum.

AGBU: When does the AVC team expect course accreditations to begin so that students can receive credit from their local colleges and universities for their work?

YZ: AVC learners can choose to earn credits for each course that they complete, ultimately leading to a diploma from the AGBU Armenian Virtual College by completing 24 courses. Alternately, students can earn a minor in a subject domain by completing eight courses from a single department. Since the courseware has been developed by the higher educational institutes in Armenia, we have already obtained full accreditation from the Academic Council of the Yerevan State University for the course developed so far.

Currently, we are actively pursuing the next level of accreditation from recognized educa-

tional institutions in North America and Europe. Such accreditation will help students transfer course credits from AVC to their corresponding universities and learning institutions across the world or obtain credit as Advanced Placement courses in their corresponding high school programs.

Alternately, AVC learners may also choose to participate in the program as an extension or continuing education course with less rigorous requirements and no credits. Based on the demographics of our recently completed summer term, we have noticed that the number of these auditors is typically in the range of a third in each of our AVC virtual classrooms.

AGBU: What is your dream for AVC? How do you see it changing in the future?

YZ: While the success of our first academic term is very promising, there is still much work to be done before the AVC reaches its full potential. In order to reach a wider range of learners in the global village, we will undoubtedly increase the number of languages in which our courses are offered. Over the past several weeks, I have already received requests to expand our six currently adopted teaching languages, by adding German, Turkish and Polish, among others. By the very nature of the college's design, the scope of the AVC is unlimited, and we will continue to widen its reach until Armenian education becomes available to every Armenian across the globe.

In addition to expanding the community it serves, the AVC will advance in the education it offers. By widening the range of courses in the AVC curriculum, we can ensure that our e-learners have the chance to obtain the most comprehensive Armenian education. We are in the process of discussing a number of subject domains to add to our current curriculum.

Due to the virtual nature of the institute, the possibilities of advancing the features available to students are endless. We are fully engaged in the global community of online learning and are collaborating with world-renowned online pedagogues and technology experts. We are willing to leverage the experiences obtained by the network of institutions in this community.

As the college thus evolves into a thriving virtual learning community, I foresee that it will foster both the cultural education and social communication otherwise out of the reach of most Armenians, and in so doing, will become the premier learning institute of the global Armenian community.



High School Pasadena (Pasadena, CA, USA)



Tarouhy-Hovagimian School (Beirut, Lebanon)

Congratulations to AGBU 2009 Graduates & Heritage Scholars

For over a century, the world's largest Armenian non-profit organization has educated hundreds of thousands of young Armenians imparting to them a sense of identity, and helping preserve and cultivate our heritage. Today, with 32 day and Saturday schools in 28 cities, we continue our mission. In 2009, over 250 bright, competitive and promising college bound students received their diplomas from AGBU high schools in Southfield MI, Pasadena and Canoga Park CA, Montevideo, Uruguay, Buenos Aires, Argentina, Beirut, Lebanon, and Aleppo, Syria.



Lazar Najarian-Calouste Gulbenkian School (Aleppo, Syria)



Manoogian-Demirdjian School (Canoga Park, CA, USA)



Marie Manoogian Institute (Buenos Aires, Argentina)



Alex & Marie Manoogian School (Southfield, MI, USA)



What is an AGBU Heritage Scholar?

Established in 2009, the AGBU Heritage Scholar Grant is awarded to college-bound high school seniors graduating from AGBU High schools. Eligible candidates are nominated by the principal and faculty members of their school. Awardees are selected based on their display of academic excellence, school spirit, and community service, with particular attention to their contribution to the Armenian community. This year's five recipients were from the Southfield, Pasadena, and Canoga Park high schools.

For queries about AGBU Schools, please email education@agbu.org.



Arts & Living

Roudolf Kharatian To Lead National Ballet of Armenia

WASHINGTON and YEREVAN — Roudolf Kharatian, choreographer and ballet teacher, is returning to his native Armenia where he has been appointed artistic director of the National Ballet of Armenia. Since 1991, when he was invited to join the faculty of the Kirov Academy of Ballet, he has resided in Washington, DC.

Trained at the Armenian National Ballet School in Yerevan, Kharatian also studied at the Vaganova Academy in St. Petersburg under the legendary Alexander Pushkin. He began his professional career as principal dancer with the National Ballet of Armenia, performing the great male roles in “Giselle,” “Swan Lake,” “Romeo and Juliet,” “Spartacus” and other famous works. Kharatian enjoyed a successful performing career spanning 25 years and was a favorite of audiences and critics alike. He also starred in films and toured the world with the stars of Soviet Ballet.

A prolific choreographer, in 1979 he founded the Chamber Ballet of Armenia, which presented contemporary works and allowed for greater experimentation and innovation. The company of 26 dancers was televised regularly and also toured widely throughout Europe, the Middle East and Asia.

Kharatian has been honored with many awards and medals in his career as dancer, choreographer and teacher. He also holds a

GERMAN AVAKIAN PHOTO



Roudolf Kharatian

master's degree in choreography and stage production from the Moscow Institute of Theatre Arts (GITIS).

Since his arrival in the US, Kharatian has been a respected teacher and coach, producing many medalists and world-class dancers. He has been on the faculty of the Kirov Academy and the School of the Washington Ballet. He has guest taught and lectured throughout North America and has taught such companies as American Ballet Theatre, Boston Ballet and the Kirov Mariinsky Ballet.

His work, the duet “Dialogue,” was one of the featured works during the Dance Metro DC Awards Presentation at the Kennedy Center's Terrace Theatre on Monday, September 14. Kharatian will be the featured guest at the March 3, 2010 installment of “Happenings at the Harman” at the Harman Center for the Arts. And a retrospective of Kharatian's work is planned for March 7, at the Performing Arts Center in Silver Spring, Md., as part of the “Three Dancers” program.

Kharatian will take up the post of artistic director of the National Ballet of Armenia at the end of September. Said Kharatian: “The National Ballet of Armenia is a high-level company of very well-trained dancers. However their world-view has been limited to the Russian and Soviet experience. I hope to broaden their horizon by introducing the best works of both past and present from around the world. More importantly, Armenia has a rich and unique tradition in dance and the arts, which I look forward to presenting to the world.”



James Russell lecturing at the National Association of Armenian Studies and Research

Russell Examines Armenian Roots of Outlaw Figures

BELMONT, Mass. — Harvard University's Prof. James Russell presented his research on the *Epic of the Blind Man's Son*, its shared Armenian and Turkish heritage and its influence on the world's thirst for stories of outlaws at the National Association for Armenians Studies and Research (NAASR) last week.

Russell, who has served as the Mashtots Professor of Armenian Studies at Harvard since 1992, has written several books on Armenian literature, including *An Armenian Epic: The Heroes of Kasht and Hovhannes Tlkurantsi and the Medieval Armenian Lyric Tradition*, among others.

The September 17 lecture, Russell's first for an Armenian audience since a presentation on Armenian magical scrolls at the Armenian Library and Museum of America (ALMA) late last year, centered around not only an outline of the *Epic of the Blind Man's Son*, but also the historical and sociological forces that made it endure.

By Thomas C. Nash

Mirror-Spectator Staff

Known to most by its Turkish name, *Köroglu*, the epic comprises roughly 30 parts, or “branches.” Reciters would tackle one part a night for 30 days (for Muslim reciters, during the month of Ramadan), accompanying themselves on instruments. Boiled down, it is the story of a son, Köroglu, armed with a magical horse and super strength he acquired from drinking foam from a river, seeking revenge on the king who blinded his father.

Köroglu becomes a roving bandit and minstrel in the kingdom, attracting followers along the way. He is an archetype found in many cultures: “The brave and cheerful bandit who rebels against unjust authority and robs from the rich and gives to the poor,” according to Russell.

All of this, Russell points out, begins to take shape five centuries before the story of Robin Hood begins to be told.

“The historical Robin Hood of the 14th century seems to have inherited in literature the ready-made deeds and features of a folk epic narrative perhaps five centuries older.”

Köroglu takes place across Central Asia and is influenced by multiple cultures and languages.

“The Soviet Armenians knew [the epic] from a famous opera and from Russian translations,” Russell said. “Few surmised that its roots are in part in their own country and culture, partly because it has been appropriated by Turkey and Azerbaijan as their national epic, and partly because its characters are indeed Muslims, with Turkic and Persian names, and most versions of the epic are in Turkic languages ... though there are also Kurdish, Persian and Armenian variants.”

The shared history, Russell said, may be a large factor as to why the epic is so little-studied today by those interested in Armenian studies.

“The cultural divide ... has become so wide that the idea of a shared literary work of this kind has become almost inconceivable,” Russell added.

Quoting German communist scholar Ivan Olbracht, Russell said, “Man has an insatiable longing for justice and so he rebels against a social order which denies it to him. Whatever world he lives in, he accuses that social order, or the entire material universe, with injustice.”

“Man is filled with a strange, stubborn urge to remember, to think things out, to change things. And in addition he has the urge within himself to have what he cannot have — if only in the form of a fairy tale. That is perhaps the basis for the heroic sagas of all ages, all religions, all peoples and all classes.”

Listen to the complete lecture online at www.mirrorspectator.com.

Antranig Dance Ensemble to Host 40th Anniversary Extravaganza

NEW YORK — On Saturday, November 28, the AGBU Antranig Dance Ensemble will present an anniversary performance, which will take place at Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts to mark its 40th anniversary.

Gagik Karapetian has choreographed the group for the past 20 years, creating six full-length productions.

Karapetian said the anniversary show would pull out all the stops, saying it will include full-group pieces with more than 40 dancers to specialty dances for the men or women of the ensemble and stories-in-dance for the group's soloists.

While focused on Armenian folk and ethnographic dance, the Antranig ensemble has branched out throughout its history, something Karapetian said would also be reflected at the performance.

Most recently the director of the Armenian State Dance Ensemble, Karapetian, honed his skills as a dancer and soloist with the professional troupe for over 20 years. Since then, he has worked annually with Antranig and has trained and consulted other Armenian and non-Armenian ensembles internationally.

The Antranig Dance Ensemble is under the artistic directorship of Joyce Tamesian-Shenloogian, who has managed the group since 1986 after a long and successful career as dancer, soloist and assistant director with Antranig.

Tickets to the performance are available from the AGBU.

Ignatieff, Pamuk Join Toronto Authors' Festival

TORONTO (CBC) — Nobel laureate Orhan Pamuk will rub shoulders with crime writer Kathy Reichs and graphic artist Seth at this year's International Festival of Authors (IFOA) here.

IFOA, scheduled for October 21-31, announced 44 prominent authors for the 2009 festival this week.

Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff, who could be caught up in an election campaign by this fall, will be among the guests.

His memoir, *True Patriot Love: Four Generations in Search of Canada*, was published earlier this year.

It tells the story of his mother's family, the Grants, who over three generations, conducted a spirited argument about what Canada was and what it should be.

Pamuk, the Turkish writer who has been tried in his native country over his outspoken views on Turkish history, is to read from his newest work, *The Museum of Innocence*.

Seth is the pen name of Gregory Gallant, the Canadian graphic artist known for comics such as *Palooka-Ville*. The festival also has drawn New Yorker graphic artist R.O. Blechman.

Other guests include Garrison Keillor, creator of “A Prairie Home Companion,” Man Booker nominee Sarah Hall, author of *How to Paint a Dead Man* and International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award-winner Michael Thomas, author of *Man Gone Down*.



Orhan Pamuk



ARTS & LIVING

ARPA International Film Festival to Be Held October 23-25

HOLLYWOOD, Calif. — The 12th annual Arpa International Film Festival will present more than 50 films, post-screening receptions and a star-studded closing night awards ceremony over three days, Friday, October 23 to Sunday, October 25, at the Egyptian Theatre.

On Friday, October 23, the festival presents the North American premiere of Haik Gazarian's "Venezzia," starring two Latin American stars, Alfonso Herrera and Ruddy Rodriguez. Gazarian makes his directorial debut in this epic love story set on the Venezuelan coast of the Caribbean during World War II. Joining Gazarian at the red carpet premiere, which kicks off at 6:30 p.m., will

around the films we've been able to get this year. Our programming department tracked the global film festival scene for the last year and singled out the exemplary films relating to Armenians or made by Armenian filmmakers," says Arpa Festival director Alex Kalognomos. "[The year] 2009 happens to be a standout year for cinema featuring films by Armenian filmmakers — and we're so fortunate to be screening all of them at Arpa."

In the documentary lineup, this year's official selection includes "Anjar: Flowers, Goats and Heroes," a film about the history of the people of Musa Dag by Canadian-Armenian filmmaker Noura Kevorkian; "Autumn of the Magician," an homage to legendary Italian screenwriter Tonino Guerra and Armenia's official selection in the Best Foreign Language Film category for the 2010 Academy Awards; "Komitas Hairig," which tells the story of the beloved Komitas Vardapet; "Husher," a film which documents the testimony of Armenian Genocide survivors who settled in Italy and "Whispering Memories," the story of a community of Armenians in Turkey who stayed behind during the genocide and silently converted to Islam.

This year's competitive short film category includes "Hove," starring Olympia Dukakis. "Hove" is a film about the powerful, unresolved legacy of the Armenian Genocide, directed by Alex Webb. Actor-writer-director Shant Hamassian's "Spaceman on Earth," which debuted at this year's Cannes Film Festival, will be featured in a program of shorts by Los Angeles filmmakers.

Screening in the feature film category is acclaimed Turkish filmmaker Ozcan Alper's



"Hove," starring Olympia Dukakis



The opening-night poster for "Venezzia," with Ruddy Rodriguez and Alfonso Herrera

be co-stars Herrera, one of Mexico's most popular actors and former member of the Grammy-nominated pop group RBD, and Rodriguez, a former Miss World Venezuela, whose more than two decades in television and film have garnered her a legion of devoted fans in the Spanish-speaking world and beyond. Opening-night proceedings will be emceed by ReelzChannel's Jill Simonian. "Venezzia" screens at 8 p.m. with a reception to follow. Tickets to the red carpet premiere screening of "Venezzia" and the post-screening reception are available at www.affma.org.

More than 50 feature films, shorts, documentaries, music videos and animations will screen during the festival. "There's an incredible buzz

acclaimed "Sonbahar" ("Autumn"), the first feature-length film ever to be shot in Homshetsma, a dialect of Armenian that has been preserved in the Artvin province of northeastern Turkey for

starring Art Aroustamian and veteran actress Ann Magnuson.

Other films feature the work of such acclaimed figures as Sting ("Battle of the Xingu"), such



"Spaceman On Earth"



"Husher" is a Genocide documentary.

hundreds of years; and one of the festival's most anticipated films. "Chasing Tchaikovsky," a laugh-out-loud comedy about marriage and moviemaking directed by Greg Lalazarian and

actors as Academy Award-winner Jeremy Irons ("Power of the Powerless") and "24" star Kiefer Sutherland ("Return to Mexico City"), which also includes interviews with President Barack Obama and Tom Brokaw. It tells the story of Olympic medalists Tommie Smith and John Carlos, who return to Mexico City 40 years after stirring controversy by raising their fists in the air during their medal ceremony and, in the process, raising awareness of the struggle for civil rights in America and basic human rights throughout the world.

This year's recipient of Arpa's Armin T. Wegner Award, which each year is awarded to a motion picture that contributes to the fight for social conscience and human rights, is "Voices from Inside: Israelis Speak." "This feature-length documentary film is based on the stories of 16 Jewish Israeli voices of conscience, each representing a different facet of the peace movement inside Israel," says Zaven Khachaturian, Arpa Film Festival curator, who invited the film to the festival.

Armenian Educational Foundation (AEF) will receive this year's Arpa Foundation Award. Over its 60 year history, AEF has been committed to Armenian youth and the pursuit of higher learning. To that end, the organization has built and supported the establishment of hundreds of Armenian day schools around the world. A Sevag Vrej-directed, Christina Shakarian-produced short film documenting AEF's educational endeavors in Armenia will be screened during the closing night awards ceremony.

This year's official selection includes films from over 20 countries including Armenia, Turkey, Brazil, France, Peru, Canada, Malawi, Spain, China, India, Iran and many more. To reserve all-access passes in advance, visit www.AFFMA.org.



WENTWORTH GALLERY Presents

GEVORG

The Armenian Artist Who conquered the
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2:00-9:00 PM

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Additional exhibitions:

Phipps Plaza, Atlanta, GA — 10/16/2009

Perimeter Mall, Atlanta, GA — 10/17/2009

Las Olas, Fort Lauderdale, FL — 10/23/2009

Town Center Mall, Boca Raton, FL — 10/24/2009



ARTS & LIVING

AGBU NYSEC Presents Performing Artists in Concert at Carnegie Hall, October 24

NEW YORK – The AGBU New York Special Events Committee (NYSEC) presents the second AGBU Performing Artists in Concert, showcasing the talents of young Armenian musicians, to be held at Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall (154 West 57th St.) on Saturday, October 24, at 8:30 p.m.

Like the inaugural concert held in 2008, this AGBU NYSEC event will applaud the achievements of talented Armenian youth who have benefited from AGBU's scholarship assistance toward their studies in performing arts, including piano, strings, wind, percussion and voice. The artists hail from distinguished conservatories and universities worldwide, such as the Juilliard School, Manhattan School of Music, Komitas State Conservatory, Yale University, Mannes College of Music, Boston Conservatory, State University of New York at Stony Brook and the Royal College of Music.

Supporting youth studying in the performing arts has always been a priority for AGBU. Twelve performers, under the artistic direction of brothers Hrant and Kevork Parsamian, are collaborating to prepare a repertoire of music celebrating Armenian and classical composers, such as Babajanian, Khachaturian, Schostakovich and Schumann. Of special note will be the US premiere of 19-year-old Gevorg Badalian's composition based on five folk songs from the Armenian Genocide.



2008 Debut Concert performers on the stage of Carnegie Hall.

The performing artists include three violinists: Monika Chamasyan (VA), Nazig Tchakarian (NY), and Viktoria Tchertchian (MA); two cellists, Hrant and Kevork Parsamian (NY); two

violinists, Alex Nazaryan (NY) and Anoush Simonian (NJ); two pianists, Marina Chamasyan (VA) and Varta Tchakarian (NY); a flautist, Stepan Dadourian (NY); a marimbist, Sylvie Zakarian (MA) and an opera singer, soprano Natalie Aroyan (NY via Australia).

For tickets and information, call the AGBU. To purchase tickets directly through the Carnegie Box Office, visit www.carnegiehall.org.

For decades, AGBU grants have been awarded to hundreds of talented and qualified students of Armenian descent studying in the performing arts who have demonstrated excellence in their chosen fields. These awards enable recipients to achieve their potential, laying the foundation for their future as they celebrate their heritage and identity. In 2008, the AGBU

NYSEC proudly presented "A Debut Concert" featuring some of the AGBU Scholarship Program's Performing Arts grant recipients. Proceeds from the concert contributed to future AGBU's Performing Arts grants. The 2009 concert will showcase the talents of a new selection of grant recipients and will benefit the newly-established AGBU Performing Arts Fellowship Program.

To sustain and expand our support for future worthy candidates, AGBU NYSEC invites you to join them in raising funds on the occasion of this benefit concert for the AGBU Performing Arts Fellowship Program. A generous tax-deductible donation toward this event will make a dynamic difference in the performing arts aspirations of new and succeeding generations of Armenian youth.

HMADS Presents Comedy with Kev Orkian

BAYSIDE, N.Y. – The Friends of Holy Martyrs Armenian Day School (HMADS) presents a performance by Armenian comedian Kev Orkian at New York's Flushing Town Hall, 137-35 Northern Blvd., in Flushing, Queens, on Saturday, October 24 at 7:30 p.m.

Orkian's blend of modern humor and cultural satire has made him a



Comedian Kev Orkian

crowd favorite and a comedic legend in both British and Armenian circles. This pianist extraordinaire also has a revamped musical-comedy repertoire.

Orkian honed his skills and perfected his comedic timing at Brunel University, where he studied drama and music and also trained for a two-year national diploma in the performing arts. He made his West End debut in "Fame" and was in the original production of "Happy Days," the musical. He has taken his one-man piano-comedy show to sold-out performances around the world, including Los Angeles as host of the Armenian Music Awards, on the "Hye seas" aboard the Armenian Heritage Cruise, and in Australia. To catch a sneak peak of some of his stand-up routines, visit www.kev-orkian.com.

For reservations, call the school office.

— Jennifer Chelebi

Ahnert to Give Talk at St. Leon Armenian Church

RIDGEWOOD, N.J. – Margaret Ajemian-Ahnert, noted author of *The Knock at the Door: A Journey through the Darkness of the Armenian Genocide* will discuss her book and later be available for discussion, on Friday, October 2, 7:30 p.m. in Abajian Hall, St. Leon Armenian Church here.

The book is an account of her mother's harrowing escape from her birth town of Amasia in Ottoman Turkey and the unspeakable crimes she survives and witnesses during her year-long journey to the safety of American shores.

Ahnert retells her 98-year-old mother's tale from her bedside in the Queens Armenian Home – and in the process leaves her own

imprint on the story of survival as she simultaneously weaves the tale of a loving mother-daughter relationship.

Ahnert counts as her friends and supporters former Gov. Hugh Carey and Manhattan District Attorney, Robert Morgenthau, whose grandfather, Henry Morgenthau, was the US ambassador to the Ottoman Empire from 1913 to 1916 and one of the first to raise an alarm there.

A limited number of copies of *The Knock at the Door* will be available that night for sale; however those interested are urged to contact the church to reserve a copy in advance.

Refreshments will be served after her presentation.



Թէքեան Մշակութային Միութիւն – Միւր Մկրտչեան Թատրոն
Tekeyan Cultural Association – Mher Megerdchian Theatrical Group

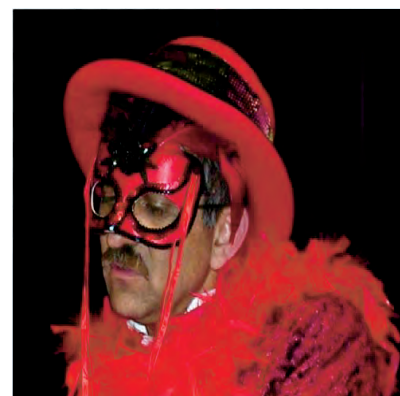
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644 Paramus Road, Paramus, New Jersey 07652

Շաբաթ, Հոկտեմբեր 10, 2009 Ժամը 8-ին
Saturday, October 10, 2009 at 8:00 PM

Donation: \$60 ♦ BYOB ♦ Dress Code (Optional): 1860's Attire & Mask

For Tickets, Call Marie Zokian (201) 745-8850, Noushig Atamian (718) 894-5878
Maro Hajakian (201) 934-3427 or Missak Boghosian (212) 819-0097



BOOKS

Author to Launch *Through the Wall of Fire* at ACF on October

ARLINGTON, Mass. — If every writer's dream is to see his/her manuscript receive the attention it deserves from a publisher and more so from an audience, Muriel Mirak-Weissbach, the author of *Through the Wall of Fire: Armenia-Iraq-Palestine: From Wrath to Reconciliation*, could not ask for more.

As a Fulbright scholar, educator, political activist and author of numerous articles, Mirak-Weissbach's work has received praise even before it hit the bookstores. The "daughter of two orphans, both victims of the 1915 Armenian Genocide," as she begins the introduction of her book, she makes it clear from the outset that the focus of her work is on the viewpoint of the children in three very diverse settings, Armenia (1915), Iraq (2003) and Palestine (1948), who lived through unspeakable horrors and the trauma they suffered.

The Armenian Cultural Foundation (ACF), in collaboration with the Armenian International Women's Association (AIWA), invites the public to attend an evening of literary journey on Wednesday, October 7, at 7:30 p.m. to meet Mirak-Weissbach, who will share her experience in writing this fascinating and groundbreaking work. The event is open to the public, free of charge with limited seating.

Unlike many volumes of memoirs chronicling the horrors of Armenian Genocide, Mirak-Weissbach with the experience of her childhood as the child of Armenian parents from the Arabkir region in the Ottoman Empire orphaned during the Armenian Genocide, delves into the deep psychological impact of a catastrophe on the children. Her book is a comparative study of children from three diverse cultures — Armenia, Iraq and Palestine — in three different periods in history and under three different circumstances: genocide, war and deportations. Her work helps the reader understand how hatred, wrath, prejudice and the thirst for revenge become embedded in the psyche of generations who underwent the horrible experiences in the hands of their oppressors. In turn, she provides hope and believes in the power of dialogue and reconciliation. Quoting her favorite poet Dante Alighieri and seeking guidance in the lines of his masterpiece, *The Divine Comedy*, from which the title of her book is inspired, the author believes that the only way to achieve peace and harmony is a fundamental shift in the thinking and moral outlook of both sides.

Through the Wall of Fire, composed of three parts and 15 chapters, addresses three historical and unhealed wounds which continue to fester and contaminate the souls of generations in three nations: Armenia, Iraq and Palestine. All

three cases continue to be the captives of the geopolitics of the region within the broader chessboard of the "Great Game" played by world powers at the expense of the lives of millions. Despite the direct connection of the three cases to the genocides, wars and ethnic cleansing, which has torn apart nations, the author's purpose by writing this book has been to provide some insights to help achieve the noble goal of reconciliation, which will set both the oppressor and the oppressed from decades of emotional bondage.

Among its many readers, Dr. Robert Mirak, author of *Torn Between Two Lands, Armenians in America, 1890 to World War I*, calls *Through the Wall of Fire* a "pathbreaking analysis by first hand on the ground, investigations of the traumas of war inflicted on children. It is a compelling read and is recommended to all interested in current geopolitics and humanitarian causes."

Mirak-Weissbach was born and brought up in Boston. She graduated with honors from Wellesley College in 1965, with a thesis in English literature, and studied as a Fulbright scholar in Italy in 1966. She then earned a graduate degree with honors in English literature at the University of Milan in 1971, and entered a teaching career at that university as well as the Bocconi University in Milan. After many years of teaching, she began political activity dedicated to establishing a new, just economic order based on economic cooperation among sovereign nations.

Mirak-Weissbach has specialized in political, economic and cultural developments in the Arab and Islamic world. She has traveled extensively to many countries of the region, and has presented papers to conferences and seminars, on economic development policy and cultural dialogue, in Jordan, Egypt, Iraq, Sudan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Pakistan, Malaysia, Yemen and the Islamic Republic of Iran. Following the 1991 war against Iraq, she led a humanitarian aid effort (the Committee to Save the Children in Iraq), which brought her into contact with leading political figures in Iraq, as well as in the United Nations.

She has published hundreds of articles in several political and cultural journals on topics related to development policy, the dialogue between Christianity and Islam, and political developments in the Arab and Islamic world. Over the recent years, she has also written on the Iranian nuclear energy program, based on interviews with Iranian officials. Since August 2007, she has become an independent journalist, and publishes regularly in online publica-

Peter Balakian Speaks about *Armenian Golgotha* in Michigan

BIRMINGHAM, Mich. — Acclaimed scholar and author Peter Balakian spoke to throngs gathered at the Birmingham Border's store on the newly-translated *Armenian Golgotha*, a dramatic and comprehensive eyewitness account of the Armenian Genocide, on September 17.

After his discussion and book signing at

Terzibashian, a local Armenian activist. Following the blessing, Balakian, gave heartfelt thanks to Hagopian for his continuing commitment to culture, education and his Armenian heritage.

Peter Balakian describes *Armenian Golgotha*, the translation of his great uncle Rev. Grigoris Balakian's first-person account



From left, David Terzibashian, Peter Balakian, Very Rev. Diran Papazian and Edgar Hagopian

Borders, Balakian greeted guests at an Afterglow held at Edgar Hagopian's showroom in Birmingham. Balakian was in Metro Detroit as part of his book tour for *Armenian Golgotha* and the revised 10th anniversary edition of *The Black Dog of Fate* and to kick off a tribute to Edgar Hagopian recognizing his contributions to the Detroit-area community.

A high note of the Afterglow included a "blessing" or "Kinetzon" of *Armenian Golgotha* performed by the Very Rev. Diran Papazian, with the help of David

of the Armenian Genocide, as the most comprehensive memoir of the Armenian Genocide ever written. The English translation by Balakian and Aris Sevag, published in 2009, is the two-volume set originally published in the first half of the 20th century.

Balakian is the recipient of many awards including the PEN/Martha Albrand Award, Raphael Lemkin Prize and a Guggenheim Fellowship. He teaches at Colgate University where he is Donald M and Constance H Rebar Professor of the Humanities.

tions, like www.globalresearch.ca as well as a German publication, *Arab Forum*.

One particular area of interest for Mirak-Weissbach is the contribution of the Islamic renaissance to the European renaissance. She has recently done work on the impact of Persian poetry in Germany, especially through

the translations of Friedrich Rueckert. She has also written on the decipherment of Ancient Persian cuneiform, as well as of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics. She is married and lives in Germany with her husband, also a journalist.

For more information, contact the ACF during office hours, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Two Arab Novelists on the Frontline in English

By Susannah Tarbush

Among the Arab writers who have had novels published in the UK in English translation this year, two names in particular stand out: Bahaa Taher of Egypt and Elias Khoury of Lebanon. Both are major literary figures in the Arab world, and thanks to the magic of translation, they are becoming increasingly known to the English-reading public.

The English version of Taher's novel *Sunset Oasis*, published by the Hodder & Stoughton imprint Sceptre, hits UK bookstores this week. The Arabic original was in 2008 the first-ever winner of the \$60,000 International Prize for Arabic Fiction (IPAF).

Khoury's novel *Yalo* was published in English in June by the MacLehose Press imprint of London publisher Quercus and has already garnered some highly favorable reviews.

Like *Sunset Oasis*, *Yalo* was translated by Humphrey Davies, one of the most eminent translators of Arabic literature. Davies' translation of an earlier Khoury novel, *Gate of the Sun*, won the inaugural Banipal Prize for

Arabic Literary Translation in 2006.

Taher and Khoury were in London recently, en route to Edinburgh, to participate in a session of the Edinburgh International Book Festival. They appeared at the Frontline Club, West London, in an event billed as an Edinburgh taster. They discussed their work with the prominent cultural journalist Maya Jaggi of the *Guardian* newspaper before the floor was thrown open for questions.

The writers spoke eloquently, and with a generous sprinkling of humor, about their own work and on wider issues of Arab literature and politics. The subjects ranged from narrative techniques, to portrayals of victim and victimizer, women in novels, Arab prison literature and torture methods and the impact of invasion and occupation on fiction writing.

Taher, born in 1935, is the author of six novels and five short story collections. *Sunset Oasis* is the fourth of his novels to be translated into English.

The novel is set in late 19th century Egypt under British colonial rule, and depicts police officer Mahmoud Abd El-Zahir, who is sent to the rebellious Berber-speaking oasis town of Siwa in the remote west of Egypt as district commissioner and tax collector. His posting is

a punishment for his having sympathized with the Urabi revolt, the failed nationalist uprising that led to the 1882 Anglo-Egyptian war and to British colonial rule. Mahmoud's wife insists on accompanying him on the hazardous journey to the oasis. She is determined to try to salvage her shaky marriage and to find the tomb of Alexander the Great. Things turn out disastrously.

Khoury, 61, is the author of 12 novels, six of which have appeared in English translation. He is particularly known for his 1998 novel *Gate of the Sun*, an epic narrative of the Palestinian 1948 naqba (catastrophe). Possessor of a doctorate from the Sorbonne in Paris, he is editor-in-chief of the cultural supplement of the daily newspaper *An-Nahar* and Global Distinguished Professor of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at New York University.

Yalo is set in the early 1990s in a prison outside Beirut. The protagonist, Yalo, is repeatedly tortured, interrogated and forced to write accounts of his life. He relates how he joined a barracks during the civil war, deserted to Paris, was picked by a Lebanese arms dealer to become a security guard, had an affair with his boss's wife and became a robber, voyeur and rapist. He falls in love with one of his victims,

who denounces him and precipitates his arrest.

Khoury said that forcing a prisoner to write his life story "is a bizarre technique, but it is, unfortunately, used in Arab prisons."

Yalo is of Assyrian background and Khoury links his story in modern Lebanon with the thread of blood stretching from the massacres of Assyrians, along with Armenians, in Turkey in 1915.

Taher said the idea of victim and victimizer is also reflected in the themes of *Sunset Oasis*, whether in relation to Mahmoud, or to Alexander the Great who "while victimizing others was at the same time defeating himself."

Taher expressed some caution over experimentation. He has read *Yalo* twice and discovered that it has "a form of its own; you cannot categorize it."

"I find that in our modern literature there are some writers who are writing experimental things just for the sake of experiment not because they have really something new to add, or because they believe that they should modernize Arabic literature, but just because they want to be unusual and do not want to be conventional writers, and in cases where the writer is not very experienced or very talented this could be a very dangerous development," he concluded.

(This article originally appeared this week in the *Saudi Gazette*.)



ARTS & LIVING

CALENDAR

CALIFORNIA

SEPTEMBER 22 – OCTOBER 27 – Michael Bobelian, author of *Children of Armenia*, published by Simon & Schuster, will participate in a series of readings and book signings. This groundbreaking book is the first to chronicle the aftermath of the first genocide of the 20th century, recounting the Armenian struggle for justice in the face of silence and denial. For more info., www.childrenarmenia.com.

- September 29 – 7 p.m., at the Glendale Public Library, 222 E. Harvard St., Glendale, Calif.
- October 1 – 7 p.m., at the Fresno Public Library (Fig Garden Branch), 3071 West Bullard Ave., Fresno, Calif.
- October 18 – 4 p.m., at the Ararat-Eskijian Museum, 15105 Mission Hills Road, Mission Hills, Calif.
- October 27 – 7 p.m. at Chaucer’s Bookstore, 3321 State St., Santa Barbara, Calif.

NOVEMBER 7 – Armenian Professional Society Honors Dr. Vartan Gregorian as their Professional of the Year. Sheraton Universal, Los Angeles. Tickets: \$150.

NOVEMBER 8 – Sayat Nova Dance Company of Boston travels to California to present its dynamic “Power in Rhythm” performance at Glendale High School Auditorium, 1440 E. Broadway, Glendale. For tickets, contact www.itmyseat.com.

FLORIDA

FEBRUARY 6, 2010 – Cupid Capers Fun Night, presented by Women’s Guild St. David Church Boca Raton, featuring Onnik Dinkjian, vocals; Ken Boyajian, oud; Mal Barsamian, clarinet; Ara Dinkjian, guitar and Noubar Boyajian, dumbeg. Save the date. Details to follow.

MASSACHUSETTS

SEPTEMBER 19-OCTOBER 10 – Whistler House Museum celebrates Arshile Gorky. 243 Worthen St., Lowell, call (978) 452-7641 or e-mail jdymment@whistlerhouse.org. Exhibit opens on Wednesday, September 16. On Saturday, October 10, at 6 p.m., an original play will be performed by Regina Eliot Ramsey about Willem De Kooning and Gorky.

SEPTEMBER 28 – First Annual Sts. Vartanantz Golf Tournament and outing, Butter Brook Golf Club, Westford. \$150, includes golf, cart, prizes, reception and awards dinner. 1 p.m., shotgun start. Dinner only, \$35. Proceeds to benefit Sts. Vartanantz Youth Scholarship Fund. Contact Ara at (978) 251-4845, Steve at (978) 808-2820 or e-mail: StsVGolf@earthlink.net.

OCTOBER 2 – Jazz Nights @ ALMA with Armen Donelian Trio at Armenian Library and Museum of America, Watertown. Donelian (piano), David Clark (bass) and George Schuller (drums) will perform music from their latest album “Oasis.” The concert begins at 8 p.m. in ALMA’s Contemporary Art Gallery; museum doors open at 7:30 p.m. Tickets \$15 (includes one complimentary glass of wine for 21+). ALMA members, students and JazzBoston members (with proper ID) pay \$10. Visit www.almainc.org or call (617) 926-2562 to preorder tickets/make table reservations.

OCTOBER 3 – St. Stephen’s Armenian Elementary School presents YerazArt Young Musicians from Armenia in a concert sponsored by the Khatchig Babikian Fund. Saturday, 4 p.m. at the National Heritage Museum, 33 Marrett Road, Lexington. Admission, \$15. For tickets and info., call (617) 335-1159 or (857) 991-0297.

OCTOBER 3 – Brattle Boutique and Sparks St. Café – A Fall Fair featuring specialty gift and food items, sponsored by the Women’s Guild of Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Saturday. Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. This new event will feature a variety of specialty vendors selling gifts and gourmet food. There will also be a Children’s Corner with activities and items for children. Admission is free. For further info., contact the Holy Trinity Church Office at (617) 354-0632 or e-mail office@htaac.org.

OCTOBER 3 – Armenian American Professionals Gala Banquet and Dance Honoring Massachusetts state Rep. Peter Koutoujian of Waltham. 6 p.m., cocktail hour. Dinner with music and dancing with DJ Eddie K. Hyatt Regency Hotel, Cambridge. For information and tickets, contact Ara Demirjian at (617) 974-8343. Sponsored by the following associations: Armenian American Medical Association, Armenian American Dental Society, Armenian American Nurses Association, Armenian American Bar Association (Law Society) and hosted by the Armenian American Pharmacists’ Association.

OCTOBER 3 – Second St. James Parish Reunion and kef, hosted by the St. James ACYOA Seniors. Saturday, 8 p.m.-1 a.m. at St. James Armenian Church. Charles Mosesian



On October 3, St. Stephen’s Armenian Elementary School presents YerazArt Young Musicians from Armenia in a concert sponsored by the Khatchig Babikian Fund on Saturday, 4 p.m. at the National Heritage Museum, 33 Marrett Road, Lexington, Mass. The young artists, pictured above, will perform classical works. For tickets and info., call (617) 335-1159 or (857) 991-0297.

Cultural and Youth Center, Keljik Hall. 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown. Featuring Bob Raphaelian (oud), Leon Janikian (clarinet), Harry Bedrossian (keyboard and vocals), Kenny Kalajian (guitar) and Leon Manoogian (dumbeg). \$25 per person. Tables of 10 may be reserved with advance payment. For tickets, contact Melanie Khederian at (617) 694-1057 or at mkhederian@gmail.com. All proceeds to benefit the 2010 ACYOA General Assembly and National Sports Weekend hosted by St. James ACYOA.

OCTOBER 4 – Preservation of Armenian Monasteries of Iran: History, Challenges and Accomplishments. Presenter: Varoujan Arakelian, architect. Sunday, 3 p.m. Armenian Cultural Foundation, 441 Mystic St., Arlington. Admission is free and open to the public. Co-sponsored by the Armenian Cultural Foundation, the Armenian Society of Boston and the Hamazkayin Armenian Educational and Cultural Society.

OCTOBER 4 – Celebration of Armenian Independence Day (New Republic) by the Lowell ARF, 1 p.m., Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church, 180 Westford Road, North Chelmsford; complimentary dinner and program; David Boyajian will be recognized for his years of dedicated service to the No Place for Hate campaign and will offer an update.

OCTOBER 7 – Armenian Cultural Foundation, Book Presentation, 441 Mystic St., Arlington, 7:30 p.m. An evening with author, scholar and political activist Muriel Mirak-Weissbach on her thought-provoking and groundbreaking work, *Through the Wall of Fire, Armenia-Iraq-Palestine: From Wrath to Reconciliation*, examining the fate of the orphans in the aftermath of the Armenian Genocide, Iraqi and Palestinian children after decades of war and deportations and search for a path to reconciliation. The event is free and open to the public followed by a reception and book signing. For more info., call ACF at (781) 646-3090.

OCTOBER 8 – Michael Bobelian, author of Children of Armenia, will participate in a reading and book signing. 7 p.m. at NAASR Bookstore, 395 Concord Ave., Belmont, Mass. This groundbreaking book is the first to chronicle the aftermath of the first genocide of the 20th century, recounting the Armenian struggle for justice in the face of silence and denial. For more info., www.childrenarmenia.com.

OCTOBER 15 – Human Rights in Armenian History, a lecture by Prof. Simon Payaslian, at 7 p.m. at the Armenian Library and Museum of America, Watertown. Payaslian, Kenosian Chair in Modern Armenian History and Literature at Boston University, discusses the development of human rights in Armenia within a long historical perspective and contends human rights values and customary practices require centuries of development. For more info., visit www.almainc.org. The event is free and open to the public.

OCTOBER 16-17 – St. James 62nd Annual Bazaar. Friday and Saturday, 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Armenian food, shish kebab, chicken kebab, losh kebab, kheyma and eetch. (served from 11 a.m.-8 p.m.) Armenian delicacies and pastries. Boereg, manti, yalanchi, porov kufteh, tourshi, choereg, cream and nut khadaif, bourma, baklava and more. Booths and vendors including the country store, Armenian items, attic treasures, jewelry and spa vendors, candy sale. \$100 raffle. (Only 350 sold. Purchase by September 30 to be entered in a \$500 special early-bird drawing. Grand prize: \$5,000; second-fourth prizes: \$1,000. Fifth-eighth prizes: \$500) and \$2 raffle. Silent auction including art from Armenia and Jerusalem, jewelry, gift certificates and sporting events. St. James’ Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center, 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown. For info., call (617) 923-8860.

OCTOBER 23 & 25 – Armenian Festival, Armenian Church of Our Saviour, offering the most delicious shish, losh and chicken kebab on char-broiled grills. Freshly-made kheyma, kids meals available, raffle/prizes, beer and wine. The best authentic Armenian baked goods, country store, music and fun for the entire family. Friday, October 23, 5-9 p.m., and Sunday, October 25, 12-5 p.m. Cultural Center, 34 Boynton St., Worcester. (508) 756-2931.

NOVEMBER 1 – Armenian Children’s Concert, featuring Nouné Karapetian and Tsapikner. Sunday, 3 p.m. First Armenian Church, 380 Concord Ave., Belmont. Kids, bring a pillow to sit on. Tickets: \$15 in advance; \$20 at the door. To purchase in advance, call Liana (617) 744-0595. Sponsored by Erebuni Saturday School and Amaras Art Alliance. For more info., visit www.erebunischool.org or www.amaras.org.

NOVEMBER 6 – Wine Tasting, 7-9 p.m. Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church, 180 Old Westford Road, Chelmsford. Tickets: \$30 per person (before October 24) \$35 thereafter. Includes brief wine presentation, appetizers and wine. Contact Carol Hildebrand (978) 618-6982 or e-mail stswine-tasting09@gmail.com.

NOVEMBER 6 – Jazz Nights @ ALMA with Steve Tashjian’s Classic Groove at Armenian Library and Museum of America, Watertown. ClassicGroove returns to the stage, performing an exciting range of jazz favorites in ALMA’s Contemporary Art Gallery. The concert begins at 8 p.m.; museum doors open at 7:30 p.m. Tickets \$15 (includes one complimentary glass of wine for 21+). ALMA members, students and JazzBoston members (with proper ID) pay \$10. Visit www.almainc.org or call (617) 926-2562 to preorder your tickets/make table reservations.

NOVEMBER 6 – “The Golden Voices of Opera,” featuring Yeghishe Manucharyan, Victoria Avetisyan and Yelena Dudochkin with Tatyana Dudochkin, piano. Celebrate 2009 Armenian Cultural Heritage Program. Sponsored by Holy Trinity Armenian Church and Choir of Greater Boston. Friday, 8 p.m. Longy School of Music, Edward M. Pickman Concert Hall, 27 Garden St., Cambridge. Tickets: \$25 per person. The program will include favorite arias, duets and romances, including Verdi, Puccini, Rossini, Tigranyan, Abrahamyan, Rimsky-Korsakov and others. For further info., contact the Holy Trinity Church Office at (617) 354-0632 or e-mail office@htaac.org.

NOVEMBER 6-7 – St. Stephen’s Armenian Apostolic Church, 53rd Armenian Bazaar. Friday and Saturday, 10 a.m.-9:30 p.m. Armenian Cultural and Educational Center, 47 Nichols Ave., Watertown. Lamb, losh and chicken kebab, kheyma, kofta and yalanchi. Meals served from 11:30 a.m.-8:30 p.m. Takeout available. Armenian pastries, gourmet, soujoukh, arts and crafts, books, tapes, art sale, children’s games. Auction starts at 7 p.m. Also raffles, sports tickets and much more.

NOVEMBER 7 – Film Screening of “Hove,” presented by the Armenian Library and Museum of America, 65 Main St., Watertown, at 2 p.m. Olympia Dukakis stars in this moving tale about two Armenian women whose friendship is deeply affected by an encounter with the past and the powerful, unresolved legacy of the Armenian Genocide. Co-star Shirleyann Kaladjian and Director Alex Webb will attend the screening. Admission is \$8. ALMA members pay \$5. Visit almainc.org.

NOVEMBER 16 – Concert of works by Lexington composer Hayg Boyadjian and several members of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Edwin Barker, principal double bass of the Boston Symphony Orchestra; Doriot Anthony Dwyer, former principal flautist of the Boston Symphony Orchestra; John McDonald, pianist, former chairman of the Music Department and present director of Graduate Music Studies at Tufts University, and Jodi Hitzhusen, soprano. First Parish Church, 7 Harrington Road, Lexington Center. For more information, call (781) 862-9395.



ARTS & LIVING

NOVEMBER 19 — The Armenia Fund USA welcomes the Prime Minster of Karabagh Araik Harutunyan and Archbishop Barkev Mardirossian. Panel to also include the president of Karabagh's press attach , David Babayan. ACEC Hall, 47 Nichols Ave., Watertown. 7-9 p.m. For info., contact AFUSA (212) 689-5307.

NOVEMBER 21 — Sayat Nova Dance Company of Boston sponsors the popular and beloved singer Alla Levonyan of Armenia in a live concert. Save the date. Details to follow.

DECEMBER 4 — Jazz Nights @ ALMA with Yulia Musayelyan Quartet at Armenian Library and Museum of America, Watertown. Musayelyan (flute), Fernando Huergo (bass), Franco Pinna (drums) and a pianist conclude the 2009 concert series with original compositions and arrangements that infuse folk rhythms from Argentina, Armenia and other cultures. The concert begins at 8 p.m. in ALMA's Contemporary Art Gallery; museum doors open at 7: 30 p.m. Tickets, \$15 (includes one complimentary glass of wine for 21+). ALMA members, students and JazzBoston members (with proper ID) pay \$10. Visit www.almainc.org or call (617) 926-2562 to preorder tickets/make table reservations.

DECEMBER 4 and 5 — Trinity Christmas Bazaar, Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Friday, 3-9 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.-7 p.m. Save the date. Details to follow. For info., contact Holy Trinity Church Office at (617) 354-0632 or e-mail office@htaac.org.

DECEMBER 5 — Second Annual Breakfast with Santa. 10 a.m. St. James Armenian Church, Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center, Keljik Hall. 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown. Tickets must be purchased in advance, and include breakfast, time and photos with Santa, and a special gift for each child. Tickets are \$25 for adults, \$20 for children, 1-12 years old; \$15 for children under 1-year-old. Payment must be received to reserve your space. Contact Mark Janian at (617) 875-3671 or Markhj77@yahoo.com or e-mail stjamesbreakfastwsanta@yahoo.com for tickets. Tickets will also be available in the St. James church office and during Fellowship Hour on Sundays. Call Tina Kurkjian at (781) 727-3643 or e-mail st.jamesbreakfastwsanta@yahoo.com to include a greeting, ad or photo of one's child in the Christmas Greetings Book.

DECEMBER 12 — Concert featuring Hoy Lari to benefit the Armenian Children's Milk Fund at First Armenian Memorial Church, 380 Concord Ave., Belmont.

FEBRUARY 27-28, 2010 — Arsenal Center for the Arts sponsors the Sayat Nova Dance Company of Boston. The production will be performed for two nights at the Charles Mosesian Theater, 321 Arsenal St., Watertown.

OCTOBER 9, 2010 — 30th Anniversary celebration of the Armenian Independent Radio of Boston. Please mark your calendar. Details to follow.

MICHIGAN

OCTOBER 10 — The AGBU Alex and Marie Manoogian School 40th Anniversary Celebration Dinner Dance, featuring the opening of the new High School Building Expansion. 22001 Northwestern Highway, Southfield. Hors d'oeuvres and school tours, 7-7:45 p.m. Ribbon-cutting cere-

mony, 8 p.m. Strolling dinner and open bar to follow. Music provided by Arthur Apkarian. Donation, \$50. Advance tickets only. Reservations by September 30: Linda Darian Karibian (248) 932-5282 or school office (248) 569-2988.

NOVEMBER 19 — Soire  Musical, featuring violinist Henrik Karapetian and his quartet, 7 p.m. Bloomfield Township Library Hall. Reception to follow.

NEW JERSEY

OCTOBER 2 — Margaret Ajemian-Ahnert will speak about her book, *The Knock at the Door: A Journey through the Darkness of the Armenian Genocide*, at 7:30 p.m., Abajian Hall, St. Leon Armenian Church, 576 Highland Ave., Ridgewood. To reserve a book, send a \$25 check to the church, attn: Linda Tarzian. Books will be reserved at the table upon entering. For info., call (201) 445-8167.

OCTOBER 7 — Michael Bobelian, author of *Children of Armenia*, published by Simon & Schuster, will participate in a reading and book signing. 7 p.m. at the Books and Greetings Bookstore, 271 Livingston St., Northvale, NJ. This groundbreaking book is the first to chronicle the aftermath of the first genocide of the 20th century, recounting the Armenian struggle for justice in the face of silence and denial. For more info., www.childrenarmenia.com.

OCTOBER 10 — Tekeyan Cultural Association — Mher Megerdchian Theatrical Group Presents "Who Killed The Eastern Dentist?" A Masquerade Party in Baronian's 1860s Istanbul. A Murder Mystery Dinner Theater prepared by Harout Chatmajian. Assyrian Orthodox Church of the Virgin Mary, 644 Paramus Road, Paramus. Saturday, at 8 p.m. Donation, \$60; BYOB; dress code (optional); 1860s attire and mask. For tickets, call Marie Zokian (201) 745-8850, Noushig Atamian (718) 894-5878, Maro Hajakian (201) 934-3427 or Missak Boghosian (212) 819-0097.

NOVEMBER 15 — "One Nation, One Culture," a cultural festival under the auspices of Dr. Hranush Hakobyan, Republic of Armenia Minister of Diaspora, organized by Hamazkayin Eastern USA Regional Executive, featuring Alla Levonian from Armenia and Babin Boghosian & Ensemble from Los Angeles, with the participation of Antranig Dance Ensemble of AGBU, Akh'tamar Dance Ensemble of St. Thomas Armenian Church, Yeraz Dance Ensemble of St. Sarkis Church, NJ, Hamazkyain Nayiri Dance Group and Arekag Children's Choir and Dohl Group. Sunday, 4 p.m. Felician College, 262 S. Main St., Lodi, NJ. Donation:\$75, \$50, \$35, \$25. For more info. or tickets, contact Haazkayin at (201) 945-8992 or paradon2009@gmail.com.

NEW YORK

OCTOBER 15 — Michael Bobelian, author of *Children of Armenia*, will participate in a reading and book signing. 7 p.m. at the Zohrab Center, 630 Second Ave., New York, NY. This groundbreaking book is the first to chronicle the aftermath of the first genocide of the 20th century, recounting the Armenian struggle for justice in the face of silence and denial. For more info., www.childrenarmenia.com.

OCTOBER 24 — AGBU New York Special Events

Committee (NYSEC) presents — AGBU Performing Artists in Concert. A benefit for the AGBU Performing Arts Fellowship Program, showcasing the talents of 12 Armenian youth, under the artistic direction of Hrant and Kevork Parsamian, all of whom have benefited from AGBU's scholarship assistance toward their studies in performing arts. Curtain time 8:30 p.m. Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, 154 West 57th St., New York City. Tickets, \$65. For tickets and info., call (212) 319-6383, ext. 124 or visit www.carnegiehall.org.

JANUARY 15, 2010 — On the occasion of its 20th anniversary, the Fund for Armenian Relief will honor and thank a lifetime benefactor to the global Armenian community, Dr. Edgar Houspian. Dinner and Program at Cipriani Wall Street New York City, 7 p.m. Info. at (212) 889-5150 and far@farusa.org.

PENNSYLVANIA

OCTOBER 3 — The Society for Orphaned Armenian Relief (SOAR), Inc. Fourth Annual Complimentary Cocktail Reception. The Village Hall, (Spread Village) in Wayne. A cultural evening featuring the Ararat Dance Ensemble; comedienne Lory Tatoulian, vocalists, artists and rugs. 5-10 p.m. For additional info., contact George S. Yacoubian, Jr. at (610) 213-3452 or gyacoubian@soar-us.org.

RHODE ISLAND

OCTOBER 25 — Husenig Grove Family Day and Hayride. Full-course spaghetti dinner at 2 p.m. Hayride at 3 p.m. All are welcome. Husenig Grove is on Simmons St., Rehobeth. Dinner for adults, \$12. Hayride and dinner for children, \$6. For more info., call Marc Janigian at (401) 942-3477.

NOVEMBER 28 — Providence ACYOA hosts the Annual Holiday Kef, featuring an All-Star Band. Jason Naroian, Leon Janikian, Kenny Kalajian, David Hoplamazian, Joe Kouyoumjian and more. For individual or table of 10 reservations, call Kevork Vartanian at (401) 419-1052 or Ara Janigian at (401) 486-8495 or Sevan Janigian at (401) 533-4147 or contact providenceacyoa@gmail.com.

CANADA

OCTOBER 3 — Michael Bobelian, author of *Children of Armenia*, published by Simon & Schuster, will participate in a reading and book signing. The Armenian Bar Association mid-year meeting in Toronto, Canada. This groundbreaking book is the first to chronicle the aftermath of the first genocide of the 20th century, recounting the Armenian struggle for justice in the face of silence and denial. For more info., www.childrenarmenia.com.

The *Mirror-Spectator* has a new Calendar Policy: The *Mirror-Spectator* is now accepting all calendar items for free. All items may be sent to mirrords@aol.com. Due to the anticipated shortage of space, items may be edited to fit the space.

When Violence Was Ceased

Armenian Golgotha. By Grigoris Balakian A memoir of the Armenian Genocide, 1915-1919. Translated by Peter Balakian with Aris Sevag. 509 pp. New York: Knopf. \$35

By John A. C. Greppin

This extraordinary narrative of the Armenian Genocide was written by an eyewitness, a celibate Armenian priest, Grigoris Balakian. This first translation into English is by his great-nephew, Peter Balakian, whose previous books, *The Burning Tigris: The Armenian Genocide and America's Response* (2003) and the *Black Dog of Fate* (1997, reissued 2009), were both widely acclaimed. The translation of this moving account is, one suspects, also a labor of ancestral devotion.

The narrative begins as Grigoris Balakian, one of 250 Armenian intellectuals, is deported under armed guard from Constantinople in April 1915, on a hellish trip towards the desert of Der Zor in northern Syria. They are taken first by rail, in box cars without food or water or sanitary provisions, then in open carts, and finally on foot. These various forced marches of Armenians, for the most part involving tens of thousands of peasants, were happening all over Turkey — directed, according to Grigoris

Balakian, by Talaat Pasha, one of the three Young Turks who were responsible for the overthrow of the Ottoman Caliphate and the eventual founding of the modern Turkish Republic. Initially, Grigoris makes clear, only a minority of Turks supported the forced marches. Talaat, he alleges, at first operated in near secrecy, surreptitiously replacing honest Turkish provincial governors with men of his own view, so that the central Armenian provinces would be cleared brutally of their inhabitants.

There have been numerous narratives describing the forced Armenian deportation. The best known is that by Ambassador Henry Morgenthau who, in Constantinople, beginning in 1915, received reports from American consulates throughout the Ottoman Empire. There are also British and German consular reports, still held in American and European archives as well as eyewitness narratives written by scores of survivors. These latter are of limited use to scholars, as they are largely recorded by poorly educated refugees, who came west after the massacres without a grasp of the big picture.

What separates Grigoris Balakian's account from the others is his great and well-disciplined intelligence; he attended divinity school in Germany before the First World War and there

acquired good language skills which saved him from death on numerous occasions. He spent a year, from April 15 to April 1916, on his eastwards deportation route. Sometimes he was able to escape by finding a job with the German builders of the Berlin-to-Baghdad railway in the Taurus Mountains in southern Turkey. Here his language skills helped him immensely, letting him pose as a German employee of the rail construction company. His German co-workers quickly realized he was an Armenian and a Christian, and made great efforts to protect him.

Nevertheless, on many occasions Armenian workers on the railway were pulled from their employment and sent, under guard, on foot towards Der Zor. The German workers knew what their arrest meant, but were powerless to intervene. These wretched groups were often simply escorted a few miles out of town and then hacked to death by their guards. Grigoris Balakian, however, also mentions the kindnesses of many Turks and Kurds towards him, telling how he was protected in Turkish homes and by Turkish officials before they were replaced by psychopathic appointees of Talaat Pasha. The latter often had criminal mentalities and were not simply indifferent to these Armenians' tragic suffering, but derived perverse pleasure from it. Grigoris is careful not to

give an image of the average Turk dripping blood from his hands and jaw. It is Talaat Pasha, he says, who bears ultimate responsibility; indeed, after the end of the First World War, there were trials in Constantinople at which Talaat Pasha was found guilty in absentia. He was ultimately assassinated in 1920 by an Armenian survivor of the massacres, Soghoman Tehlirian, in Germany, whither Talaat had fled after the Armistice. For his part, having masqueraded as a German officer, and following a long and arduous trek, Grigoris Balakian got back to Constantinople in September 1918. Times had changed, the intensity of the Turks' hatred had run its course, and for a while as the war drew to a close, life became less dangerous for an Armenian.

This beautifully-translated memoir of those massacres, eventually to be called a genocide, brings some restraint to American-Armenian studies. For the past few decades American-trained scholars of the Armenian Genocide have lost academic detachment, and their writings, often mediocre, bringing little new to the study, have instead found profit in whipping up a frenzy of Turkophobia. This has made diplomacy impossible. In this presentation of his forebear's remarkably controlled text, Peter Balakian has brought back sobriety to this study, without diminishing its horrors. This book will influence Armenian Genocide studies for decades.

(This article originally appeared in the *Times (London) Literary Supplement*, August 7.)

Book Review



COMMENTARY

THE ARMENIAN

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EDITOR
Alin K. Gregorian
ASSISTANT EDITOR
Thomas C. Nash
ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Taleen Babayan
ART DIRECTOR
Marc Mgrditchian
PRODUCTION
Dilani Yogaratnam
COPY EDITOR
Rose Muggeridge

CONTRIBUTORS:
Elizabeth Aprahamian, Dr. Haroutiune Arzoumanian, Edmond Azadian, Prof. Vahakn N. Dadrian, Diana Der Hovanessian, Philip Ketchian, Kevork Keushkerian, Arsen Noubar Mamourian, Moorad Mooradian, Sonia Kailian-Placido, Harut Sassounian, Mary Terzian, Hagop Vartivarian, Naomi Zeytoonian

CORRESPONDENTS:
Armenia - Hagop Avedikian
Boston - Nancy Kalajian
Philadelphia - Lisa Manookian

Contributing Photographers: Sarkis Bahar, George Bogosian, Jacob Demirdjian, Harry Koundakjian.

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For advertising: mirrorads@aol.com
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(201) 800-1164

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EDITORIAL

Protocol Negotiations Ongoing

People both in Armenia and the diaspora are focusing heavily on the proposed Protocols between Armenia and Turkey, in their efforts to establish diplomatic ties.

The Protocols, announced on August 31, have been embraced by certain segments of the community, including the ADL Eastern District of US and Canada, the Armenian Assembly of America and the Armenian General Benevolent Union.

Some other segments in the community worry that the Armenian side, in the Protocols, is agreeing to pre-conditions dictated by Turkey, in order to establish relations. Successive Armenian governments have stressed the importance of establishing relations without preconditions. Those opponents, again both domestic and in the diaspora, suggest that the negotiations should be dropped regarding the Protocols and that in no time should they be signed.

The government of Turkey seems to provide some Diasporan Armenians with a chance to achieve what they want, namely, the dissolution of the negotiations on the Protocols on which the governments of Armenia and Turkey are working, with the help of the Swiss government and the US State Department.

Last week, during an interview, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan suggested that the Turkish-Armenian border would not open without the resolution of the Karabagh conflict and the status of Karabagh.

This week, the usually mild-mannered and genteel Armenian Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian, hit back hard, suggesting that the status of Nagorno Karabagh is not one of the topics that is up for discussion between Armenia and Turkey.

In fact, he concluded his remarks by suggesting that “If the authorities of current Turkey are not ready today to recognize the fact of the Genocide perpetrated in Ottoman Empire, they are at least obliged to respect the survivors of the Armenian Genocide and their descendants.”

The government of Armenia is trying hard to promote the importance of signing the Protocols after thorough negotiations have been carried out, and after the Armenian and Diasporan Armenian communities are well familiar with the protocols.

As part of this effort, the Armenian president, Serge Sargisian, is going to embark on a tour of the Middle East and the US, as

well as Europe, in order to gauge the feelings of the diasporans. He also conducted last week a meeting with all the party leaders in Armenia.

The two issues that are most hotly opposed by members of the opposition, and have led to demonstrations inside and outside Armenia, are the establishment of an “impartial” commission to look at the history in a “scientific” manner, and then another which recognizes the current border between Armenia and Turkey. Armenians, of course, don’t need to study the issue more. The border, established in Soviet times, is unfortunately, for the time being, one that is used internationally, regardless of how we Armenians feel about it. Perhaps, the same historical commission can study the accuracy of the Turkish-Armenian border.

It is clear that the United States and the European Union are redoubling their efforts in order to settle the Turkish-Armenian issues and conflict. Theories proliferate with regard to why so much pressure at this particular junction. Sadly, the incoming Obama administration, so eagerly welcomed by all segments of the Armenian world, has shown just more of the same as the Bush administration with regard to Armenia. Matthew Bryza, who has represented the United States in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group, tasked with resolving the Karabagh issue, is about to be named US ambassador to Azerbaijan. The group has held many, many meetings and has often not chastised the Azeri government for flagrant violations of the cease-fire tentatively in place between itself and the Nagorno Karabagh Republic.

Opponents of the Protocols are free to disagree with the items; after all, Armenia is a democracy. However, they should not resort to scare tactics, suggesting that the status of Karabagh is going to be discussed, with the intent of handing it to the Azeris.

It is promising that President Serge Sargisian is listening to people with whom he disagrees on this issue, both in Armenia, and soon, in the diaspora. He and his administration face a difficult time and a difficult task. He deserves our respect and honest opinions. Where these Protocols end, it is not clear. It seems that Turkey seems to be forced into this uncomfortable marriage by the West and perhaps, they will opt out before the Armenians do.

The Great Rivalries of Chess

By Finlo Rohrer

Chess is a game that rarely draws a massive amount of attention from the global public, but a rematch between Kasparov and Karpov reminds us that it throws up the occasional great rivalry.

When Garry Kasparov challenged Anatoly Karpov in 1984 for the chess world championship, it was the beginning of a titanic struggle.

The contest lasted five months and featured a series of successive draws of 17 and 15 games. It was controversially ended by the chess authorities over fears for the health of the players, both of whom had lost weight during the struggle. Kasparov had been resurgent at the end, although Karpov still held a lead.

“It was a gigantic metaphor for the collapse of a creaking, unviable, introspective, conglomerate empire ”

Grandmaster Raymond Keene on the Kasparov-Karpov battle

In 1985, Kasparov beat Karpov for the title. They played for it again in 1986 and again Kasparov won. In 1987, Kasparov was one down going into the final game, but recovered to tie the series and therefore retain his crown.

It was a great chess rivalry, but it was more than that to the watching public and pundits.

“It was very symbolic of what was happening to the Soviet Union,” says grandmaster Raymond Keene, chess correspondent for the Times. “It was obvious the USSR was going through a period of great turmoil.”

And the rivalry was perfect in pitching a brilliant, brooding outsider against the Soviet establishment’s main man.

“Kasparov was a southerner, half-Jewish, half-Armenian, much younger, in the vanguard of a change, taking on the golden boy of the old Soviet Union,” says Keene.

Keene organised the London matches of the

third series between the players in 1985, which took place both in the UK and Leningrad. He was surprised by the stark disparity between the Soviet and the Western ways of organising things.

In London, after the matches, a list of moves with annotation was faxed all over the world within 15 minutes of the conclusion. In Leningrad, a sheet bearing only the moves was typed up, a press officer with a minder was taken to the local party HQ where the only photocopier was to be found, the sheet was copied and then manually handed only to the journalists present at the event.

“They were still mired in Soviet bureaucracy and fear of publicity. I thought ‘this place is doomed’.

“It was a gigantic metaphor for the collapse of a creaking, unviable, introspective, conglomerate empire.”

There had been other rivalries that never succeeded in sparking the imagination. Mikhail Tal against Mikhail Botvinnik in the early 1960s had the same hallmarks of the non-Russian outsider against the Soviet stalwart, but failed to develop into a sustained struggle. And the earlier battle between Vasily Smyslov and Botvinnik is probably one for chess aficionados only.

The other rivalry that spread outside the world of chess was between Bobby Fischer and Boris Spassky. Their famous 1972 world

championship match became another symbol of the struggle between civilisations.

Fischer was the Western maverick up against Spassky, the emblem of the powerful Soviet machine. And Fischer won.

“It was about Western individualism, depth of analysis, use of the technology available,” says Keene.

And the notion that ideas of a greater struggle would be imposed on chess was an invention of the Stalinist era.

The Communist official Nikolai Krylenko took his board games seriously. He was reported to have said: “We must organise shock brigades of chess players, and begin immediate realisation of a five-year plan for chess.”

He might have approved of the great rivalries with an ideological flavour that grew up in the 1970s and 80s. He would have been less delighted that on both occasions the Soviet establishment’s representative was bested.

Other sports have individual rivalries. Tennis has had some great ones.

But perhaps only boxing, with its system of champion and challengers, comes close to replicating the way that the protagonists have to study each other’s play and personality, even live in each other’s skin, during the mind-bogglingly detailed preparations for a world championship series.

(This article originally appeared in the *BBC News Magazine* on September 23.)

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COMMENTARY

Jerusalem Odyssey – Part V

JERUSALEM – A gentle breeze has sprung up, cooling the ardor of the morning sun. Above me the cupola of the Dome of the Rock shimmers like a glorious beacon pointing at the sky, the golden tiles reflecting the aspirations and prayers of a thousand genuflecting worshippers.

I am waiting for my guide, Abu Fadi, thoughtfully provided by Dr Yusuf Natsheh, of the Waqf, the Supreme Islamic Council.

Over a cup of sweet Arabic coffee in his spartan office, Natsheh, who is also director of the Department of Islamic Archaeology, has brought me up to date on the latest developments affecting the city's Muslim denizens.

It is not a happy state of affairs because access to the “Haram al Sharif” sanctuary, which encompasses the Dome of the Rock and the Al Aqsa mosque, is controlled by the Israeli police and not the Waqf, as it had been during the previous Jordanian administration, and is restricted for security reasons. The police do not want a repetition of the riots that sparked the second Palestinian “intifada” (uprising) or of attacks on the sacred Muslim shrines.

By Arthur Hagopian

Ordinarily, access to the sanctuary is possible via the Dung Gate (Babel Magharbeh), one of twelve entry points, but Abu Fadi has been waiting for me at the Lion Gate entrance, and I have therefore to run the gauntlet of a laborious security check before I am let in.

Abu Fadi turns out to be an enjoyable companion, knowledgeable and loquacious. As he walks me through the paces of a royal tour of the compound that occupies one sixth of the area of the Old City, I am overwhelmed by the magnificence around me. With every step I take, I am reliving history.

I read with fascination the golden Qur'anic verses that adorn the Dome of the Rock, like a necklace around its neck, in the words of Dr. Mustafa Abu Sway, associate professor of philosophy and Islamic studies and director of the Islamic Research Center at Al-Quds

University. I will be meeting with him later, and over a lunch of “lahmajoon” (Armenian meat pie), he conveys to me the special significance in Islam of Al Aqsa, the second holiest shrine for Islam, the fruit of the labors of the two seventh and ninth C Umayyad Caliphs, Abd Al-Malik Ibn Marwan and his son Al-Walid.

“The magnificence of the architecture of the Dome of the Rock and the southern most building within the parameters of Al-Aqsa is witness to the importance of these holy sites in Islam,” Abu Sway says. He points out that it is the religious duty of Muslims all over the world to maintain Al-Aqsa Mosque both physically and spiritually.

“The relationship with Al-Aqsa Mosque is primarily fulfilled through acts of worship, but the physical maintenance of the Mosque is also part of the responsibility of all Muslims.”

Abu Fadi pauses pause before Saladin's wooden “minbar” (pulpit) in the Dome of the Rock, now enclosed within a protective barrier. It is a replica because the original had been destroyed in a fire. There's not a single nail in evidence: the wooden joints are all masterfully held together without the aid of any metal artifice.

The tour over, I pause under the shade of a tree for a moment. An Arab family is holding a picnic nearby. I catch their eye and a little girl of 4 or 5 sashays over, perches herself on a rock, and gazes up at me. It's a moment of pure, ineluctable innocence and mystery, an ineffable purity, to capture and treasure. I snap a picture – and she vanishes.

I do not know why she chooses to privilege me with her presence and her smile. But I can't help wondering, what does the future hold for this child? Or for a Jewish, Christian, or other child growing in the turbulently ailing maelstrom, Jerusalem, that has been described as the center of the world?

see JERUSALEM, page 20

Making the Punishment Fit the Crime Or, A Treasured Boyhood Memory

By George Juskalian

When I was a youngster I spent a few summer vacations in Worcester, Mass. with my older sister, Nevart, her husband, John Bilzerian, and their daughters, Esther and Helen, who were some years younger than I.

John and Nevart were old enough to be my parents. As a matter of fact, strangers meeting them for the first time invariably made some comment like, “How nice, two beautiful daughters and a handsome son to serve as a big brother.”

“Serve as big brother” was a responsibility I shouldered so-so. Girls and dolls and all things nice got tiresome at times. So I made friends with a few of the neighborhood boys and did things young boys like to do, such as act like older boys.

One of the things we used to do was make-believe smoking. We would wrap aged (brownish) corn silk in cigarette paper and proudly pretend we were smoking. From a distance, someone might easily think we were really smoking. And that is what actually happened one day. A lady neighbor, well-known for her gossipy ways, couldn't wait to tell my sister that she had seen me and some other boys smoking behind a neighborhood building.

When I got home, I no sooner had my foot in the doorway when my sister shouted, “Kirkor, I heard you've been smoking.”

“No, I haven't. Who told you that?” I squirmed. “Don't you dare lie to me,” she kept shouting. “Mrs. Gabby said she saw you and some other boys smoking behind the building. You just wait until John comes home.” I tried to explain but she turned a deaf ear.

All too soon, John got home from his downtown architect's office. He didn't even get a chance to take off his shoes before Nevart blabbed. I suspect he sensed the truth, but for whatever reason decided to go along with Nevart. “What kind of cigarettes do you like, Kirkor?” he asked me calmly with nary a touch of anger. I was speechless.

When I remained speechless, he again asked me what my favorite cigarette was. All of a sudden the names of the popular brands – Camel,

Old Gold, Chesterfield and Lucky Stripe – came swirling through my mind. “Lucky Strike,” I blurted. Whereupon he handed me a quarter and told me to get a package of Luckies from the corner drug store.

Because of my age, the clerk at the drugstore was reluctant to sell me cigarettes, but when I told him that my brother-in-law, John Bilzerian, who was a good, steady customer, had sent me to buy them, he relented.

I walked back to the apartment as slowly as I dared, all the while mulling what was in store. He himself was a cigar smoker; what the devil was he going to do with the cigarettes? I was soon to find out.

Back in the apartment, I handed him the package of Lucky Strikes. He opened the package, offered me a cigarette, lit it for me, and told me to go ahead and smoke. I did, drawing in a puff and quickly exhaling. Nothing to it, I said to myself. That comfortable routine went on for a minute or two when he told me to try inhaling and then exhaling through my nose. Nothing comfortable about that routine. I began choking and gasping for breath, my eyes watering. Somehow I finished that first cigarette, but then he offered me a second one.

As he did so, my sister screamed, “John, he's turning green,” then grabbed me by the arm and rushed me into the bathroom where I upchucked a pail full of bile. My worldly-wise brother-in-law had picked the perfect punishment to fit the crime.

Notes:

Kirkor, which was my boyhood Armenian name, is a version of Krikor (Gregory). How I finally ended up with George is a another tale in itself.

John Bilzerian was a prominent architect in Worcester, Mass. He designed two of the most beautiful Armenian churches in America: the Church of Our Saviour in Worcester and The Holy Trinity Church in Cambridge, Mass. He was also a distinguished Armenian writer under the penname, Zaven Baikar, and a dedicated member of the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party and the Armenian General Benevolent Union.

(George Juskalian is a resident of Centreville, Va.)



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Ten Major Concerns Regarding Armenia-Turkey Protocols

In earlier columns, I had described the major negative aspects of the already-initialed Armenia-Turkey Protocols made public on August 31.

The concerns I had expressed dealt with two unacceptable preconditions– recognizing the territorial integrity of Turkey and establishing a joint committee of experts to study historical archives, a not-so-veiled reference to re-examining the Armenian Genocide.

Below is a more comprehensive evaluation, providing 10 reasons why the Armenian government should not have initialed, and should not sign and ratify these Protocols:

1) Armenia's leaders made the misjudgment of trying to resolve a large number of emotionally-charged Armenian-Turkish issues all at once, through a single agreement. Decades of antagonism cannot be dealt with in such haste. Armenian officials should have proceeded cautiously and gradually, starting with the simple step of establishing diplomatic relations, followed by the opening of the border. More complicated issues should have been left for a later date.

2) Since the declared purpose of these negotiations is the opening of the border with Armenia – which Turkey shut down 16 years ago – there was no reason to conduct such protracted and complex negotiations, and draft an elaborate document that included many unrelated and unacceptable conditions. It may have been wiser to draft a one-sentence

agreement that would have simply stated: “Armenia and Turkey agree to establish diplomatic relations and declare their mutual border open on January 1, 2010.” In fact, such a one-line agreement was adopted by the United States and Turkey in 1927, when establishing diplomatic relations.

3) Armenia did not have to make any concessions in order to entice Turkey to open its border. Since Turkey has been desperately trying to join the European Union for several decades, it has no choice but to open its border with Armenia. The EU requires that all member states have open borders with neighboring countries.

4) By rushing to shut down the border in 1993, Turkey deprived itself of an important leverage over Armenia. Should Turkey reopen the border, it would once again possess that leverage, holding the threat of closing the border as a Damoclean Sword over Armenia's head. This threat becomes particularly potent, once Armenia's population is increasingly dependent on imported, cheap Turkish food-stuffs and goods.

Should Turkey decide to close the border in the future under some pretext, Armenia's leaders would not be able to reverse the damage done to the nation's interests, even if they abrogated the Protocols.

5) Prime Minister Erdogan said once again last week that Turkey would not open its border with Armenia, unless the Karabagh (Artsakh) conflict is resolved. Armenia's leaders should announce that they will not sign these Protocols, since Turkish officials have made it crystal clear that they have no intention of keeping their side of the bargain.

6) Retired Turkish Ambassador Yalim Eralp made an important disclosure during a recent interview. He stated that the Turkish Parliament, while ratifying the Protocols, could declare them to be valid only after the resolution of the Karabagh conflict. Should the Turks advance such a condition, the Armenian Parliament could retaliate by requiring that the Protocols go into effect only after Turkey acknowledges the Armenian Genocide and Azerbaijan recognizes the Republic of Artsakh.

7) The Protocols do not include any requirement that they be signed and ratified by a particular date. The oft-mentioned October 12 or 13 signature dates are not mentioned in the text of the Protocols. The Armenian government should not rush to sign and ratify these Protocols.

Armenia's leaders may yet be saved from damaging their country's interests by Turkey's reluctance to ratify the Protocols. Turkey may blink first.

8) Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian admitted last week that there is no legal requirement to submit these Protocols to Parliament for ratification. However, such ratification would unnecessarily compound the damage done to Armenia's national interests.

9) The Armenian government made no attempt during the lengthy negotiations with Turkey to consult with Diaspora Armenians, despite the fact that the Protocols addressed vital pan-Armenian issues. Months ago, when organizations and individuals expressed serious concerns regarding the preliminary text of the Protocols, they were simply ignored by the Armenian authorities. Attempts to hold discussions at the eleventh hour are futile, since the Armenian foreign minister has declared that the Protocols cannot be amended.

10) When the Armenian president met with leaders of more than 50 political parties in Yerevan last week, the five-hour-long “consultations” were held behind closed doors. Regrettably, only the president's remarks were publicized. One would hope that when Sargisian goes on his planned trip in early October to Paris, New York, Los Angeles, Moscow and Beirut, his discussions with diaspora leaders would be more open and transparent, and preferably televised.

The one unintended outcome of this heated controversy is the coming together of diverse Armenian organizations to take a common stand against these Protocols. It is everyone's earnest hope that the intense intra-Armenian discord would not last long and Armenia's leaders would find the courage and wisdom to stand down from their decision to sign and ratify these Protocols detrimental to the Armenian Cause.



Haigazian Hosts International Conference: the Armenian Genocide And International Law Concludes its Sessions

BEIRUT – The two-day international conference titled “the Armenian Genocide and International Law” organized by Haigazian University and the Armenian National Committee-Middle East, concluded its sessions on Friday, September 4.

This conference, got underway on Wednesday, September 2, with the inaugural speech of the President of the House of Representatives of Cyprus Marios Garoyan, who stated that his presence as the guest speaker of the conference is driven by his country’s “commitment to international law, peace, security and stability, but also the determination to continue to condemn, on every possible occasion, any infringement of international law by acts of Genocide.”

During the next two days of the conference, a dozen experts in the field of genocide and international law, coming from the US, Canada, Switzerland, Ireland, Armenia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Lebanon joined the 80 members of the local Lebanese political scientists, activists, sociologists, historians, religious leaders, educators, intellectuals, international correspondents, journalists and students, in establishing a solid step in the direction of addressing the consequences of the Armenian Genocide and promoting a fair perspective through international law.

The conference covered such topics as Genocide denial and recognition issues, Turkish nationalism and the politics of denial, as well as the economic aspect of the Genocide and the issues of lands and assets. Within the framework of international law, the conference discussed the general topics of genocide and crime

against humanity, retribution, and preservation of the Armenian cultural heritage.

Dr. George Charaf from the Lebanese University, lectured on “The Problem of Minorities and Majorities, discussing the case of the Ottoman Empire;” Dr. Ugur Ungor, from the University of Sheffield, talked about demographic engineering in the Ottoman Empire and the Armenian Genocide; Dr. Mohammad Rifaat, from the University of Alexandria, discussed the Armenian Question according to Arab sources; Dr. William Schabas, from the National University of Ireland, discussed the problems and prospects of the Genocide and International Law, 60 years after the Convention; Dr. Alfred De Zayas, from the Geneva School of Diplomacy and International Relations, elaborated on the issues of justice and international law regarding the Armenian Genocide; Khatchig Mouradian, a PhD candidate in Genocide Studies at Clark University, lectured on the Armenians, Raphael Lemkin and the UN Convention. Dr. Taner Akcam’s paper on Turkish Nationalism and the Armenian Genocide Issue in Turkey today was read in absentia.

In addition, Dr. Ragip Zarakolu, vice president of Human Rights Association of Turkey, tackled the issue of Genocide Denialism and Law in Turkey. In the same context, Dr. Seyhan Bayraktar, from the University of Zurich, covered the evolution of the Armenian Genocide denial in the Turkish Press.

A PhD candidate, at John Hopkins University, Bilgin Ayata talked about the Kurdish – Armenian relations and the Armenian Genocide.

Dr. Roger Smith, a professor Emeritus of government at the College of William and Mary in Virginia, lectured on Professional Ethics and the Denial of the Armenian Genocide; Dr. Henry Theriault, from the Worcester State College in Massachusetts, talked about restorative justice and alleviating the consequences of genocide and finally, Dr. Richard Hovannisian, from UCLA, covered the issue of universalizing the legacy of the Armenian Genocide.

The discussants and moderators of the ses-



From left, Dr. Henry Theriault, Dr. Roger Smith, Dr. William Schabas and Dr. Alfred De Zayas

sions, were Dr. Arda Ekmekji, Dr. Naila Kaidbey, Giro Manoyan, Dr. Rania Masri, Dr. Joseph Bayeh, Dr. Ohannes Geukjian, Antranig Dakesian and Dr. Haig Demoyan.

Haigazian University President Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian said that such conferences will always keep the Genocide issue alive, giving an

increasingly growing international momentum to it. Moreover, Haidostian said that “the Genocide topic and this conference in particular, will hopefully open the door to further academic studies and research, activating deeper study in the economic, social and legal aspects of inter-state relations.”

Ara Babloyan Elected To WHO Executive Committee

COPENAGEN (Armenpress) – A session of the European regional committee of the World Health Organization (WHO) took place September 15 here, resulting in the election of representatives of Armenia and Norway to the organization’s highest executive committee.

Ara Babloyan , chair of the Armenian Permanent Commission for Health, Maternity and Children’s Affairs, will serve in the position.

Jerusalem Odyssey: A Native Returns to The City after a Long Absence

JESUSALEM, from page 19

It is a question that haunts not only Natsheh and Abu Sway, or the other Arabs, Jews or Christians I meet. It is a question that haunts the conscience of the whole world, I am told by a Hebrew University lecturer.

The Jerusalem academic world is in fact in the foreground of efforts to bridge the deep Arab-Israeli divide, on both a personal and intellectual level. The virtual online library (<http://www.jerusalem-library.org>) created by the Hebrew and Al Quds Universities is a living testament to the determination of men of goodwill to contribute and share, and to acknowledge the fact that they are destined to live together in this land.

Some of the leading Palestinian intellectuals I encountered (among them Sari Nuseibeh, President of Al-Quds University, anthropologist Ali Qleibo, historian Mohamad Al Alami and librarian Haifa Al Khalidi), were actually recommended to me, and highly spoken of, by Israelis.

One Palestinian scholar, who wishes to remain anonymous, tells me peace between Arabs and Israelis can only be achieved when Israel has attained acceptance among the Arabs.

“It’s the best security they’ll ever have,” he insists. “Peace is certainly possible between

our two people,” an Israeli thinker adds. “But it will require difficult compromises from both sides.”

For Haifa Al Khalidi, a former teacher at St George’s Boys school, peace cannot come too soon. The library she has inherited at the 13th C Mameluke building at Bab Al Silsilah (the Gate of the Chain), houses some of the Islamic world’s most precious manuscripts, including several Ottoman “firman”s (decrees). The oldest dates back 1000 years.

The Al Khalidis began collecting the works in earnest some three centuries ago, but the present library was set up only in 1900.

Haifa shows me some of her precious charges, and I can only gaze in wonder at the inimitable Arabic calligraphy, and in horror at the network of tiny tunnels dug over the years by the larva of book worm beetles in some of the pages.

The forlorn expression on Haifa’s face betrays the pain and frustration she feels at this sacrilege, but the underlying steel in her eyes is ample evidence that the bug stops here.

(Arthur Hagopian, former press officer of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem currently residing in Australia, spent two weeks in the Old City recently, after a 15-year absence. This is the fifth installment of his report on his sojourn there.)

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