

Komitas Works Designated Part of UNESCO Memory Of the World Register

YEREVAN (news.am) — By a unanimous decision of the United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Executive Board on January 29, the works of the great Armenian cleric, musicologist, composer, arranger, singer, and choirmaster Komitas (Soghomon Soghomonian) will be included in the Memory of the World Register of UNESCO, Nikolay Kostandyan, director of the Komitas Museum-Institute in Yerevan, announced on the same day.

Vahan Kostanyan, the deputy foreign minister, noted that in 2019, the 150th birth anniversary of Komitas, was put on UNESCO's list of the organization's list of historic events and anniversaries.



Komitas Vartabed

“Documentary samples of exceptional value are registered in UNESCO's Memory of the World international register. The goal of this program is to prevent the loss of archives, libraries and valuable collections existing in the world, and to contribute to their effective preservation and dissemination,” added Kostanyan.

On January 29, RA Deputy Foreign Minister Vahan Kostanyan participated and spoke at the press conference on the occasion of the registration of Komitas Vardapet's collection of works in the International Memory of the World Register by the unanimous decision of the UNESCO Executive Board—Minister of Culture and Sports Zhanna Andreasyan, Director of Komitas Museum-Institute Nikolay Kostandyan, and others. RA Deputy Foreign Minister Vahan Kostanyan, in his speech in particular, noted.

Kostandyan said the registration of Komitas' works in the International Register of Memory of the World has been the result of years of joint work between the museum institute, the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, and Sports, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

He also credited Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan who participated in the 42nd session of the UNESCO General Conference, during which time he also raised the issue of UNESCO sending a fact-finding mission to Nagorno Karabakh. In addition, the organization was asked to address the educational needs of forcibly displaced children from Karabakh.

In addition to Komitas' news, the centennials of both Charles Aznavour and Sergey Paradjanov were already included in the 2024–2025 calendar of anniversaries of famous people and events.

Facing Expulsion, Azerbaijan Quits European Parliamentary Body

The Parliament Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) refused to ratify the credentials of the Azerbaijani delegation this year, citing the country's poor human rights and democracy record.

Anticipating the result of the vote, Azerbaijan's delegation itself withdrew from PACE a few hours earlier, citing what it called “racism, Azerbaijanophobia, and Islamophobia.”

In its January 24 session, PACE resolved not to ratify the credentials of Azerbaijan's parliamentary delegation by a vote of 76 to 10, with four abstentions. The body concluded that the country has “not fulfilled major commitments” stemming from its joining the Council of Europe in 2001.

Each year the parliaments of PACE member countries present the credentials of their delegations, and the assembly votes on their ratification.

“Very serious concerns remain as to [Azerbaijan's] ability to conduct free and fair elections, the separation of powers, the weakness of its legislature vis-à-vis the executive, the independence of the judiciary and respect for human rights, as illustrated by numerous judgments of the European Court of Human Rights and opinions of the Venice Commission,” the Assembly said in a resolution.

The Assembly also touched on the humanitarian crisis last year in the then-Armenian-populated Nagorno-Karabakh region, which started with Azerbaijan's

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State TV and other pro-government media criticized PACE ahead of the vote

PACE Politicians on Baku's Payroll

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

It is not the first time that the Azerbaijan government has been caught bribing politicians in Europe, and it may or may not be the last. As reported on January 29 by the German Press Agency (DPA) and picked up by national media outlets, the Munich District Attorney's office announced that members of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) have been under investigation for four years, suspected of having accepted bribes from the Azerbaijan regime. And now they will be charged.

(The money was apparently not well spent, as Azerbaijan has in essence been kicked off PACE. See related story on this page.)

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New Cádiz Armenian Studies Center in the Works

By Alin K. Gregorian
Mirror-Spectator Staff

CÁDIZ, Spain — Anahit Margaryan, a doctoral student at the University of Cádiz, is currently in the final stages of establishing the Hispano-Armenian Center at her university, which has a counterpart in Armenia.

In a recent interview, she said that in September 2023, the Yerevan segment of the Hispano-Armenian Center was inaugurated at Yerevan State University. The center will be a “collaborative effort involving University of Cádiz officials and the International University Center for Eastern Europe and Central Asia [CUNEAC] Center of the University of Cádiz,” she added.

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Anahit Margaryan



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ARMENIA

NEWS from ARMENIA

Catholicos Karekin II Meets with Archbishop of Canterbury

LONDON (Panorama.am) — Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, met with Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, the leader of the Church of England, during his visit to the UK on Saturday, January 27, the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin reported.

“The meeting addressed issues facing the forcibly displaced Artsakh Armenians, the return of prisoners, the preservation of Armenian religious and cultural heritage in Artsakh, as well as the regional situation,” the Armenian Church said in a statement on Tuesday, January 30.

Parliament Speaker Calls For New National Anthem

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — Speaker of Armenia’s National Assembly Alen Simonyan on January 30 suggested on social media that the national anthem should be replaced with another one. He also called for changing the country’s coat of arms.

“It’s obvious to me that sooner or later the anthem of the Republic of Armenia should be changed. It should be Armenian, have a connection with the Armenian state and music and comply with the rules of an anthem,” he posted on Telegram on January 30.

“I am not saying that it should be replaced by the music of great composer Aram Khachaturian, which, in my opinion, is magnificent, exceptional and purely Armenian, but, obviously, changing the existing anthem of foreign origin is a must,” Simonyan added.

The speaker said the the coat of arms should be changed also.

“At the very least, Armenia cannot be under water, which was a punishment to mankind, the lion cannot look like a Facebook emoji and the sword defending Armenia cannot be chained,” he stated.

Defense Minister Praises ‘Tangible Results’ after Arms Acquisitions

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Armenian Minister of Defense Suren Papikyan has praised the “tangible results” in arms acquisitions last year.

“Experience showed that without modern armaments it’s impossible to have a strong and combat-ready army, no matter how high the spirit of troops to serve their country selflessly,” Papikyan said at the January 28 Army Day celebration.

He said that the efforts to re-equip the Armenian Armed Forces on a proper level befitting leading militaries of the 21st century have “given tangible results.”

“We’ve been able to enhance military-technical cooperation by finding new partners and making tangible steps in the direction of armament diversification. This is one more step strengthening the diversification of our security architecture, which will help us develop a stronger and more reliable security environment around Armenia,” Papikyan said.

Pashinyan Proposes Non-Aggression Pact With Azerbaijan

By Shoghik Galstian & Ruzanna Stepanian

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — Armenia is ready to sign a non-aggression pact with Azerbaijan and give other “guarantees” to Baku, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said on Sunday, January 28.

“We are ready to give such long-term and irreversible guarantees but expect the same guarantees from others,” he reiterated

the proposals on Monday.

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev demanded safeguards against Armenian “revanchism” in December, saying that an Armenian-Azerbaijani peace treaty would not be enough to preclude another war between the two countries. Pashinyan expressed on January 20 readiness to meet this demand if Azerbaijan recognizes Armenia’s territorial integrity through that treaty “without any

surging Armenia’s external security,” Pashinyan said on Sunday.

The premier signaled on January 18 plans to try to enact a new Armenian constitution for that purpose, prompting scorn from opposition groups.

Commenting on Pashinyan’s latest statement, the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry claimed that the current Armenian constitution contains “encroachments on the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Azerbaijan.” Instead of taking concrete steps to eliminate them, the Armenian government is voicing “proposals that make no practical sense,” a ministry spokesman said, adding that Yerevan is not serious about normalizing Armenian-Azerbaijani relations.

Azerbaijan remains reluctant to formally recognize Armenia’s current borders. In early January, Aliyev renewed his demands for Armenia to open an extraterritorial corridor to Azerbaijan’s Nakhichevan exclave. He also demanded Armenian withdrawal from “eight Azerbaijani villages” and again dismissed Yerevan’s insistence on using the most recent Soviet maps to delimit the Armenian-Azerbaijani border.

Pashinyan rejected those demands, saying that they amount to territorial claims to Armenia. His foreign minister, Ararat Mirzoyan again spoke last week of “significant regression” in Baku’s position on the peace deal with Yerevan. Armenian opposition leaders insisted, for their part, that Pashinyan cannot prevent another Azerbaijani attack on Armenia with what they see as additional concessions offered to Aliyev.

Lilit Galstyan, a parliament deputy from the main opposition Hayastan alliance, said on Monday that the latest Armenian proposals to Baku revealed by Pashinyan are further proof of the failure of his declared “peace agenda.”

“Nikol Pashinyan ... constantly throws out thoughts, new ideas which once again subject our society to further stress,” she told RFE/RL’s Armenian Service. “Not only has the peace process failed, but we keep hearing aggressive rhetoric by Azerbaijan.”

Pashinyan’s government is engaged in “inadequate behavior” in the face of Azerbaijani war preparations, she said.



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan speaks during an Army Day celebration in Yerevan, January 28, 2024.

during an official event to mark the 32nd anniversary of the official establishment of Armenia’s armed forces.

In that context, Pashinyan pointed to a mutual withdrawal of Armenian and Azerbaijani troops from the border between the two countries which has been proposed by Yerevan and categorically rejected by Baku.

“We have also proposed to Armenia a demilitarization of the border and also a mutual mechanism for arms control and also the signing of a nonaggression agreement if it turns out that the signing of a peace treaty takes longer than expected,” he said.

The Azerbaijani government dismissed

reservations.”

Pashinyan tried hard to negotiate the peace treaty after explicitly recognizing Azerbaijani sovereignty over Nagorno-Karabakh about a year ago. He kept pressing for such an agreement even after Azerbaijan recaptured Karabakh and forced its entire population to flee to Armenia last September.

“The Republic of Armenia should identify itself with the territory on which it was recognized by the international community... We must state clearly and unequivocally that we do not and will not have any claims to any other territory, and this should become the strategic basis for en-

Young Armenian Wrestlers Win Six Gold Medals In Moldova

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — Young Armenian wrestlers have earned six gold and two bronze medals at a freestyle wrestling Tudor Jubîrcu Tournament in Moldova on January 30.

Hayko Gasparyan (57 kg), Tigran Buniatyan (61 kg), Andranik Avetisyan (65 kg), Narek Nikoghosyan (74 kg), Razmik Yepremyan (86 kg) and Henrik Haykyan (125 kg) clinched gold after showing brilliant performances, the Wrestling Federation of Armenia reported on Monday.

Arman Musikyan (65 kg) and Narek Grigoryan (79 kg) won bronze medals in their respective wrestling categories.



Armenia’s Amberd Among Most Endangered Sites in Europe Shortlisted for 2024

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — Armenia’s Amberd Historical and Cultural Reserve has been shortlisted for this year’s edition of the 7 Most Endangered Program announced on January 29 by Europa Nostra, the European Voice of Civil Society Committed to Cultural and Natural Heritage, and the European Investment Bank (EIB) Institute.

In addition to Amberd, the other sites are: Archaeological Site of Muret e Portës, Durrës, Albania; Palais du Midi, Brussels, Belgium; Working-class Housing (courées) in Roubaix-Tourcoing, France; Cycladic Islands, notably Sifnos, Serifos and Folegandros, Greece; Church of San Pietro in Gessate, Milan, Italy; Synagogue of Siena, Italy; Palace in Sztynort, northern Masuria, Poland; Home of the Yugoslav People’s Army in Šabac, Serbia; Greek Orthodox Church of St. Georgios, Altınözü / Hatay province, Turkey and Iron Gate



Amberd in Armenia



of Antioch, Antakya / Hatay province, also in Turkey. The Executive President of Europa Nostra, Prof. Dr. Hermann Parzinger, stated: “The selected heritage sites are threatened by demolition, unsuitable development, the devastating impact of natural disasters, neglect or lack of funding. By publishing this shortlist, we wish to convey a strong message of solidarity and support to the activists and local communities who are deeply

ly committed to saving these sites. Europe’s heritage must be preserved not only as a testimony of our shared past, but also as a catalyst for a sustainable, cohesive and peaceful future.” The Dean of the European Investment Bank Institute, Shiva Dustdar, added: “Cultural heritage is a key resource for European identity, attractiveness and economic growth. This shortlist reminds us how fragile it is and how much we take it for granted. Together with our long-time partner Europa Nostra, the Institute amplifies the efforts of local communities throughout Europe who know that saving cultural heritage sites will help them tackle other pressing challenges. We hope to see the sites restored and preserved for generations to come.”

The sites were shortlisted by an international Advisory Panel, comprising experts in history, archaeology, architecture, conservation, project analysis and finance. Nominations for the 7 Most Endangered Program 2024 were put forward by member organizations, associate organizations or individual members of Europa Nostra, as well as by members of the European Heritage Alliance. The selection was made on the basis of the outstanding heritage significance and cultural value of each of the sites, as well as the serious danger that they are facing today. The level of engagement of local communities and the commitment of public and private stakeholders to saving these sites were considered crucial added values. Another selection criterion was the potential of these sites to act as a catalyst for sustainable socio-economic development. The final list of 7 Most Endangered Heritage Sites in Europe for 2024 will be unveiled in April.

Armenia Presents Crossroads of Peace Project at Global Gateway

BRUSSELS (Armenpress) — Armenia presented its Crossroads of Peace project at the Global Gateway Investors Forum in Brussels on January 30. The project was presented by Deputy Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructures Armen Simonyan at the forum’s “South Caucasus and Türkiye: the strong connectivity link between Central Asia and Europe” panel discussion. Simonyan highlighted that the main principle of Crossroads of Peace is that all infrastructures will function under the sovereignty and jurisdiction of the countries through which they pass. “The latest geopolitical developments proved that the diversification of transport routes is a vital necessity for the continuity of supplying goods to regional markets,” the Armenian official said. He added that Armenia estimates the project to ensure 4,7 million tons of cargo and 300,000 passenger transportation through regional countries during the first year of operation of Crossroads of Peace. By 2050 the volume of goods transported through regional countries by Armenian railway infrastructures will reach 10 million tons. Simonyan then held meetings with his



Deputy Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructures Armen Simonyan speaking

counterparts from various countries. The Investors Forum takes forward the conclusions of the EU-commissioned Study on Sustainable Transport Corridors between the EU and Central Asia, and aims to translate the political commitments of the EU and the five countries in Central Asia to enhance and reinforce connectivity into tangible operational deliverables. The Forum contributes to the long-term objective of making the Trans-Caspian Transport Corridor a multimodal, modern, competitive, sustainable, predictable, smart and fast route linking Europe and Central Asia in 15 days or less. For this, the Forum aims to: send a strong and concrete signal to the five Central Asian countries of the EU’s political and operational commitment to strengthen connectivity with the region

through the Global Gateway initiative kick-start the process for implementing and coordinating investments along the Trans-Caspian Transport Corridor by following up on specific actions identified in the Study, notably by mobilizing investors on projects, with concrete and realistic timelines and financial commitments commit key stakeholders for continued participation in the Forum as the main platform for implementing the projects identified in the Study The event brings together high-level representatives from Central Asian countries, EU Member States, partner countries along the Trans-Caspian Transport Corridor, EU Institutions, international and bilateral financial institutions, as well as representatives of the private sector and members of civil society. The Crossroads of Peace project is designed to establish connections between the Persian Gulf, the Gulf of Oman, the Black Sea, the Caspian Sea and the Mediterranean Sea via a consolidated, regional railway network and via the North-South and East-West roads. The Crossroads of Peace project is about creating new infrastructures or improving the scope and quality of the existing ones.

INTERNATIONAL

INTERNATIONAL

Azerbaijan Postpones Dutch Minister's Visit

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Azerbaijan announced on January 29 that it has postponed the planned visit of Dutch Foreign Minister Hanke Bruins Slot, the official Azerbaijani APA news agency reported, citing the press secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, Aykhan Hajizade.

“As for the intention of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands to visit Azerbaijan, this visit was postponed by our country,” Hajizade said.

The Azerbaijani side has reportedly informed the Dutch side that it does not intend to discuss normalization of relations with Armenia or internal issues of Azerbaijan.

Court Denies Vardanyan Pretrial Detention Appeal

YEREVAN (news.am) — The appellate court of Baku on January 29 denied an appeal which had been submitted in relation to the decision by a court of first instance to extend the period of pretrial detention of Ruben Vardanyan, former Minister of State of Nagorno-Karabakh, Azerbaijani media reported.

Earlier, a court of first instance in Baku extended the term of Vardanyan's pretrial detention by four months, but his attorney appealed that decision.

The appeal was examined at the Baku Court of Appeal, but it was denied, and decision of the court of first instance remained.

Scottish MP Proposes Motion in Support of Jerusalem Quarter

LONDON (Public Radio of Armenia) — Chris Law, Scottish National Party MP for Dundee West, presented an Early Day Motion (EDM) in the UK Parliament on January 26 regarding the situation in the Cows' Garden in the Armenian Quarter of Jerusalem.

The motion reads:

That this House is deeply alarmed by the attempted take-over of the Cows' Garden in the Armenian Quarter of Jerusalem by illegal Israeli settler organizations; notes that, despite the cancellation of a lease agreement, Israeli settlers have used violence, threats and bulldozers against the Armenians at this site; recognizes that settlements in the Old City of Jerusalem are a method of permanent land acquisition and theft of territory, and needs the same robust international response as elsewhere in occupied Palestinian territory; acknowledges the severe and critical threat to the Armenian community of Jerusalem, which has had a presence in the Old City for almost two millennia; further recognizes that the destruction within the Cows' Garden in the Armenian Quarter wounds the local fabric and relations between communities; highlights the particular vulnerability of the small yet vibrant Armenian community of Jerusalem; and calls on the Government to take effective measures in response including supporting all legal and accountability mechanisms to resolve this crisis.

Top Aide to Iran's Khamenei Visits Armenia

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan praised Iran for supporting Armenia's position on transport links with Azerbaijan when he met with a senior adviser to Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in Yerevan on Monday, January 29.

The official, Kamal Kharrazi, also heads Iran's Strategic Council for Foreign Relations, reportedly linked to Khamenei's office. He served as Iranian foreign minister from 1997-2005.

The Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict was high on the agenda of Kharrazi's separate talks with Pashinyan and Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan.

“Minister Mirzoyan presented Armenia's approaches in detail, emphasizing the imperative of unconditional respect for Armenia's territorial integrity, inviolability of borders and sovereignty,” said the Armenian Foreign Ministry.

Both Pashinyan and Mirzoyan were reported to stress the importance of Tehran's “positive” reaction to Yerevan's “Crossroads of Peace” project which they see as a blueprint for opening the Armenian-Azer-

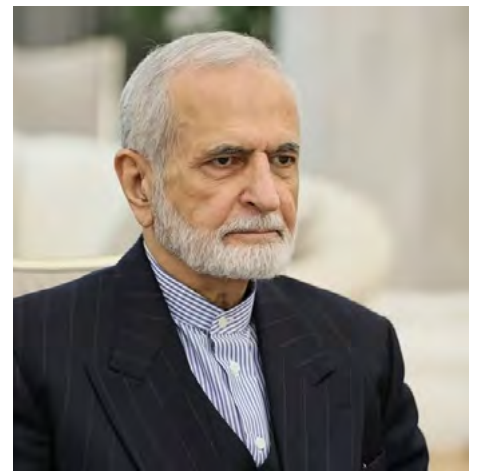
baijani border to travel and commerce.

The project says that Armenia and Azerbaijan should have full control of transport infrastructure inside each other's territory. Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian praised it during a December visit to Yerevan.

Azerbaijan afterwards renewed its demands for an extraterritorial corridor that would connect it to its Nakhichevan exclave through Syunik, the only Armenian region bordering Iran. Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev said people and cargo should be allowed to move through that corridor “without any checks.” Yerevan continues to reject those demands.

Iran has repeatedly warned against attempts to strip it of the common border and transport links with Armenia. Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi reportedly told a visiting Azerbaijani official in October 2023 that the corridor sought by Baku is “resolutely opposed by Iran.” Khamenei likewise made this clear to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan when they met in Tehran in 2022.

Armenia's position on the issue has



Kamal Kharrazi

been criticized by not only Azerbaijan and Turkey but also Russia, its long-time ally. Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov complained on January 18 that Yerevan opposes Russian control of a Syunik road and railway leading to Nakhichevan. Lavrov claimed that a Russian-brokered agreement that stopped the 2020 war in Karabakh calls for “neutral border and customs control” there. Armenian leaders deny this.

New Cádiz Armenian Studies Center in the Works

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The center in Cádiz will receive support from the Armenian government and the Armenian Embassy in Spain. In addition, she explained, the center will “engage in various activities, ranging from research on Armenian studies across all available research areas at the University of Cádiz to cultural and language events, courses, conferences, and student and university staff exchanges. It is noteworthy that the Hispano-Armenian Center is unique as the first-ever Hispano-Armenian Center in Spain.”

Margaryan, who hails from Armenia, studied at the Faculty of European Languages and Communication at Yerevan State University.

She recently returned to Spain from a visit to the US, where she had conducted research at the University of Michigan and Harvard.

One unusual aspect of Margaryan's academic field is that she is getting her PhD in linguistics rather than history.

She explained, “My academic journey began with a deep interest in the Spanish language and literature, leading me to fluent proficiency. However, my equally strong passion for Armenian history and political studies guided my doctoral dissertation, titled ‘The Discourse of Conflict in the Spanish Sources on the Armenian Cause and its Translations.’ This dissertation explores the linguistic aspects of historical events, specifically the Armenian Genocide and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The research is being done within the framework of the Applied Linguistics doctoral program at the University of Cádiz under the supervision of Professor Miguel Casas Gómez and Professor Pamela Faber of the University of Granada, who are distinguished scientists in Europe. Miguel Casas is the director of the Institute of Applied Linguistics at the University of Cádiz, which is considered an exclusive research center in Europe. Pamela Faber has held the Chair of Translation and Interpreting at the Department of Translation and Interpreting of the University of Granada since 2001.”

As for how history and linguistics work together, she noted, “Science nowadays tends to include interdisciplinary approaches. When we talk about Linguistics, people may imagine an analysis of letters or grammatical features of some language. In other

words, analyze language features in a closed circle. However, the modern approaches may include a wide range of studies including not only history, political studies, and sociology, but can even include clinical or genetic studies depending on the purpose of the investigation.”

She continued, “Linguistics and Armenian history, for my research, are intertwined. I try to address the linguistic phenomena concerning the language of the conflict in the Hispanic sources on the Armenian Cause (including both the Armenian Genocide and Nagorno Karabakh conflict), the lexicon developed in the conflict, the discursive strategies, and mechanisms, also to mark the extralinguistic factors that affect both the original works and their translations into other languages at the lexical level and beyond the linguistic limits themselves. As you can see, neither History nor Political Sciences can be excluded from this Linguistic research. Moreover, they are needed.”

The initiative, Margaryan said, has received support from political and academic spheres in Spain. “The vice-rector for internationalization of the University of Cádiz, Rafael Jimenez Castañeda, the head of the Linguistic Policy Department Javier de Cos, and the head of the University Center for Cooperation with Eastern Europe and Central Asia Andres Santana were the ones to visit Yerevan State University to inaugurate the Yerevan headquarter of the Center few months ago,” she explained.

The scope of the center will include modern Armenian history too, she explained. “It's essential to acknowledge that universities generally follow ethical guidelines when addressing sensitive topics. We aim to cover diverse topics of Armenian interest that are relevant to the Spanish academic and civil society, however, all are approached from academic and scientific perspectives. The vision of the Center is to become a strong university center with big international academic involvement.”

Margaryan is a fan of Spain and the Spanish language. That love goes back to age 15, when she overheard a friend speaking Spanish with her mother to keep their conversation private from Armenian friends. “The idea of this seemingly secret communication fascinated me, and I became determined to learn this not-so-common language. It's amusing because Spanish, as

the world's second-most-spoken language, was not very common in Armenia at that time. Ironically, now, living outside Armenia, Armenian serves as a secret language since only a select few can speak it. This curiosity about secret communication led me to choose Spanish as my career language. My academic journey brought me to Spain for my master's studies. And once you are there, it's very hard not to admire the vibrant and abundant Spanish culture.”

While pursuing her doctorate, she has released a book titled *G. Guarach: Interview for the History*, a Spanish-Armenian publication released by Yerevan State University in 2022. “It is dedicated to the great philanthropist, Spanish novelist Gonzalo Hernandez Guarach, with a focus on his ‘Armenian Trilogy,’ contributing to the understanding of Armenian-Turkish relations,” she explained. The book was presented at the University of Cádiz and the Frankfurt International Book Fair.

As for Karabakh and its tragic fate, she said, “I find it extremely frustrating that events of such magnitude can happen in the modern world and be largely ignored. The tragedy that our people experienced is not a fashionable topic to discuss at the governmental level of different countries. In contrast, conflicts like the Ukrainian-Russian and Palestinian-Israeli disputes are considered top priorities on all social media platforms.”

She added, “This distinction between ‘fashionable’ and ‘non-fashionable’ conflicts is disheartening, as it deviates from basic humanity and underscores the influence of governments in shaping the narrative around certain issues, turning them into trends. The impact of Artsakh reality on me is a renewed commitment to build a strong, independent country that doesn't rely on external support or consideration. We strive to be the best we can be, even if achieving that goal takes decades, steadfastly working towards this. If not this, what else can we do?”

While she is just at the beginning of her career, looking ahead, she said, “My ultimate career goal is to have my contribution to building strong scientific ties between Spanish and Armenian academic institutions and bring Armenian science to a strong international involvement by strengthening the Hispano-Armenian Center and bringing more interdisciplinary and contemporary scientific topics to the forefront.”



INTERNATIONAL

Archbishop Barsamian Receives Medal from Vatican

ROME — On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue, between the Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches, an important pan-Christian event took place on Tuesday, January 23 in the university hall “Angelicum,” at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas in Rome.

During the academic event, Cardinal Kurt Koch, Prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity, Bishop Kyrillos [Abdelsayed], Auxiliary Bishop of the Coptic Orthodox Church, Cardinal Walter Kasper, President Emeritus of the Pontifical Council for the promotion of Christian Unity, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Representative of the Armenian Church to the Holy See, and Fr. Frans Bouwen, former editor of the journal *Proche-Orient Chrétien*, made presentations on the successful journey of twenty years of dialogue.

At the conclusion of the academic event, Cardinal Koch, on behalf of Pope Francis, presented the Benemerenti Medal of Honor to Archbishop Barsamian for his many years of committed work on behalf of Christian unity and specifically for his efforts toward deepening the relationship between the Armenian and the Catholic Churches.

Archbishop Barsamian is also the Pontifical Legate of the Armenian Church in Western Europe. He is widely known for his work in the fields of education and pastoral duty, and for his contributions to various educational and scholarly journals. He is the recipient of honorary doctorates from the General Theological Seminary, Seton Hall University, and the Academy of Sciences of Armenia.



Archbishop Khajag Barsamian receives the medal from Cardinal Kurt Koch



Participants in the academic event at the Pontifical University



The medal and accompanying certificate

Azerbaijan Quits European Parliamentary Body

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blockade of the region, culminated with its military offensive in September, and ended with the mass exodus of Armenians.

“Azerbaijan’s leadership ‘did not acknowledge the very serious humanitarian and human rights consequences’ stemming from the lack of free and safe access through the Lachin Corridor, and [the Assembly recalled] its condemnation of the September 2023 military operation ‘which led to the flight of the entire Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia and to allegations of ‘ethnic cleansing,’” the statement read, citing the resolution.

The resolution also accused Azerbaijan of refusing to cooperate with PACE, noting that the organization’s monitoring rapporteurs were not allowed to meet political prisoners and not invited to observe the snap presidential election scheduled for next month.

The statement added that the decision only concerns Azerbaijan’s parliamentary delegation and that the country remains a member of the Council of Europe.

The Azerbaijani delegation’s credentials were challenged on January 22 at the opening of the PACE session by German MP Frank Schwabe, who was supported by thirty members of the Assembly. A day later, PACE’s Monitoring Committee issued a report recommending that the credentials not be approved.

Azerbaijan’s pro-government media machine then went into action, publishing a series of articles attacking the Council of Europe.

“For Azerbaijan, PACE is of no importance, to say nothing of the silencing of its voice there. Our country has secured its territorial integrity and has become one of the main partner states in supplying Europe with energy. Most importantly, it has always been known for its balanced policy,” the prominent news agency Report.az wrote in an editorial.

The Azerbaijani delegation’s statement announcing its intent to leave the organiza-

tion for “an indefinite time period” reflected the same talking points.

Reading the statement to reporters in Strasbourg, head of the delegation Samad Seyidov claimed that the initiative to eject the Azerbaijani delegation was “part of the prejudiced campaign carried out” against Azerbaijan by PACE.

PACE German Politicians on Baku’s Payroll

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Among them are two former members of the German Bundestag (Parliament), Eduard Lintner from the Christian Social Union (CSU) and Axel Fischer of the sister party Christian Democratic Union (CDU). The former was a long-term member of the



(left to right) Karin Strenz, Eduard Lintner, and Axel Fischer

German legislative body until 2009 and a member of PACE since 1999; Fischer served in the Bundestag until 2021 and was leader of the German delegation in PACE from 2014 to 2017. Another German politician named is the late Karin Strenz, a former CDU Bundestag member, who died in 2021. Her Baku connection had been revealed earlier, and covered the national press as well as the Armenian-German Correspondence (ADK), the publication of the German-Armenian Society (DAG).

Now that the District Attorney in Munich has apparently enough material to reinforce its suspicions of bribery, the legal process should continue. Now it is up to the Munich Court of appeals to consider the charges and decide if it goes to court proceedings.

As reported on national television ZDF

“After the historic victory of Azerbaijan and the restoration of territorial integrity, we are facing a smear campaign organized to tarnish Azerbaijan and cast a shadow on the country’s achievements towards restoring the justice that had been denied to the people of Azerbaijan,” Seyidov said. “Some biased groups are abusing the basic

principles of PACE for their narrow interests. Political corruption, discrimination, ethnic and religious hatred, double standards, arrogance, and chauvinism have become a prevailing practice in PACE.”

(This story originally ran in www.eurasianet.org on January 25.)

and other media, Strenz had received funds from Baku via Lintner. Back in 2017, Lintner’s name had emerged in investigations conducted by the daily *Süddeutsche Zeitung* as well as the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP), and he had acknowledged his role as a paid lobbyist. Reportedly two of his firms had contracts with a state-owned Azerbaijani entity, which delivered monthly payments, amounting in the end to millions of Euros. Apparently Lintner kept some of the money which was channeled through shell companies abroad, and forwarded some to Strenz. Lintner’s companies were supposedly being paid for certain services; instead, it was political favors that were purchased.

PACE, the body the individuals were hired to influence is presented as the “democratic conscience of Europe” on its website. With representatives of its 46 member countries, it is mandated to protect human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. Armenia is a member of the Council of Europe, and therefore is bound to respect its rulings. Azerbaijan was a member until last week.

According to press accounts, Council members are accused of having accepted bribes to represent Baku’s political interests, and to cast votes accordingly. In the current case, Fischer is said to have done so in January 2016 in a vote relative to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, and to have received over 20,000 Euro that year for services rendered. The District Attorney is apparently planning to seize the funds. The

report asserts that Fischer was supposed to “deliver speeches favorable to Azerbaijan” in the sessions and “make available reserved documents.”

Even the widower of Strenz may have to return funds, although the proceedings against her had been dropped after her death. Her “earnings” were reportedly almost 150,000 Euro, between 2014 and 2017.

Scandalous as it sounds, to date none of the perpetrators had been punished. Gerald Knaus, the founding director of a think-tank called European Stability Initiative, went so far as to call it “the perfect crime.” Though pleased with the current “excellent” developments, Knaus said the fact it has taken so long is “disastrous.” That said, the affair may, indeed, catalyze a “chain reaction.” This is the view expressed by Frank Schwabe (SPD), who leads the Bundestag’s delegation to the Council of Europe. He sees the three named individuals as part of a larger, organized corruption network for Azerbaijan, involving not only Germans but other parliamentarians. In fact, German national television reported that the Munich authorities had also conducted investigations in other countries, including Cyprus, Liechtenstein, Belgium, Estonia, Latvia, Switzerland, and Azerbaijan — and that one former member of the Parliamentary Assembly from this last-named country, Elkhan Suleymanov, is also involved. It is to be hoped that the investigations will go forward, and focus on the period up to the most recent cases of Azerbaijan’s anti-Armenian aggression.

Community News

Manoogian Manor Earns Prestigious 2023 'Best of' Recognition

LIVONIA, Mich. — Manoogian Manor, providing boutique senior living care in Livonia since 1949, has recently been honored with “best of care” recognition by *Hour Detroit Magazine* and the City of Livonia.

Hour Magazine recognized Manoogian Manor by selecting it to be included in their Best of Senior Care listing, as one of the top retirement and assisted living facility providers, in their November 2023 issue. Methodology included consulting with state and government sources, media and press reports and consumer ratings.

Manoogian Manor was also selected for the 2023 Best of Livonia Award in the Assisted Living Facility category. Each year, the Livonia Award Program identifies companies



that have achieved great success in providing exceptional service to their customers and the community.

These awards typify the culture of caring at Manoogian Manor – designed to enhance the quality of life for residents with its compassion and a sense of purpose and independence. But for its residents, it's simply home – in every sense of the word. “We look at it as this is our resident's home and we are the guests, here to provide whatever they need,” said Robert (Baydarian) Harrison Jr., marketing manager at Manoogian Manor. “Everything we do is focused on improving their lives, shown by how our employees treat our residents – like family members. We feel that the reason we are still here and best at what we do is because of the care we provide.”

Manoogian Manor is licensed to allow for 72 residents but downsizes the capacity in order to accommodate what people want, including bigger rooms, more space for activities and services and to make it more like home. Home-cooked meals, including Mediterranean/Armenian style food selections, are prepared by skilled chefs and are served in a spacious, sunny dining room or outside on the veranda. Residents also maintain active lifestyles, with daily activities like crafts, exercise and music, along with Friday night movies, ice cream socials and outside entertainment. The sprawling grounds

see MANOR, page 7



The runners and walkers at the AAHPO 5K Run/Walk

AAHPO Races to Help Armenians in Need at Fifth Annual 5K Run/Walk

By Stephan S. Nigohosian

RIDGEFIELD PARK, N.J. — Grey rainclouds gave way to blue skies and sunshine the moment the Armenian American Health Professionals Organization (AAHPO) began its annual Fifth Annual 5K Run/Walk at New Jersey's Overpeck County Park on October 21.

Runners and walkers of all ages participated in the event to raise desperately needed funds to support healthcare and medical treatment for people in Armenia, including the displaced population formerly living in Artsakh. Funds raised will also be used to provide medical training and resources to healthcare providers from Artsakh who were also forced to relocate to Armenia.

In light of the humanitarian crisis caused by Azerbaijan's military offensive and takeover of Artsakh, a reported 120,000 ethnic Armenians from Artsakh were forced to resettle in Armenia. These refugees are in dire need of medical attention and medication, further pushing Armenia's already strained healthcare system to its limits. For this reason, AAHPO continues to focus its efforts toward alleviating this shortage of critical resources and medical care by funding hands-on and virtual training to displaced Artsakh physicians as they transition to work in Armenia. Underwriting the cost of curating and sending medical equipment and medicine to the region is also one of AAHPO's top priorities.

“Each year, our 5K Run/Walk Event continues to grow and is a testament to the dedication and compassion of Armenian-Americans to help their brethren in Armenia,” said AAHPO President Larry Najarian. “The need for physicians, particularly in rural areas of Armenia, has never been greater, and our collaboration with other charitable Armenian-American organizations provides these healthcare professionals with training in current innovative approaches, methods, and technologies in medicine.” Representatives from organizations that have partnered with AAHPO in previous events and showed their solidarity by once again participating include the Armenian Engineers and Scientists of America (AESA).

New to this year's event was an intercollegiate race competition for Armenian college students from the College of New Jersey (TCNJ), Fordham University, Rutgers University, Princeton University, the University of Pennsylvania, Villanova University and other academic institutions.

see AAHPO, page 9



Zoryan Webinar Explores Impact Of Cultural Loss As a Result of the Genocide

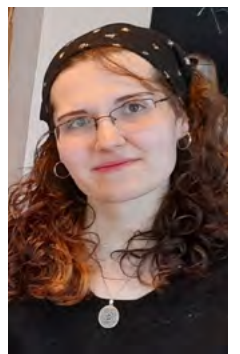
TORONTO — The Zoryan Institute will host a webinar with Dr. Aysenur Korkmaz titled “‘Absent(ed) Presence’: Exploring Lost Heritage of Ancestral Land” exploring the lasting impact of the Armenian Genocide on the cultural heritage of Ottoman Armenians, on February 15, 1 p.m. EST.

The genocide that engulfed the lives of Ottoman Armenians in 1915-16 also left traces on their cultural heritage. After being subjected to cycles of state-sponsored destruction, confiscation, and architectural alteration, Armenian heritage sites have lost their shapes and become relics of their former selves. Today, these sites constitute the physical setting for Armenian roots tourism in eastern Turkey, the ancestral heritage tours that the descendants of genocide survivors from Armenia and the diaspora undertake. This talk explores how these material spaces shape the descendants' experience of their ancestral homeland. What affordances and agencies do they have to tell a story, emit meaning, and elicit emotions in visitors? Conversely, what meanings and signification do the descendants bring to these sites?

Korkmaz is currently a postdoctoral research fellow at the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study in Amsterdam (NIAS). She obtained her PhD from the University of Amsterdam, European Studies. Her work focuses on the multifaceted aftereffects of the Armenian genocide in Soviet and post-Soviet Armenia. At the crossroads of history and anthropology, she explores how the genocide survivors and their descendants in Armenia have been reflecting on the violent past, losses, and expulsion from the ancestral homeland (Ergir). Korkmaz published several peer-reviewed articles and book chapters on the Hamidian Massacres, the Armenian genocide, post-genocide memories in Soviet Armenia, and Armenian roots tourism in eastern Turkey.

Korkmaz is a graduate of Zoryan Institute's Genocide and Human Rights University Program (GHRUP) and longtime friend of the Institute. The Zoryan Institute invites individuals, scholars, and those interested in exploring lost heritage of ancestral homeland to join this insightful webinar.

Register at https://us06web.zoom.us/join/register/WN_OoRZ-PVQGR5upRmDIKA17Ag#/registration



Dr. Aysenur Korkmaz

COMMUNITY NEWS

Ladies of St. Paul Armenian Church in Fresno Hold Sparkling Annual Christmas Luncheon

FRESNO — On Saturday, December 2, the Ladies Society of St. Paul Armenian Church in Fresno held its 43rd annual Christmas Luncheon in the Haig Berberian Hall to kick off the holiday season. As is the tradition, the hall was filled with the sights and sounds of Christmas as nearly 200 church friends and family members from near and far gathered to celebrate the spirit of Christmas.

Following a lively cocktail hour featuring cranberry and wine spritzers and mini charcuterie appetizers, the program opened with a welcome and devotional by Ladies Society president Darlene Chardukian, immediately followed by a delicious luncheon of sautéed breast of chicken in a creamy Tuscan sauce. White chocolate raspberry cakes decorated each table and were served as a sweet treat at the end of the meal.

Months of planning preceded the annual event at St. Paul with individual committees set up to create the invitations, bake homemade goodies for the country store, purchase the unique raffle prizes, and decorate the hall. Donors and sponsors help underwrite the costs of the luncheon that also serves as a fundraiser for the St. Paul Ladies Society philanthropic endeavors. Janice Hallaian chaired the event this year with assistance from Isabel Chilpighian who



Entertainment was provided by Fresno’s Award-Winning Bullard Talent Concert Choir from Fresno Unified School District



White chocolate raspberry cakes decorated each table and were served as a sweet treat at the end of the meal

served as chairlady for many years. Other committee members include: Alberta Bedoian, Diane Sirabian-Messerlian, Jacqueline Grazier, Jackie Manoogian, Beverly Larios, Paula DerMatoian, Janet Sabbatini, Darlene Chardukian and Ozzie Tashjian.

To make this festive holiday cocktail for yourself, combine together and chill before serving:

- 1 liter bottle 7Up (or Sprite or Sierra Mist)
- 1 64 oz. bottle cranberry juice (any variety)
- 1 bottle of your favorite red, white or rosé wine, prosecco or champagne
- 1 bag of fresh cranberries
- Lots of ice cubes

Scale up or down this recipe as needed. Serve in small cups or glasses with additional cranberries or fresh mint or rosemary sprigs as garnish.

Entertainment was provided by Fresno’s Award-Winning Bullard Talent Concert Choir from Fresno Unified School District.

“With heartfelt gratitude and respect, we celebrate the many talents of these hard-working, dedicated ladies who made this special day possible,” said Janice Hallaian.

To support or donate to the St. Paul Ar-

menian Church Ladies Society, contact: St. Paul Armenian Church, 3767 N. First Street, Fresno, CA 93726.

To purchase A Taste of Fresno Armenian and American Cuisine Cookbook for gifts for family and friends, contact: St. Paul Armenian Church, 3767 N. First St, Fresno, CA 93726.

For the church website, go to: <https://stpaulfresno.com/>



From left, Melene Ouzounian, Peggy Akbiyikian, Diane Sirabian-Messerlian, Darlene Chardukian, and Alberta Bedoian seated at the hostess table

Manoogian Manor Earns Prestigious 2023 ‘Best of’ Recognition



MANOR, from page 6

include lush gardens, shady trees and a fountain. The property incorporates wide walking paths, comfortable benches, a beautiful courtyard and frequent visits from deer. Residents enjoy American and Armenian live entertainment, outdoor concerts, painting, lecture series and discussion groups. Armenian church services and visitations by local clergy are also provided.



“The Armenian administration, management team and staff take a personal interest in your loved ones’ comfort and stay as their own family. We believe that each individual is unique, worthy of respect and dignity, and all our residents are entitled to care that reflects the idea that life in all circumstances has value,” Harrison Jr. said. “We wish to create an environment and atmosphere that is filled with vibrancy, pride, security and a sense of belonging. We want them to feel at home because they are home.”

Manoogian Manor is located at 15775 Middlebelt Road in Livonia, Michigan. For more information visit www.manoogianmanor.com.



OBITUARY

Sirvart (Emily) Hovnanian

Major Philanthropist, Dedicated to Family

Sirvart (Emily) Hovnanian, loving wife, mother, sister, grandmother, and great-grandmother, died peacefully surrounded by her family on January 14, 2024. Born in 1926 to Nevart and Ardashes Megerdichian, she is survived by her five children and their spouses, thirteen grandchildren, eight great-grandchildren and a brother.

Sirvart married Kevork S. Hovnanian in 1948. Together with her husband they were forced to leave the Middle East in 1959 under very difficult circumstances. Having family in the United States, they emigrated and settled in New Jersey, where Kevork founded one of the country's largest publicly traded homebuilding companies.

As the matriarch of the Kevork Hovnanian family, in her quiet but strong way, Sirvart raised a family of five children and

was the staunch supporter of her husband in all of his successful endeavors. She was a graceful, gracious and elegant woman with profound wisdom, an immeasurable kind heart and deep faith. Her love for her family was paramount. She gathered everyone home for every holiday and never missed a birthday, usually spending special time with the young ones by taking them to lunch and the toy store on their big day.

Always full of wit, she lived life to the fullest, surrounding herself with family and friends. She was an avid reader and a great cook, spoke several languages, played backgammon and croquet, and most of all loved to travel.

Kevork and Sirvart Hovnanian's beneficence and philanthropic deeds were admirable. To name just some of their generous accomplishments, they established



the K. Hovnanian Children's Hospital in New Jersey, the Emergency Care Center at Riverview Medical Center and the Cardiology Floor at Columbia Presbyterian New

York Hospital. They also supported many Armenian causes. They founded the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR) following the 1988 earthquake in that country, and they constructed and were the benefactors of St. Stepanos Armenian Church in Elberon, NJ.

Sirvart was a legend in her own right in every respect and became a paragon to emulate for all who knew her. She will fondly remain in the hearts and memories of all those whose lives she touched.

Private funeral services were held at St. Stepanos Armenian Church on Friday, January 19. A memorial service will take place at St. Vartan Cathedral in New York.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made to one of the following:

- Riverview Medical Center (Department of Nursing)
- K Hovnanian Children's Hospital
- Columbia Medical School (Cardiology Department)
- Fund for Armenian Relief
- St. Stepanos Armenian Church (Designate: Endowment Trust Fund)

David Pepanyan

Born in Armenia

WATERTOWN —David Pepanyan of Watertown passed away peacefully on January 28 after a long battle with cancer at the age of 58.

David was born in Alaverdi, Armenia to Anichka Davoyan and the late Saribek Pepanyan. David grew up in Armenia and



attended college earning a 2-year degree.

David met and married Nellie Ghalayan in 1989 in Armenia and they were blessed with their son Narek a short time later. In 1996, the family immigrated to America where they were blessed with their daughter Annie. In America, David worked in

the auto body business with his brother-in-law Armen. He enjoyed playing tennis, swimming, gardening, playing guitar and fishing. He enjoyed spending time with his family and loved his dog Luna.

David is survived by his mother, Anichka Davoyan in Armenia, his beloved wife of 34 years Nellie Ghalayan, his children Narek Pepanyan of Watertown and Annie Pepanyan-Yeretsian and her husband Hovsep Yeretsian of Burlington. He was the dear brother of Levon Pepanyan, Aida Pepanyan & Kamo Pepanyan all of Armenia. Additionally, he is survived by his mother-in-law Goharik Elmezian and her late husband Arshaluys Ghalayan, his sister-in-law Susanna Shmavonian and her late husband Armen Galaian, his niece Lucine Gavlakian and her husband Hovanes and his nephew Armen Galaian, Jr. He also leaves behind 3-generations of additional nieces and nephews in Armenia.

Funeral Services were held at St. James Armenian Church, Watertown, on February 1. Interment was at Ridgelawn Cemetery in Watertown.

Expressions of sympathy may be made in his memory to St. James Armenian Church.

Arrangements were made by the Giragosian Funeral Home.

Albert B. Der Torossian

Master Tailor

WALTHAM, Mass. — Albert B. Der Torossian, of Waltham, formerly of Beverly Hills, Fla., passed away peacefully on January 18, 2024 at the age of 88.

He was the husband of Juliana (D'Alessandris) Der Torossian. He was the father of Benon Der Torossian and his wife Gail, and of Carol Cotterly and her husband Kevin. He was the grandfather of Samantha Der Torossian and is survived by many loving nieces and nephews.

Albert, one of three children to Yessayi and Takouhi Der Torossian, was born in Damascus Syria on May 28, 1935. Raised in a catholic household, he received his tailoring diploma in France.

He met Takouhy Frengulian and married her in 1963, and soon after their son Benon was born in Beirut, Lebanon.

From an early age he showed an affinity for woodworking, masonry, and construction and finally went on to become a master tailor.

In 1965 he immigrated to Montreal, to start a new life for his family. In 1966 their daughter Carol was born, and soon after they moved to Boston, where he built a successful tailoring business.

From 1968-1974 Albert worked at Zareh's boutique as a master tailor, and then



started his own business, Albert's Custom Tailoring, in downtown Boston which grew into a successful enterprise. His cliental included many famous sportsmen, lawyers, doctors and other professionals who greatly appreciated his immaculately custom made suits. Years later he expanded his business and

moved his store to Chestnut Hill. Over the years Albert helped many of his family members move to the United States, from Syria and Lebanon. He also lent a helping hand to numerous families who had immigrated from Lebanon and Syria, by finding them residences and jobs.

In early 2000, he moved to Florida with his second wife Julia D'Alessandris, where he enjoyed his retirement years.

In recent months Albert moved back to Boston to his children, but unfortunately became ill and passed away at Mt. Auburn hospital on January 18.

Funeral Services were held at Holy Cross Armenian Catholic Church, 200 Lexington St., Belmont, on January 29. Burial services were private.

In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be made in Albert's memory to Holy Cross Armenian Catholic Church.

Arrangements were made by the Bedrosian Funeral Home.

Sirvard (Keshishian) Deirmendjian

MALDEN, Mass. — Sirvard (Keshishian) Deirmendjian of Malden passed away peacefully at home surrounded by her family on January 21, 2024. She was 80.

She was born on December 5, 1943 in Aleppo, Syria to the late Setrak and Marie (Orchanian) Keshishian.

Sirvard was the wife of the late Smbat Deirmendjian who passed away in 2017. She was mother to Karen Yeretsian and her husband Hovannes of Malden and Ara Deirmendjian and his wife Emma of Lynnfield. She was the grandmother of Araxie Miller and her husband David, Hovsep Yeretsian and his wife Annie, Simbat Deirmendjian and Ella Deirmendjian. She was the sister of Victoria Deirmendjian of Malden, Azadouhi Safarian of California and the late Simon Keshishian and Zabel Keshishian. Additionally, she leaves behind many nieces and nephews, relatives and friends.

Funeral Services were held at St. Ste-



phen's Armenian Church, Watertown, on January 25. Interment followed at Forest Dale Cemetery in Malden.

Memorial donations may be made in her memory to St. Stephen's Armenian Church.

Arrangements were by the Giragosian Funeral Home.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation to Hold Los Angeles Community Events

LOS ANGELES — The Armenian Communities Department of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation has embarked on a two-day conversation with the Los Angeles Armenian community. It will take place on the weekend of February 2 and 3, at Hero House in Glendale.

Dr. Razmik Panossian, director of the Armenian Department at Gulbenkian since 2013, will present the foundation’s projects, strategies and goals, and engage in dialogue with various scholars and specialists.

On Friday 2 February, from 7 to 8.30 pm, a visual presentation will precede a conversation where Panossian will highlight some of the activities of the Department during the past decade and present future directions. This short presentation will be followed by an hour-long discussion about Gulbenkian’s work, in conversation with Salpi Ghazarian of the USC Institute of Armenian Studies and

Dr. Houri Berberian, Meghrouni Family Presidential Chair in Armenian Studies and director of the Armenian Studies program at UC Irvine. Questions and comments from the audience will be welcomed.

On Saturday February 3, from 11.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m., a sequence of three bilingual panels will explore (a) the changing world of Armenian philanthropy, (b) the challenges facing the Armenian language, education and culture in the Diaspora, and (c) the importance of critical thinking, especially in Armenia, and in Diaspora institutions.

The Gulbenkian Foundation’s engagement in Armenian communities around the world continues even as it looks to work more closely in Los Angeles, always within the sphere of its strategic directions. These directions are examined and adopted every five years, taking into consideration changing global and Armenian challenges.

The USC Institute of Armenian Studies has partnered with Gulbenkian in the organization of these events. “This is not the first time that we’ve collaborated with Gulbenkian. Our perspectives and approaches are similar, and we welcome the opportunity to broaden the Armenian conversation,” said Salpi Ghazarian, who, together with Institute Director Dr. Shushan Karapetian will participate in the panels. The various panelists also include, among others, Professor Donald Miller of USC, Dr. Hagop Gulludjian and Dr. Shant Shekherdian of UCLA, as well as Shogher Margossian from the Gulbenkian Foundation.

Everyone is invited to participate in this rare conversation between program designers and funders on the one hand, and the community the program are meant to benefit on the other. What challenges Armenian organizations are currently facing and will face in the future? How can we actually reinforce language

and culture in a diasporan setting? Do we want to? Are institutions and their programs useful, appropriate and impactful, or repetitious, outdated, not focused? How are decisions made and programs evaluated? Is decision-making and fundraising changing? Should it, and if so, how?

“The Gulbenkian Foundation journey supporting Armenian communities started in the Middle East, where it is still present. It has also steadily shifted westwards, bringing us to Los Angeles. We need to learn from the Los Angeles community, and we would like to contribute to it, especially in the domains of culture, education, and language. This two-day dialogue is essential for us to develop appropriate programming that is relevant to this ever-more-important Armenian hub that is very different from those that have come before,” said Panossian.

For more information write to carmenias@gulbenkian.pt.

AAHPO Races to Help Armenians in Need at 5K Run/Walk

AAHPO, from page 6

The 5K course, equal to 3.1 miles, offers scenic views of the Manhattan skyline and picturesque, waterfowl-populated ponds and marshes. But the beauty of the course did not distract the event’s participants, consisting of both seasoned and novice runners, from the focus of the event. Groups of walkers and runners from many different backgrounds and vocations converged as one team to help Armenians in

need.

One of the additional benefits the event provided runners was the opportunity to boost their competitive racing statistics, as race results were officially recorded and certified by USA Track & Field, the United States national governing body for track and field, cross country running, road running and racewalking. The competition was sanctioned by the US Track & Field Association with 500 race points



SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

The Armenian Students’ Association of America Inc. is now accepting scholarship applications for the 2024-25 academic year. Applicants must have completed at least one year of college by June 2024 and be of Armenian descent. The application deadline is April 1, 2024. We awarded over \$155,000 in scholarships to 32 deserving students last year. Please visit www.asainc.org for applications and further information.

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awarded to each participant. In addition, all registrants received a commemorative T-shirt.

Among the organizations making this year’s event possible were Englewood Pediatrics, LLC; Northern Jersey Obstetrics & Gynecology; Mandelbaum Barrett PC; William G. Basralian Funeral Service; Toufayan Bakeries; Robert V. Kinoian, DMD; Ridge Family Dentistry; Dr. Tro’s Medical Weight Loss & Direct Primary Care; Bedminster Eye and Laser Center, P.A.; Dexcom G7; Harco Incentives; and Peapack Private Wealth Management.

Those wishing to donate to the cause may do so at <https://aahpo.org/donate/>.

The Sixth Annual 5K Run/Walk event is scheduled for Saturday, October 19, 2024.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Armenian EyeCare Project Honors Children's Hospital L.A. and Late Luther Khachigian

NEWPORT BEACH, Calif. — On December 2, 2023, the Armenian EyeCare Project (AECPP) had the distinct privilege to honor both a very close corporate partner as well as a generous benefactor and friend who has sadly passed on during the non-profit organization's annual gala fundraiser in Newport Beach.

A close partner and collaborator for nearly 15 years, Children's Hospital Los Angeles (CHLA) was honored as the AECPP's Corporate Honoree at the organization's event. In attendance was President and CEO of Children's Hospital Paul Viviano; CHLA Division Chief of Ophthalmology Dr. Thomas Lee and several other staff members from the notable hospital who work regularly with the AECPP team in Armenia on various initiatives, including Dr. Eyal Ben-Issac, Dr. Armine Lulejian, Jenia Ghazarian and more.

"We are thrilled to be here tonight to celebrate our 14-year history with the Armenian EyeCare Project and the lives of all the children we have touched during that time," Viviano said during the event. "What started as a targeted program to train ophthalmologists on how to diagnose and treat a devastating form of childhood blindness has blossomed into a larger training mission to educate not just doctors but also nurses and hospital leaders on how to prepare for the future of Armenia."

Since their involvement began in 2009, CHLA has been instrumental in the success of AECPP's pediatric program in Armenia, dedicated to advancing eye care for infants and children and eliminating preventable blindness caused by retinopathy of prematurity (ROP) and other childhood eye diseases. Since this time, CHLA's continued commitment to serve the people of Armenia has expanded through several additional joint programs with AECPP through the years. This includes the opening of a Neonatal Simulation Center inside the AECPP's Center of Excellence for the Prevention of Childhood Blindness in Yerevan; the implementation of a large-scale School Screening Program throughout Armenia for school-aged children; the provision of educational resources and training opportunities for medical staff in Armenia including neonatal nurses, mental health professionals and more; and participating as a consistent co-organizer of the AECPP-CHLA Annual Conference held in Yerevan, Armenia every year.



Left to right: CHLA President and CEO Mr. Paul Viviano; CHLA Division Chief of Ophthalmology Dr. Thomas Lee; AECPP Founder and President Dr. Roger Ohanesian and AECPP Volunteer Physician and Master of Ceremonies Dr. John Hovanesian.

CHLA has helped the AECPP leverage innovative solutions to touch the lives of thousands of children in Armenia. They have used telemedicine to train physicians in Armenia who have now performed more than 35,000 screenings for ROP and 950 surgeries. As a result of this partnership, no child in Armenia has gone blind from this debilitating eye disease since 2018.

"We are committed to the lives of all children whether they are in L.A. or half-way around the world," Viviano said. "Our commitment to Armenia will continue, and we are so grateful to have the Armenian EyeCare Project as our steadfast partner in helping us in our mission."

Also honored at the gala was a great benefactor of the AECPP, the late Luther Khachigian, who passed away in June 2023. A longtime supporter of the AECPP, Khachigian contributed to the organization's many initiatives in Armenia over the years. This included the funding of several pieces of cutting-edge medical equipment



The late Luther J. Khachigian



Khachigian's son, Luther Khachigian II, with Dr. Roger Ohanesian and Dr. John Hovanesian

used to diagnose and treat eye disease as well as the underwriting of an entire Regional Eye Center in the country. Named after his father, whom Khachigian loved and respected very much, the John Ohannes Khachigian AECPP Regional Eye Center was developed and opened in Gyumri, the second-largest city in Armenia, in 2017.

"Luther was not only a great supporter and a generous and committed benefactor, but he was also a very dear friend," AECPP Founder Dr. Roger Ohanesian shared. "He was instrumental in providing long-term support to various AECPP initiatives and always stressed the importance of getting more Armenians involved."

Many of Khachigian's family and friends were present at the AECPP gala to watch Khachigian being honored posthu-

mously. This included Khachigian's son, Luther Khachigian II; Khachigian's younger brother, Ken Khachigian and others. During the event, Luther II shared that his father's extraordinary generosity would continue through Khachigian's bequest.

Presenting the AECPP with a generous contribution from his father's estate, Luther II said that it was an honor for his father to be remembered by AECPP and pledged more support for the organization through Khachigian's estate in the coming year.

As thousands of patients continue to be treated at Khachigian's regional center in Gyumri and with news of his legacy funding, it's no doubt that Khachigian's tremendous impact and contribution to eye care in Armenia will be felt for generations to come.



COMMUNITY NEWS

President of Glendale Community College Writes Bill To Assist Refugees from Artsakh and Elsewhere

By Vic Gerami
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

GLENDAL — Since his appointment in July 2022, Glendale Community College (GCC) President Ryan Cornner has been a staunch ally of the Armenian community. He wrote SB971, a measure that would make higher education more affordable for Artsakh Armenians and other low-income refugees by exempting them from paying the nonresident tuition fee. This California Senate Bill 971 was introduced by State Sen. Anthony J. Portantino (D – Burbank) on Thursday, January 25.

Cornner’s latest project is to support the Armenian-American community and its Armenian students, who comprise about a third of the institution’s student body.

Due to a growing number of regional conflicts worldwide, many individuals seek haven through immigration to the United States, establish residency in California, and get higher education. Ineligibility for financial aid can make the cost of college disproportionately higher and unaffordable.

SB 971 would exempt from the nonresident tuition fee a nonresident, low-income student who resides in a region impacted by war or other regional conflict and registers for lower division courses at a community college. The measure requires the governing boards of community colleges that



Dr. Ryan Cornner

use this exemption to adopt one uniform policy to determine a student’s residence classification, establish procedures for an appeal and review of the residence classification, and determine whether a student is low-income.

“Part of our mission is to build a sense of belonging within our community and serve all students by creating an educational environment where they can take the next steps toward the future,” said Dr. Ryan Cornner, superintendent and president of GCC. “Glendale has a history supporting recent immigrant communities. In turn, these populations have become cornerstones in our community. SB 971 will allow us to more effectively meet the needs of our community and ensure that we fulfill our mission,” he continued.

A large number of Armenians were displaced from their homeland of Artsakh, the population of which was greater than 120,000, even before Azerbaijan’s complete ethnic cleansing of Artsakh last September. California is home to a large diaspora of Armenian people and will continue to see the immigration of individuals seeking safety. Similar displacements have been seen in Ukraine. The United Nations indicates that over six million individuals have sought refugee status.

With the global Armenian community under attack and conflicts in other parts of the world dominating society, non-Armenian allies are exceedingly essential and rare. Cornner’s first significant outreach to the Armenian community happened soon after he took office. He invited me to screen my documentary feature film about the Artsakh Genocide, *Motherland*, at GCC and paid for all associated expenses.

Last year, he supported a resolution supporting Artsakh and calling for a peaceful end to the blockade that GCC’s Board of Trustees passed. The GCC Trustee vote on the three-year MOU passed unanimously, a resolution supporting Artsakh and “unequivocally condemning the illegal and inhumane blockade enforced by Azerbaijan against Artsakh.”

In October 2023, GCC announced a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Yerevan State University (YSU).

GCC’s agreement with the college in Armenia strengthens the ties between educational institutions, facilitates international collaboration, and promotes academic and cultural exchange opportunities for students and faculty.

Finally, Dr. Cornner has supported and facilitated GCC’s Study Abroad Program in Armenia. The two-week program’s last trip, led by Dr. Sevada Chamras, took place in June/July 2023 and offered a brief overview of Armenian culture, history, art, and society through field observation and research.

While educating non-Armenians about the struggles of the Armenian community has been a significant challenge, Cornner has created an inclusive environment at GCC for Armenian students, staff, and faculty.

SB971 will undergo several steps in the CA legislation, which will take approximately nine months.

(Vic Gerami is an award-winning journalist and the editor and publisher of *The Blunt Post*, documentary filmmaker, and the founder of the *Truth And Accountability League* (TAAL), a non-profit advocacy organization founded in 2020 that monitors and confronts bias, disinformation, propaganda, and slander of the Armenian people and culture at the media level, including social media, academics, intelligentsia, and public policy.)



Tekeyan Cultural Association Sponsor a Teacher in Armenia

Since its inception in 2001, the Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) Sponsor a Teacher Program has raised 838,700 dollars and reached out to 7,386 teachers and school staff in Armenia and Artsakh. This year the program continues to support school teachers in Tekeyan Schools in Armenia, as well as teachers who had to flee Artsakh but continue teaching in Armenia’s schools, as they educate new generations of children, our future leaders.



YES, I would like to sponsor TCA school teacher(s) in Armenia, as well as teachers who fled Artsakh and continue teaching in Armenia schools, in order to continue helping them work and educate the children, our future leaders. I would like to have the sponsored teacher/s’ name(s) and address(es).

☐ \$240 ☐ \$480 ☐ \$700 ☐ other _____

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Arts & Culture

Nvart Andreassian

Conducting Symphonic Music Worldwide



By Artsvi Bakhchinyan
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN — Conductor Nvart Andreassian was born in Istanbul; since 2017, she has lived in Armenia. From 1966 to 1971, she studied at the Romanos Melikyan Music School, Armenia, with Herman Terterian, and graduated with a degree in choral conducting. She emigrated to France where she studied at the Ecole Normale de Musique de Paris, with Pierre Dervaux, and graduated with a higher diploma in orchestral conducting. From 1977 to 1980 she was assistant conductor at the Paris Grand Opera and Orchestre de Paris. Andreassian has taken master classes with conductors and composers Michel Tabachnik, Jean Fournet, Péter Eötvös, Igor Markevitch, Daniel Barenboim and Anthur Oldham. In addition, she has also studied with Pierre Dervaux and Pierre Boulez and attended courses in music analysis of contemporary music with Max Deutsch and classical music with Sergiu Celibidache and Roland Catoir. Nvart Andreassian has been a prizewinner in the Young Conductors (Besançon, France) and Yehudi Menuhin Foundation (Great-Britain) competitions.

She has been guest conductor of numerous orchestras in Belgium, Brazil, China, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Russia, the US, Netherlands. She has been the artistic director of Polychromie Contemporary Music Ensemble and Polychromy Festival. Nvart has given masterclasses and taught in various countries such as Russia, Brazil, Turkey, Armenia, Germany, Belgium, Holland, Uruguay, recorded with different labels and for Classical Radios.

“I have an excellent recollection from my collaboration with Nvart Andreassian during the Festival Polychromy. She gave an excellent reading of my work *Ballade des Pendus*. Nvart’s know-how and understanding of contemporary music as well as her musical comprehension permit me to look forward to further collaborations and complicity,” said Vincent Paulet, composer, France.

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Angelina Nazarian on “The Voice” (photo Greg Gayne NBC)

Angelina Nazarian Sets Her Sights on Musical Success

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

BOSTON — The road to success in the music world is a difficult one, but if perseverance and dedication to continuing self-improvement are indicators of success, 18-year-old Angelina Lola Nazarian already is going places. She has 24,400 followers and 1.4 million likes on her TikTok account. After competing on NBC’s singing competition television show “The Voice” in the fall of 2023, Angelina went on to enroll in the Berklee School of Music in Boston, where she is now a freshman, preparing for further musical successes.

Family on the Move

Thanks to Angelina’s parents, she has enjoyed a truly international childhood and upbringing. Her father Albert was born in Ararat, Armenia, and her mother Christina in Baku. They met in an English class in Ararat and fell in love. They came to the US to further their education, and Angelina was born in Ann Arbor, Mich. However, due to her father’s career in finance, the family ended up living in six different countries, China, Korea, Russia, the US, Armenia and the United Arab Emirates (Dubai). Angelina’s father worked 24 years for General Motors in various posts, such as CFO for Africa and Middle East Operations (AMEO) or managing director of AMEO Commercial Operations.

Angelina proudly declared: “My parents worked really, really hard to create a good foundation and basis to move forward in their life, and yes, we are 100 percent Armenian, very proud Armenians. That is one reason why I take my life goals so seriously, whether to represent Armenians on ‘The Voice,’ the Armenian community here at the Berklee College of Music, or my future endeavors as an Armenian-American singer or songwriter.”

Angelina speaks English, Armenian and Russian, and also can get by in French, which she said she studied for some six years. Wherever she lived, she always went to international schools following either the American or British curriculum, and teaching in English.

She learned Armenian at home. She said that in the family, they would mix

continued on next page



The Nazarian family, with Angelina in the center

‘Armenians In Film’ to Be Presented at Fresno State

FRESNO — The Armenian Studies Program, the AGBU Greater Fresno Chapter, AGBU Arts and CineCulture present “Armenians in Film: Six Short Films by Armenian Filmmakers” on Friday, February 16, at 5:30 p.m., in the Leon S. and Pete Peters Educational Center Auditorium, 5010 N. Woodrow Ave., on the Fresno State campus. Following the screening, which is part of the Armenian Studies Program Spring 2024 Lecture Series, the audience will have the opportunity to virtually discuss the films with the directors.

Established in 2015, AGBU Arts’ “Armenians in Film” Film Series is an annual, international event that unites talented Armenian filmmakers from all over the globe. In the past nine years, over fifty short films have been screened by filmmakers from the United States, Canada, France, Brazil, the United Kingdom, China, Bulgaria, Armenia, and more.

These talented artists featured are graduates of prestigious film schools, such as NYU Tisch School of the Arts, Columbia University and UCLA, and have screened their films at legendary festivals such as the Cannes Film Festival, Toronto International Film Festival, Sundance Film Festival, Sunset Film Festival, and more.

Film lineup is:

“Dehatsi – I was Another Place”: Anush is a young Armenian woman who travels to Brazil without a return ticket. Once she is welcomed and adopted into the Armenian community in São Paulo, her biggest challenge is to adapt to the large and cosmopolitan city, so far from her roots. Directed by Tatiana Boudakian, 20 minutes.

“Crossing the Blue: (Armenia)”: Anoush, an emigrant, who fled from her abusive husband in post-Soviet Armenia, is facing eventual deportation years later... Directed by Victoria Aleksanyan, 12 minutes.

“Sunset”: With sunlight quickly fading on the horizon, a student goes on a fantastic journey contemplating the importance of happiness and budding friendships versus their studies. Directed by Kristine Khanamiryan, 4 minutes.

“Stones”: The brutal Nagorno-Karabakh War of 2020 ended in a Russian-mediated ceasefire forcing Armenia to cede territory it had controlled to Azerbaijan. As a result, thousands of Armenians living in these regions were forced to leave their homes. Days before the handover deadline, a group of volunteers risk their lives to enter the Lachin region to search for and save beautiful sacred ancient Armenian stone inscriptions known as “khachkars,” from destruction. Directed by Arman Ayvazyan, 17 minutes.

“The Road”: The poetic vision of director Charlotte Montgomery see FILMS, page 14



ARTS & CULTURE

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languages. Angelina said, “Sometimes it was even in a sentence. We would start it in Armenian, the middle words would be in Russian, and the ending in English....I think my mom and dad would speak Armenian at the beginning of our childhood, and then us children, who were being sent to American schools, would bring back English, so we would all speak Armenian and English. Our grandma lives with us and speaks Russian, so we learned Russian that way.”

Aside from periodic visits to Armenia, Angelina related that her family also got stuck there when the Covid pandemic began. Living in Shanghai, like many other expatriates, her family was warned about the virus, and so they left, thinking to stay in Armenia two weeks until things appeared safe. As it happened the two weeks turned into almost nine months.

Music

Angelina remembers having a special connection with music during her childhood. When she was around six years old and living in Russia, she said she recalled watching Michael Jackson making his moves on television, and she would get up and imitate them. She taught herself how to moonwalk, for example.

Her family realized her ability when Angelina was nine years old and was inspired by “America’s Got Talent,” a competitive singing show. She said: “I was young. You don’t put limits on anything....So, after I watched, I played the karaoke, and I sang *Listen* by Beyoncé. I recall my mom walked in the room and asked, was that you or Beyoncé? I was like, what? That was me of course.”

Her family never arranged for her to get formal music lessons but Angelina knew what she wanted and was persistent. She said: “Even though I didn’t end up getting coaching, I sang in front of them all the time. I made it obvious that this is what I wanted to do. I applied to every talent show at my school. I introduced myself, ‘Hello, I am Angelina. I am a singer.’ So before others could take me seriously through credentials or maybe videos, or how I was on the show, I took myself seriously. I said I am going to be a singer. I want to be a singer.”

Angelina said she joined choir clubs and performed in talent shows and musicals at her schools. She started posting on social media at 11 years old, singing covers on Instagram. At 13 years old, she said she wrote her first song and posted that on Instagram too. She took a poem she had already written and added melody to it. At 14, she released her first EP, titled “Underwater,” with three songs.

Her parents ended up supporting her. She related: “I had parents that believed in me, that were honest with me and told me, you know what, usually this isn’t a path that we would just push towards anyone, but we see how you sing, we see how you perform, we see how you write, so if you take this seriously, we believe in you.”

Angelina did have one family member who had musical interests. Her father’s father was an amateur wedding singer. “When we would have family dinners, after I performed something, maybe, let’s say, a French song or an English song, he performed something in Armenian. It was nice to have one relative who could be like I also sing,” she said. “He was good at it, and I think it was more of a passion than his main thing, but for me, it is my passion, my drive and my goal for a future career.”

She said while she did not have formal training, she did listen to people’s opinions: “I always say this: I don’t learn about singing and songwriting and how to be an artist only from other artists. A lot of what I have learned is from people who are not even musicians, who tell me, when you sang that, I felt this way. And then I, as a singer, was

like, hmm, I didn’t want you to feel that way, so I must have done something wrong.”

Her younger sister was a useful testing ground for new songs. Angelina said, “I used her a lot. I would say, come here. What do you think of this? I would sing, and she would go, mm, this one sounds like this song. And I am like, oops, okay, change the melody again. Come back, Sophia, what do you think? She would be like, wow, this one was great. So I used her as my little test machine.”

Composing

Angelina does not play any musical instruments. Consequently, when composing, she said, “I have to come up with the melody using my own humming. I would use myself as the instrument. So where maybe a pianist would find the chords of what

made a chorus, and played her fake piano, trying different things musically. She made multiple recordings so she wouldn’t forget and asked her younger sister and other family members their opinions along the way.

As a young adolescent, she did not have a wealth of experience to draw upon for songwriting. She said, “I used people’s stories and what they went through as inspiration to write. For example, one of the songs in my album is called *I Remember*. I wrote this at 13 years old, and it was about being cheated on by someone you love. Mind you, I had never been in a relationship, never been cheated on, right? How could you write about that? But when my friends told me of their experiences and I got their permission to say my viewpoint on it, that is how I wrote.”



Angelina Nazarian with her parents at her high school graduation last year from the American School of Dubai

she is looking for while she is making her chorus ... as I write songs, what I do is I just take my hands out and tap onto wood as if I am [playing on]... my wooden desk or my bed... My vision is so deep that I can hum my own background music and melody, like chords, while I write [lyrics] at the same time.”

When asked whether she would write out the notes for her compositions, she revealed, “This is the thing about my journey that I used to be very ashamed about, that I didn’t want to mention to anyone, I don’t know how to read notes, or I don’t know what you mean when you say sing it in this key.” Instead, she could repeat a melody once someone played it.

With hindsight, she said, “When I think about it, I can’t believe I was ever ashamed. I think that if you can do something like that, if I could have produced and written and made melodies without knowing absolutely anything about the theory of music, that just speaks to my hard work and the natural feel for music that I do have.”

As far as writing lyrics went, she said that it came naturally to her. She explained: “When I would write songs, what it would be is that I would have pencil and paper, and I would write, like, what’s the main subject. Boom.” She gave the example of her song, *Being Under Water*. “I would say anxiety, panic attack, boom. Then I would say, what do I associate that with, or what kind of imagery.”

She was going to start writing the words after taking a shower, but “When I am in the shower, the water is like falling over my face, and I am so in my head that I forget, and ooh, I can’t breathe for a second. Then I was like, this is what panic attacks and anxiety feel like, being underwater.”

She went back and wrote the song in minutes, first as a poem, then added verses,

the imagery of songs and the production of music videos.

‘The Voice’

Angelina got a lot of exposure for her music through her recent appearance on “The Voice,” where she made it to the “Battle” round, but more importantly, Angelina said it was one of the best things that ever happened to her because it allowed her to get a taste of the industry and see how serious she was about the work behind the scenes. Despite the long hours, she said, “I was just fueled when I was there...It really helped me be like, you know what, 9-year-old you was not wrong. This is what you want to do.”

She remains friends with some of the other young contestants on the show. She said she could not disclose much about her connection with Reba McEntire, her mentor on “The Voice” because of a nondisclosure agreement she was required to sign. She did reveal that Reba follows her now on Instagram, so there is at least that road for communication.

Appearing on the show also helped her realize that she needed to get more musical education and training. She said she saw that everyone she was competing with had some sort of classical training. She recalled, “I said, girl, no more fake piano. Go to music school, learn the chords, learn how to sight read, learn the notes.” This decision led her to Berklee.

Berklee and Beyond

At first, she did not want to go to university at all. Her thinking, she said, was “In this industry, if you want to be a singer, you need to have the talent, you need to know the basics, and you need to be available. Availability is the biggest thing in this industry...I said, how can the world or producers find talent if talent is sitting in a small room somewhere in a college?”

However, she realized that Berklee would not hinder her in this aspect. She declared: “They actually say – I don’t know if this is the slogan of the school, but a lot of people that I have spoken to or when I read about Berklee said, if you are doing all four years then you are not doing Berklee right. I didn’t understand that. I was like, what? Wouldn’t a college want you to stay all four years? But this college is so understanding that they say, you get what you need, you do what you need to do, but if there is an opportunity, skip class, go to your gig, go to your tour, go perform, because this is why we’re here.”

She wants to become a professional music major, which means that she could do some songwriting, music engineering and production, and learn about music theory, application and technology along with ear training and everything else needed for a well-rounded artist. Piano is the instrument she plans to learn to play.

Up until now, she has been a solo artist, using karaoke, but Angelina said she sees people forming bands at Berklee and wants to try performing with one. She also wants to pursue acting and modeling in addition to singing and songwriting. She did a little bit of runway work and was in a few magazines when very young.

When asked whether she has considered a backup career plan considering the difficulties of succeeding in the music world, she emphatically replied: “I’ve said this since I was young, and I always say it: I don’t have a plan B and I won’t have a plan B because that means that I doubt plan A, and I truly don’t. I will fight and work and push myself and learn until I achieve my dream. People say it is unrealistic, but I think that you are already so brave in taking an industry like this, so why not go the whole way. If you are going to even take it in the first place, be as crazy as people think you are and believe that you can go to the top, because even making that first decision is something that most don’t do.”

As she gains more personal life experience, she said she feels this is helping in her songwriting because it adds to her “ability to fully write from the heart.”

Musical Genres and Cultures

Angelina was first attracted to American music as a child living in the US. She said, “I like R&B, pop, soul anything sort of ’90s. This is the kind of music that hit my core, because I like the writing style, the storytelling, the emotion... the musk of music that has soul in it.”

However, her international lifestyle and family background have also influenced her singing. She sings in English, Armenian, Russian, and French. Angelina said, “I think that the way that I sing and what gives me my originality is the fact that I am affected by so many different cultures and different styles of music. I love Armenian music, for example. Through Armenian music I learned how to use my vocals in a way that I do more vibrato and more riffs, and maybe I play more with the emotion of sad love, because I feel that is a main subject in Armenian music. That also affects my writing in a sense.”

Angelina said that she prefers different musical genres in different languages and associates them with different emotions. If in Armenian, it is love, family and relationships, in French it is classical music. She said, “I associate the French ... language... and the music when I sing as being in an alternate reality, where I am fine dining and I am wearing pearls. It is like a different me when I sing in French.”

She said she likes operatic classical music in French. In English she remains in the world of R&B and mainstream pop. While living in Dubai, Arabic music, she said, had some influence on her.

Moreover, when she was living in Korea and China, she absorbed the focus there on



ARTS & CULTURE

Nvart Andreassian: Conducting Symphonic Music Worldwide

CONDUCTOR, from page 12

"I can state that her musical maturity and knowledge are combined with a very solid conducting technique. She leads the orchestra with Olympic calm, bringing the best of the musicians to the service of the composer is always very kind, although strict about their performance. As an artist manager, I greatly appreciate her professional approach at this high-level," added Zdenek Prouza, managing director, Czech Artist Management International.

Dear Nvart, while there are many women among choirmasters, it is not common to see female conductors of symphonic orchestras. Although in my adulthood I was watching famous Soviet conductor Veronika Dudarova's concerts with great pleasure. How do you explain the lack of female conductors in the musical scene?

What you are saying was a reality in the 20th century, but not in the 21st. Now there are many more female conductors all over the world and this is very new. Societies are changing and becoming more open minded and tolerant to the "others" than before.

Frankly speaking, of course I had some unreasonable problems but as I knew and I know to be a very good and experienced conductor of all styles of European classical music since the 9th century to today. I think that segregation is an expression of weakness. I never pay attention to their sexism; it is not interesting. But, after 50 years of musical experience and career, today, composers entrust me with the world premiere of their scores. This is a huge responsibility for the future of their music and an honor for me to know that my hard work is considered necessary.

In the 1960s not many Istanbul Armenian were coming to study in Yerevan. What brought you there?

Well, my parents wanted to emigrate, but it did not work out so I studied. The school gave me a huge chance to study with a very good teacher of conducting, Herman Terteryan, an orchestra and opera conductor. I took advantage of this opportunity and worked hard to enlarge my musical and conducting talent. This was a very big chance to be educated at that period.

Who was your main inspiration as conductor?

I cannot say that there is one who influences me, because the conducting is not moving arms/gestures/beatings/ but talent of hearing, listening, reading, understanding, transmitting and knowledge of culture, music, psychology and many,

many other things. Lots of work, but not copying anyone. As a performer I respect the composer's imagination, wishes, ideas, sensibilities and combine them with mine. A conductor is a performer who plays on a very huge musical instrument composed of 70 persons and more, who are playing different instruments and having their knowledge, sensibilities and comprehension of the music they play. The conductor is the "medium" who makes the played music's unity of interpretation. So, it is really not possible to be inspired by any one's conducting technique, because it all depends on my commitment to the process of interpretation of the composer's ideas of music.

You have worked in eight different countries. How would you describe your work in each of them in one sentence?

It is difficult to answer this question in one sentence. Each country has a different culture of being, living, music education, making music, musical tradition, composing school. But I can say that I not only bring them my French musical and rehearsal processes, as well as my vision for any score, but I also bring them a lot about life, being, tolerance and many other things from their culture. This can sound incomprehensible by anyone but this way work not only with me but with all those who are traveling, as we now call nomadic or globe-trotter artists. This is very exciting and keeps one humble and continuing to explore the world and making progress in the professional and personal life. You know I am not only exploring the visiting country's musical score for a concert program but also all their culture.

In 1992, eminent Italian composer Ennio Morricone asked you to conduct his piece *Distanze*, after which he wrote: "She made it a memorable performance." Can you speak about this collaboration?

Well, I have been the artistic director and the conductor of the French Contemporary Music Orchestra Polychromie and his annual Festival of Modern Art and Music. This festival, as five others, were always based on a composer of the 20th century, in residence and his country. I invited him next to six young Italian composers to a residence in the so-called "Music and Design, Art from Italy." It was a huge collaboration which not only presented Morricone's music but also conferences, exhibitions, educational projects. Ennio Morricone was not only a movie soundtrack composer, but also a very good trumpet player, a classical contemporary music composer. It was a privilege to meet him, to conduct his music and to be appreciated by this great musi-

cian. Thanks to him, my vision of music, in general, was enlarged.

You have also worked with eminent musicians. Again, can you describe each of them and your cooperation with them?

It will be very difficult to speak in detail about my collaboration with each of them. I conducted world premieres of Pierre Boulez, Giovanna Marini, Edison Denisov, Iannis Xenakis and many other noted composers' music, as guest conductor during very famous European festivals. My collaboration with conductors Pierre Boulez, Boris Vinogradov, Arthur Oldham was as assistant conductor in the Paris Grand Opera and Orchestre de Paris. All those collaborations are the occasions not only to exchange interpretational questions with them but also to understand, appreciate and exchange their knowledge and visions on the ART. These meetings are very important for the shaping of the musical mind of a young musician. I am so glad that I had the chance and privilege to meet them all.

You have been the chief conductor of the Armenia-Turkey Youth Symphony Orchestra. Whose initiative was it and does it somehow add to an Armenian-Turkish dialogue?

Oh, yes... this was a very interesting collaboration with "Anadolu Kültür" and "Istanbul Cultural Foundation." The project was created with a common desire in 2009 after the signing of the Armenia-Turkey protocols. This musical project sought to put together young Armenian and Turkish musicians and help them to have a healthy dialogue. That worked! And also, it worked in the Turkish society because all Istanbul cultural organizations, TV channels, newspapers, Armenian community have participated morally and financially for the realization of the project. But unfortunately, the project's second step which had to take place in Armenia, had no chance to be realized, until now.

You have recorded contemporary Armenian composers in Europe: Mansuryan, Avetisyan, Israelyan, Astvatsatryan. On your observation, how much is the Western classic music world aware of our composers?

Yes, I did that. One had to do something for Armenian living composers. Each occasion was good to propose or to put their music in my concert programs. In 2001, I broadcast a project on Armenian contemporary music for one week on Radio France/France Culture, but as Armenian musicians themselves are often performing Komitas rather than living composers, the classical music world does not know much if there is something very significant happening in contemporary music in Armenia. Armenians must understand that if they are not advertising their own culture, no one will do it for them, and they can tell that no one respects their geniuses! This is very unhealthy and dangerous. I hope the young generation of leaders and cultural managers will make the difference between this and the arrogance or the victimization.

Young composers should understand that the best is to work on the evolution of Armenian classical contemporary music without copying westerners, but create a very interesting style.

Experience shows that diasporan musicians have been, unfortunately, not so welcomed in Armenia. However, you decided to move to Armenia. So how is your professional life here?

Well, as you see my professional life has been and has nothing to do with where I am living. I am and have always been a freelance conductor/musician, so I live where

I want to live and I work where they invite me to work and conduct. This way of life can be incomprehensible by a lawyer, a doctor or... but for me this is normal and I love it. So, I am taking advantage of my personal conception of life.

As about diasporan musicians welcomed or not in Armenia, I will answer very frankly to this question: Armenia has a very small population and few working places, which are distributed to family members, friends.

All Armenians are sure to be "talented" so why do they need diasporans and well-known musicians? And another question: do diasporan musicians need to prove themselves in Armenia? In my case, no, but many wanted to be accepted here. There is, as in Soviet time, no invitation to perform, unless the Armenian musician is rich or found support and can pay for his performance fees. The second thing I want to tell you is much more dangerous for Armenia's musical culture. To make known our culture outside Armenia is very new, since 2022 and the exported music is Komitas and some other chamber music compositions of Khachaturian, Babajanian and some Soviet time composers' music. Armenians convinced themselves that there are not very good Armenian composers to be shown outside. This is a destructive and dangerous self-underestimating thought of all Armenians, both inside and outside.

Young composers and new music need our help and there is very little representation of them, unless the composer left Armenia for abroad. One thing is for sure: nobody is waiting for them and the Armenian communities are not interested in them. This immigration is not a solution for Armenian musicians: how many of them are working in the music sector? Musical education must be developed and adequate for the small country and for the world's quality needs. The country needs a cultural/educational management concept.

Since independence, 1992 to 1998, I have come to Armenia with proposals for collaborations to National Opera, Chamber Orchestra, Composers Union, Music Schools, State Conservatory financed by the French Government Cultural Department or by myself. In 2017, I received a proposal from Armenia National Opera and Composers Union and since then nothing has happened. I suppose they are not interested in collaborating with any diasporans.

Was that a solution to develop the musical culture? Did they not need to collaborate with experienced diasporan musicians?

This "mille feuille" is the reason that today there are copycat young composers. I hope it will change soon because this will be the death of the future musical culture of Armenia.

As for performers, Armenia needs to rethink its musical education policy. Very high quality of musical education can be only for the very talented ones. Talented young musicians are very few and they are leaving the country for education and are not coming back.

So, you see the country's social/economical/cultural situation needs to be clarified. After saying this, I always think the verse from "The Gathering of Mice" by Atabek Khnkoyan: "Who will hang the bell?" If these words need an explanation: who will decide the change and go to the progress? This is one of the dilemmas that we must solve.

(For more information about Andreassian, please visit <http://nvart.andreassian.free.fr/>)

'Armenians in Film' to Be Presented at Fresno State

FILMS, from page 12

converges with the spellbinding score of Armenian-Australian jazz band, Zela Margossian Quintet in "The Road." This international art-film collaboration catches you from its opening, luring you into a liminal desert space, blurring the bounds between diorama and reality. Circumnavigate these stories of isolation and connection through the opulent and atmospheric eye of a filmmaking collective poised from their recent experimental opera film, "A Delicate Fire." Directed by Charlotte Mungomery, 8 minutes.

"The Mud": Rafael is approaching his home. At the entrance he notices a lone goose. No one in the village keeps geese. When he opens the door the goose sneaks inside. Without removing his dirty shoes, Rafael rushes after the goose and catches it. When in the middle of the room he notices that he hadn't removed shoes and that the room is now dirty. He takes off the shoes and without cleaning the dirt marks on the floor leaves the house to climb the mountain. Shortly afterward Ashkhen, Rafael's wife, returns home and sees the disappearing footprints and the feathers on the floor and the mystery unfolds...Directed by Vahan Grigoryan, 11 minutes.

Admission to the film screening and discussion is free and free parking is available.



ARTS & CULTURE

Recipe
Corner



by Christine
Vartanian



Kohar Avakian's Cherished
Family Recipe *Tutum*

“When I was a young bride, I went to my in-law’s house every week so I could learn how to make the Armenian dishes my husband grew up with and enjoyed eating. And I always enjoyed eating what my in-laws made!” - Crystal Avakian

Amber Balakian at Balakian Farms in Reedley, CA writes: “There’s nothing better than a cherished family recipe that has been passed down for generations. With just one bite, memories can flood in and bring us back to special times and moments. We’re pleased to share this recipe from our dear and talented friend, Kohar Avakian. Kohar’s recipe for *tutum* (*tutumi gud* is pumpkin or squash seed in Armenian), has been passed down to her mother, Crystal, from her father’s mother, Kohar’s beloved grandmother, Nene, who lived for many years in Worcester, MA. See: <https://www.facebook.com/balakian-farms>

“My favorite Armenian recipe comes with a story and a long history,” says Kohar. “This hearty, tomato-based pumpkin stew recipe has been passed down to my Black/Nipmuc mother from Nene, my Armenian (Marashtsi/Beirutsi) paternal grandmother. Thanks to the amazing heirloom tomato products of a Black-Armenian, female-owned farm @balakianfarms, my mother made this dish on my birthday. She made the recipe in a pressure cooker, and the results were outstanding. Nene passed away in 2006 when I was 10, but her memory lives on through her character, spirit and many skills -- and the traditional Armenian recipes she lovingly prepared for her children and family during her lifetime.”

“My grandmother, Semagul (Nene) Yeranian Avakian, was born and raised in Beirut. Her mother was Takouhie Boudakian from Gesaria and her father was Movses Yeranian from Marash, a place that she kept alive in her stories and recollections to my family. She passed down a thick red book to us, preserving the history of Marash between its pages, she said. She was a great orator and would always bless our family meals. She was a nurse and my very own Armenian school teacher. She migrated to the United States as a result of the civil war in Beirut because of a dream she had, which led to the rest of my extended family finding refuge in Worcester,” says Kohar.

“Nahabed Avakian (my grandfather) was born in Yozgat, Turkey in 1920,”



Kohar Avakian and her mother Crystal Avakian (photos courtesy Kohar Avakian)

says Kohar. “As a result of the Armenian Genocide, he fled to Syria as an orphaned child and eventually found refuge in Lebanon, where he met my grandmother Nene. Although he died two years before I was born, my father’s stories rendered him larger than life. The luminous shadow of his life remains imprinted upon mine. I feel the reverberation of my grandparent’s sacrifices today. And through my father’s eyes, I see him more clearly. Through his eyes, I am able to recognize my own.”

“Here’s my tribute to the many exceptional, determined mothers, aunts, and grandmothers like Nene who nourished and sustained generation after generation of strong, independent daughters and granddaughters through the centuries. It’s because of these resilient, spirited women that I continue to have faith that our future daughters, sisters and children will have greater opportunities to thrive and succeed in anything they want to do or be,” adds Kohar. “I cherish my parent’s marriage of 37 years, and my mother’s deep love and support for her family and children. I believe my grandmother is with me and by my side in all that I do -- I think of her whenever we make this recipe.”

“As a fourth-generation farmer,” says Amber, “I set out to create healthy and tasty products at our company. Using my Grandma Stella’s recipe passed down through generations, we created our popular line of Organic Blended Heirloom Tomatoes. Balakian Farms is a women-owned business today, and we’re bringing a new freshness and sweetness to cooks and kitchens around the world. We continue to believe all tomatoes are created equal no matter their shape, size or color. Balakian Farm’s Organic Blended Red Heirloom Tomato Blend has a classic flavor profile that will intensify any of your favorite family recipes.”

To purchase the Balakian Farms heirloom tomatoes used in Kohar’s recipe, go to: <https://balakianfarms.com/products/organic-blended-red-heirloom-tomatoes>

Nene Avakian’s Tutum

For this recipe, you’ll need: a large pot, Dutch oven, pressure cooker or Instant Pot (of your choice). This recipe was made in a pressure cooker:

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 pound of beef/lamb, cut into one-inch cubes
- 1 medium onion, diced or chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 cans chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- 3 cups fresh or frozen pumpkin cubes
- 4 tablespoons olive oil, to taste
- 1 (15-oz.) can diced tomatoes
- 2 cups Balakian Farms Organic Blended Heirloom Tomatoes
- 2 cups water or beef broth
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons dried crushed mint
- Salt, pepper to taste
- 1/2 teaspoon allspice

PREPARATION:

Chop one medium onion and soften it in two tablespoons of oil in a pressure cooker.

Remove the onions and set them to the side. Add two more tablespoons of oil to the pressure cooker and brown the beef. Add the onions back into the pressure cooker with the garlic, and cook for another minute or two. Add salt, pepper, and allspice.

Add the diced tomatoes, the Balakian Farms Organic Blended Heirloom Tomatoes, the water or beef broth, and tomato paste, and stir.

Bring everything to a boil and lower the heat, allowing the ingredients to simmer until the meat is softened (cook for 10-15 minutes here, or longer, depending on taste.)

Once the meat is softened, add the chickpeas and fresh or frozen cubed pumpkin (1 1/2-inch cubes). Let ingredients simmer and cook until the vegetables and pumpkin have softened. Add lemon juice and mint leaves. Stir, season to taste, and cook for 5 more minutes total. Check seasonings and serve.

Recipe contributed by Kohar Dzovig Avakian.

Kohar Avakian is an Armenian, Black, and Nipmuc scholar and a proud member of the Armenian community of Worcester, MA. She is currently a Ph.D. Candidate in American Studies at Yale University.

Kohar graduated from Dartmouth College in 2017 with a B.A. with Honors in History, modified with Native American Studies, cum laude. As a Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellow, she completed a senior thesis on the history of legal whiteness in the U.S., using the case study of Armenian immigrants in Worcester—the first Armenian community in America. For her doctoral research, she plans to continue studying racial formation in the Armenian diaspora within the broader contexts of settler colonialism, slavery, and Asian exclusion. Through historical photography and oral history research methods, she strives to explore the palimpsestic histories of her Armenian, Black, and Native ancestors in order to illuminate the intersections of race, migration, and genocide in the United States at large.

Connect at:
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Books

Waterman and Kurkjian Discuss *What She Left Behind* at Watertown Public Library

By Ken Martin
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

WATERTOWN — On January 23, author Victoria Atamian Waterman sat down for a discussion about her new novel, *What She Left Behind*, at the Watertown Public Library, with award-winning journalist Stephen Kurkjian.

The event was jointly sponsored by the Armenian Museum of America.

The book is a historical novel that spans multiple generations, from the declining days of the Ottoman Empire in Turkey in 1915 to the Armenian communities in Rhode Island and Massachusetts during the 1990s. The book focuses on the women who became the pillars of reconstructed communities after the Armenian Genocide. It is based on stories from Waterman's own family.

The auditorium at the Watertown Public Library was full, with audience members coming from as far away as Fitchburg and Worcester, as well as from Rhode Island. Attendees took part in a lively question and answer session about Waterman's family past and her ideas for creating the novel and its characters. In addition, Kurkjian spoke about his family origins and a personal visit with his father to their ancestral home in old Armenia.

(Photos by Ken Martin)



Victoria Atamian Waterman and Stephen Kurkjian in conversation



Ardash - orphan photos in Greece



Victoria, Lucy, Mariam and other young women whose names are not known. Victoria was author Waterman's great-aunt.



Portraits from Aleppo pre-1921



Lucy and Ardash's wedding, 1936



Victoria Atamian Waterman signing copies of her book after the discussion



Victoria Atamian Waterman

ARTS & CULTURE

Fresno Book Signing of *The Dignity of Being American*

FRESNO — A book signing event for a recently published book, *The Dignity of Being American*, took place on Wednesday, January 10, at the Armenian Museum of Fresno, located at the University of California Center in Fresno, California. Co-authored by Varoujan Der Simonian and Sophia Mekhitarian, the book records never before published stories of 14 displaced persons and their families who settled in Fresno after World War II, tracing the DP’s paths and the trials they endured. The book highlights the extensive involve-

ment of George Mardikian, the founder of ANCHA (American National Committee to Aid Homeless Armenians), Brigadier General Haig Shekerjian and attorney Suren Saroyan. POWs and untold number of Armenians — by some estimates 600,000 Armenians under Nazi-controlled Europe during World War II, are presented in the book. “This is a significant part of our history that often has been overlooked,” commented Der Simonian of the Armenian Museum of Fresno and the co-author of the book. “It is our duty to recognize the role that these men and women played before, during and following World War II in saving thousands of Armenian lives,” said Der Simonian. “I wonder where we would be now

Hoover. The essay is being published for the first-time courtesy of Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and Museum. Almost all the copies of this limited-edition of the recently published book were sold. The book signing was scheduled from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. However, the museum’s galleries were packed with an enthusiastic crowd that lasted past 5:30 p.m. Contributors to the Fresno ANCHA Monument received a complimentary copy. A photographic exhibition titled “The Saga and the Triumph of the Displaced Persons” complimenting the content of the book is currently on display at the Armenian Museum of Fresno. Copies may be purchased or ordered from the Armenian Museum of Fresno at \$60.00 per copy.



Varoujan Der Simonian presenting a copy of the book *The Dignity of Being American* to Joan Schoettler, author of *The Honey Jar*

ment of George Mardikian, the founder of ANCHA (American National Committee to Aid Homeless Armenians), Brigadier General Haig Shekerjian and attorney Suren Saroyan. “It’s been our mission to focus on the accomplishments of our ANCHA leaders and affiliates for their magnanimous undertaking and to preserve our history for future generations. Heroes they were, and so shall remain,” said co-author Mekhitarian, who herself was once labeled as a displaced person. Extensive coverage of the role of unsung heroes, including Dr. Artashes Abeghian, Generals Drastamat Kanaian (Dro) and Garegin Nejdeh, Arsen Taplatsian, Misak Torlakian, Vahan Papazian, Garo Kevorkian and others, who saved thousands of

if it weren’t for unsung heroes’ patriotism, dedication, and commitment - their call to serve their own people, who were far away from their homeland.” The 260-page book includes over 300 photos highlighting the life of the Armenians at Funkerkaserne DP Camp near Stuttgart, Germany. It covers the ANCHA Monument in Fresno, all six panels placed on the monument’s pedestal, that was appropriately placed next to the Sunday School Building entrance at the Holy Trinity Church in Fresno. It also covers an oral history interview with George Mardikian; and an essay by Mardikian titled “Three Meals for the Chief” – providing detailed explanations of what, and how he would prepare three meals – breakfast, lunch and dinner, for his friend, President Herbert



Co-authors Varoujan Der Simonian and Sophia Matewosian-Mekhitarian during the book signing

CALENDAR

OF EVENTS & PROGRAMS

MASSACHUSETTS

FEBRUARY 5 — St. James Armenian Church Men’s Club Welcomes Harvey Leonard, Chief Meteorologist Emeritus, WCVB Channel 5. Monday. Mezza 6:15 pm , 7; pm . Losh Kebab & Kheyma, dinner. \$20.00 per person, 465 Mount Auburn St. Watertown, MA. Church office 617 923-8860.

FEBRUARY 7 — CELEBRATING! Making authentic Armenian lavash with Arman Manoukian, owner, The House of Lavash. Virtual, on Wednesday, 5 p.m. Welcome by Cindy Fitzgibbon, WCVB TV5. For link to register, <https://www.armenianheritagepark.org/events>.

FEBRUARY 10 — St. James Reunion Dance Featuring The Yerakouyn Band and DJ Arden. Hosted by the St. James ACYOA Seniors. All ages welcome. Mezza will be served. St. James Armenian Church, 465 Mount Auburn St, Watertown MA. Tickets: \$65 per person. Advance purchase only by February 1. For tickets please visit: tiny.cc/reuniondance.

FEBRUARY 10 — Poon Paregentan (“Great Carnival”) Dinner-Dance. Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church, 180 Old Westford Rd., Chelmsford, MA. A terrific family evening of great food, music and dancing. Featuring the fabulous Ani Ensemble – Joe Kouyoumjian, Oud; Dave Anisbigian, guitar and vocals; Art Chingris, Dumbeg; and Ara Jeknavorian, clarinet. Also featuring the latest dance tunes from Armenia and America Pop music. Adults: \$35. Students: \$15. Children under 6: free. Paid reservation must be made by February 7 either on the church website , or by contacting Corie Horan, coriehoran@gmail.com, 978-967-6423.

FEBRUARY 11 — Encounters and convergence: An Aesthetic of Mind, Spirit and Vision” Lecture and Presentation by Dr. Seta B. Dadoyan. On the occasion of the publication of her *Encounters and Convergences: A Book of Ideas and Art* (2023). Sunday, 3 p.m. Free and Open to the Public. Armenian Cultural Foundation, 441 Mystic St., Arlington.

FEBRUARY 24 — 129th Anniversary of the Lowell Aharonian Gomideh of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation. Dinner and Program featuring Gev Iskajyan, Executive Director of the Armenian National Committee of Artsakh. Presentation on “Artsakh: The Inside Story. From Victorious Republic to Loss of Independence.” Jaffarian Hall, St. Gregory Armenian Church, 158 Main St., No. Andover. 6 p.m. Adults - \$35. Students - \$15. For reservations, please contact Armen at 978-265-9479, armenjeknavorian@gmail.com; or Ara, 617-803-2612, ara.a.jeknavorian@gmail.com. Portion of proceeds to benefit Artsakh refugees.

FEBRUARY 25 — Under the Snow Moon! Virtual program at 4 p.m. Welcome. Meet and Greet. Virtually walk the Labyrinth. Share wishes for the Wishing Tree. Enjoy a musical performances. For link to register, visit <https://www.armenianheritagepark.org/events>.

APRIL 6 — Concert by Vahan Artsruni (guitar) and Nelly Manukyan (flute). Premiere performance of works inspired by the poetry of Komitas, complemented by arrangements of Sharakans by Mesrop Mashtots, original songs based on the works of renowned poet Razmik Davoyan (1940-2022). Saturday, 4 p.m. Armenian Cultural Foundation, 441 Mystic St., Arlington. Co-sponsored by The Armenian Music Festival of Rhode Island, Amaras Art Alliance. Donation: \$30 through ACF office (781-646-3090) or by visiting amarasonline.com

Send Calendar Items to the Mirror-Spectator: To send calendar items to the Mirror-Spectator, email alin@mirrorspectator.com or alin.gregorian@gmail.com. You can also visit our website, www.mirrorspectator.com, and find the “calendar” section under the heading “More.” You can also mail them to the Armenian Mirror-Spectator, 755 Mount Auburn St., Watertown, MA 02472. All calendar entries must be received by noon on Monday before publication. There is no fee for calendar entries.



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**MIRROR
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COMMENTARY

What Does Azerbaijan Want?

By Benjamin Poghosyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

After the military takeover of Nagorno Karabakh by Azerbaijan in September 2023 and the forced displacement of Armenians, there were some hopes in Armenia and abroad that an Armenia – Azerbaijan peace agreement was within reach. These hopes were based on the assumption that Azerbaijan received everything it could dream of just a few years ago.

After September 2023, Azerbaijan controlled the entire Nagorno-Karabakh, with only a handful of Armenians remaining there. The Armenian government accepted that reality with no intention to challenge it, while the international community did nothing tangible to punish Azerbaijan or create conditions to bring Armenians back. President Ilham Aliyev proved to everyone that he was not a “golden boy” who became president just because he was the son of a prominent leader – Heydar Aliyev – and lacked basic governance skills. He succeeded where his father failed, taking control over Nagorno Karabakh and raising Azerbaijani flags in Shushi and Stepanakert.

It seemed that the time had arrived to make peace with Armenia – a peace that would cement Azerbaijani control over Nagorno Karabakh and open the way for Armenia-Turkey normalization. Normalized relations with Azerbaijan and Turkey might allow Armenia to take tangible steps to decrease its dependence on Russia. Economically, Armenia might replace Russian gas with imports from Azerbaijan and divert some of Armenian exports going to Russia to Turkish markets. In the security realm, normalized relations with Azerbaijan and Turkey would probably make the presence of a Russian military base and border troops in Armenia less necessary. Thus, by signing a peace agreement with Armenia, Azerbaijan might pave the way to a more stable region and less Russian presence in the South Caucasus.

The EU and the US may have had these hopes in late September 2023. They looked forward to the triumph of Western facilitation efforts – a signature of the Armenia – Azerbaijan peace agreement and the beginning of the end of the Russian presence in the South Caucasus. Four months have passed, but the peace agreement has not been signed yet, and there are growing doubts that it may be signed soon. The reason is not Armenia’s reluctance or Armenia’s demands to secure the right of returns of Armenians to Nagorno Karabakh, to provide autonomous status to Nagorno Karabakh, or to withdraw Azerbaijani troops from occupied territories of Armenia.

The primary reasons are Azerbaijan’s demands of an extra-territorial corridor via Armenia from Azerbaijan to Nakhijevan, Azerbaijan’s rejection to agree on concrete maps for delimitation and demarcation process, and the Azerbaijani de facto refusal to recognize Armenian territorial integrity within Soviet Armenia administrative borders, despite the fact that Azerbaijan signed numerous statements in Brussels on accepting 1991 Alma-Ata declaration as a base for defining borders.

By putting forward these demands, Azerbaijan effectively killed the possibility of signing a comprehensive agreement. As an alternative, Azerbaijan offers the possibility of signing a “framework agreement,” which will leave open all outstanding issues between Armenia and Azerbaijan while cementing the post-September 2023 status quo. Even if a framework agreement is signed, the region will mostly stay the same. It will not bring lasting stability, keep the door open for military escalation, and not open the way for Armenia – Turkey normalization. Azerbaijani behavior makes it clear that Baku is not interested in having peace in the South Caucasus, even a peace which will be based on the complete victory of Azerbaijan in the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, a so-called “victor’s peace.”

There could be several explanations behind this behavior of Azerbaijan. From a domestic political perspective, President Aliyev may need to continue to have external enemies as a factor to rally the population behind his rule. In this scenario, the concept of “Western Azerbaijan” may replace Nagorno Karabakh, making the return of Azerbaijanis to Western Azerbaijan or actual Azerbaijani control over it a new national dream, similar to the “liberation of Karabakh.”

Another explanation could be Azerbaijan’s desire to continue to weaken Armenia and, as the end goal, to make Armenia a non-viable state by creating a land border between Azerbaijan and Nakhijevan through Armenian territory and closing the Armenian border with Iran. There could be other explanations, too. However, one thing is clear. Nagorno Karabakh was only one piece of the bigger puzzle of Azerbaijan’s and probably Turkey’s strategy towards Armenia. It means that even if Armenia accepts all demands of Azerbaijan, including the establishment of the extra-territorial corridor, “return of enclaves,” deployment of Azerbaijanis into Syunik and other regions of Armenia, and others, Azerbaijan will not sign a deal and will put forward new demands. It will be a never-ending story, weakening Armenia more and more.

Armenia is now in a very challenging situation. After the complete takeover of Nagorno Karabakh by Azerbaijan, the Syunik, and Vayots Dzor regions are sandwiched between Azerbaijan and Nakhijevan, military balance continues to remain in favor of Azerbaijan, Russia – Armenia relations have been at their lowest point since 1991, and the EU and the US have not offered any viable hard security guarantees. This situation requires prudent and calculated actions from Armenia. However, one thing is clear, the continuation of the appeasement policy toward Azerbaijan will not solve Armenia’s problems and will only worsen the situation.

(Benyamin Poghosyan is chairman of the Center for Political and Economic Strategic Studies in Yerevan, and Senior Research Fellow at the Applied Policy Research Institute (APRI) of Armenia.)

Azerbaijan’s Most Boring Election Campaign Ever

By Bahruz Samadov

President Aliyev’s “challengers” have nothing but nice things to say about him (Azerbaijani Public TV screengrab)

So far, the campaign for the February 7 presidential election is probably the most boring in Azerbaijan’s history.

Not because of its predictability. All elections in Azerbaijan, which has been classified as a “hegemonic electoral authoritarian regime” where elections serve only to strengthen the incumbent, are notoriously predictable.

Nor because of the praise being lavished on the regime by all the candidates. That’s not new either.

Instead, it’s because the public is disengaged from politics to an unprecedented degree.

That in turn is caused by the genuine popularity of incumbent Ilham Aliyev, who continues to bask in the glory of Azerbaijan’s restoration of sovereignty over the previously contested Nagorno-Karabakh region, and the fact that his government is ramping up repressions ahead of the vote.

Apathy has grown sharply since the last presidential election in 2018, which was accompanied by at least some actual politics.

Back then, the genuine opposition National Council not only boycotted the poll, it organized several massive rallies in Baku in the run-up to the election.

But no major protests have been staged in the capital since January 2019. Only a few dozen people took part in a rally against the continuing Covid-related closure of the country’s land borders in July 2022 that was organized by now-imprisoned opposition activist Tofiq Yagublu.

Since then, opposition parties have largely stopped trying to mobilize the public around any cause.

This is connected to the fact that, since the summer of 2020 the country’s political agenda has been dominated by relations with Armenia and the Karabakh issue. After Baku’s military victories in 2020 and 2023, which resulted in the Armenian exodus from Karabakh, the government discourse has grown more and more anti-Western. The collective West is accused of double standards, pro-Armenian stances, and jealousy.

Ahead of the Azerbaijani delegation’s preemptive withdrawal from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), pro-government media waged a campaign against the “Islamopho-

bic and Turkophobic” Council of Europe - an institution that defended Azerbaijani civil society with its Court of Human Rights, which often rendered verdicts in favor of former political prisoners, including compensation.

While the upcoming election will be observed by the OSCE, other European institutions are not invited to monitor the poll, including the European Parliament and PACE.

What do the candidates say?

Azerbaijan’s largest opposition parties are boycotting this poll, as they have done for the past two presidential elections and the past six elections overall.

And as in years before, Aliyev’s “challengers” are in fact largely sycophants who echo the regime’s talking points.

In the first debate on the public channel ITV, all candidates praised Ilham Aliyev’s role in the victory in the Karabakh conflict.

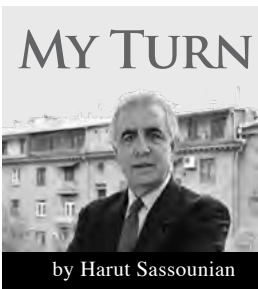
One nonpartisan candidate, Zahid Oruj, directly called on his supporters to vote for the government.

In the following debate, the nonpartisan candidate Fuad Aliyev called for closer cooperation with Russia- and China-dominated entities such as the Shanghai

continued on next page



COMMENTARY



Parliamentary Assembly of Council of Europe Voted 76-10 to Kick Azerbaijan Out

With each passing day, the noose is tightening around Pres. Ilham Aliyev’s neck. The European Union’s Chief of Foreign Policy Josep Borrell warned Azerbaijan on

January 22 that there would be ‘severe consequences’ if Armenia’s territory were to be violated. The French Senate adopted a resolution by a vote of 336 to 1 on January 17 supporting Armenia’s territorial integrity and calling for sanctions against Azerbaijan. On January 18, Russia’s Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov publicly contradicted Aliyev’s repeated demands that Armenia provide Azerbaijan a “Corridor” through “Zangezur.” Lavrov said that there is no mention of “Zangezur Corridor” in the Nov. 10, 2020 agreement signed by the leaders of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia.

The latest blow to Azerbaijan was delivered last week by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) which voted overwhelmingly to reject the credentials of Azerbaijan’s delegates, thus ejecting Baku’s participation in its meetings for at least one year. By a vote of 76 to 10, with four abstentions, PACE delegates decided to expel Azerbaijan on January 24, 2024.

The resolution adopted by PACE stated: “Very serious concerns remain as to [Azerbaijan’s] ability to conduct free and fair elections, the separation of powers, the weakness of its legislature vis-à-vis the executive, the independence of the judiciary and respect for human rights, as illustrated by numerous judgments of the European Court of Human Rights and opinions of the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission).” PACE recalled its previous resolutions which had referred to multiple problems with Azerbaijan, including the functioning of democratic institutions, organized crime, corruption, and money laundering, political prisoners, restrictions on NGO activities, violations of the rights of LGBTI people, non-implementation of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights, transnational repression as a growing threat to the rule of law and human rights, Pegasus and similar spyware and secret state surveillance, and the cases of at least 18 Azeri journalists and media actors who are currently in detention. PACE concluded that “more than 20 years after joining the Council of Europe, Azerbaijan has not fulfilled [its] major commitments.”

Referring to Artsakh, PACE mentioned its 2023 report which had specified that Azerbaijan “did not acknowledge the very serious humanitarian and human rights consequences stemming from ... the absence of free and safe access through the Lachin Corridor ... which lasted for nearly 10 months.”

PACE also condemned “the Azerbaijan army’s military operations of September 2023, which led to the flight of the entire Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia and to allegations of ‘ethnic cleansing.’”

PACE expressed its concern about Azerbaijan’s lack of cooperation with the “rapporteurs of the Monitoring Committee [who] were not allowed to meet with persons detained allegedly on politically motivated charges.” PACE was also not invited “to observe the forthcoming presidential election despite Azerbaijan’s obligation to send such an invitation as the country is under monitoring procedure.” Furthermore, Azerbaijan had refused three times the visit of a PACE rapporteur.

Ignoring Azerbaijan’s multiple violations of its commitments to the Council of Europe, Azerbaijan’s Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov condemned PACE’s decision. However, he acknowledged that Azerbaijan was ejected because of its invasion of Artsakh, which he described as “restoration by Azerbaijan of its sovereignty.”

Even though Azerbaijan had dismissed all of its violations of international law, including the numerous judgments of the European Court of Human Rights and rulings of the International Court of Justice, this time around, Baku reacted extremely negatively. The Azeri delegation in PACE announced that their country has decided to “cease its engagement with and presence at PACE until further notice.” Some have compared Azerbaijan’s withdrawal from PACE after its ejection to Nazi Germany leaving the League of Nations in 1933.

PACE’s vote was overwhelmingly against Azerbaijan because only nine Turkish delegates and one Albanian delegate voted in favor of Azerbaijan. One of the Turkish delegates even voted against Azerbaijan. Meanwhile, 76 delegates from 28 countries, including all four Armenian delegates, voted to eject Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan’s loss at PACE is Armenia’s gain:

- 1) Azerbaijan’s reputation was further tarnished after its ejection from PACE, exposing its numerous human rights violations and flagrant disregard for European values.
- 2) Baku is now deprived of the opportunity to raise its issues in Europe through PACE.
- 3) Azerbaijan will no longer be able to criticize Armenia during PACE meetings.
- 4) Azerbaijan will be unable to vote in favor of its interests and against those of Armenia at PACE meetings.

For far too long, Azerbaijan has been spoiled by the international community, particularly Western countries, blinded by Baku’s vast oil and gas supplies. After its ejection from PACE, Azerbaijan should now be expelled from the Council of Europe.

Azerbaijan’s Most Boring Election

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Cooperation Organisation, BRICS, and the Eurasian Economic Union. He also called to drift away from the “hostile” collective West.

Ultra-nationalist Elshad Musayev of the “Greater Azerbaijan Party” advocated officially laying claim to the Zangezur (Armenia’s Syunik Region), which he calls Azerbaijani “historical land.”

Surprisingly there was a modicum of criticism from MP Gudrat Hasanguliyev, the head of the Whole Azerbaijan Popular Front Party, who lamented the lack of democracy in the country and backed a transition to a parliamentary system.

He also called for renaming the country the “North Azerbaijan Republic,” a move popular among pan-Turkic nationalists as it implies territorial claims on ethnic Azeri-populated northwestern Iran.

Other candidates issued vague appeals regarding social rights and offered ideas for improving housing and education.

None mentioned the president’s name in a negative context. There was no serious criticism of the government. It was not serious political discourse.

Few people bother to watch the debates on TV, and their online views numbers are paucal. Amid the voter apathy, jailed critics and lack of serious challengers, the current government will easily be re-elected. More easily than ever.

(Bahruz Samadov is a PhD candidate in political science at Charles University in Prague. This commentary originally appeared on the website www.eurasianet.org on January 26.)

Why Take the 2024 Armenian Diaspora Online Survey?

By Aleksandr V. Gevorkyan

NEW YORK — For some growing up in a closely-knit Armenian community, which can be anywhere in the world outside of the present-day Republic of Armenia, pretty much defines their connection with the Armenian diaspora. But for a great many others, there is something else in this concept of a diaspora. For this latter group, the connection often goes beyond immediate family circles, community groups, or participation in various events. For this group it also important to do their utmost to contribute to the betterment and development of the *ancestral homeland*, the country of Armenia.

Such is the long-established view across Armenian world and, perhaps surprisingly to some, beyond. The Armenian community is said to be able to overcome the triangular cross-influence of identity, trust, and engagement infrastructure, which I discuss elsewhere in my academic work and recent general interest publication. Indeed, the perception of the Armenian diasporic community among non-Armenian observers is that of unity and dedication to the *homeland*.

Have you noticed here a subtle change of wording? The last sentence in the first paragraph uses the phrase “ancestral homeland” and the last sentence in the second paragraph just uses the operative “homeland.” The difference is minor, editorial even, yet crucial for any serious scholar or policy maker working in the diaspora engagement field. You see, on its own “homeland” implied almost physical connection between a migrant and the geographic patch of land from which they draw their roots from. On the other hand, “ancestral” suggests several degrees of physical, emotional, mental, and moral separation between an individual living in the diaspora and that geographic and political entity that exists on the world map today. Yet, there remains in this case an unclear cultural and a patriotic link mixed with one’s self-identity.

Isn’t this a story of the Armenian nation’s history? Many of those living today in the Western diaspora have very limited personal connection to modern day Armenia. Often, the

connection is in just a name, shared history and some culture, because the language is still different (the Western Armenian vs. the Eastern Armenian). Even more so, especially, for those in the Americas a trip to Armenia is often a once-in-a-lifetime experience, largely due to the cost but also due to the persisting challenges of a developing country that often surprise even the most dedicated remote donors to various types of financial and humanitarian aid to the country.

One could continue here with probably on an all too familiar path of raising one concern and obstacle to a productive relationship between diaspora and Armenia. Or, one could also argue, as I have partially admitted as well in a recent policy report to the International Organization for Migration-Armenia, that the global Armenian diaspora has been of a massive determining factor in the country’s development.

True, but have we fully discovered and uncovered the diaspora’s potential? In fact, what do we really know about the Armenian diaspora’s engagement with Armenia the country? As a researcher, economist and someone with strong interest in the diaspora’s economics, I would argue that we do not yet know much and significant efforts are needed to revitalize diaspora research and data collection.

In that, the recent Gulbenkian Foundation’s Armenian Diaspora Survey stands as one of those incredible and much timely monumental studies. With its global coverage and explicit effort to capture the diversity of the Armenian diaspora’s voices, that survey is destined to become an essential source to current and future diaspora scholars.

But more is needed.

Specifically, I would argue there is a need for understanding the diaspora’s (to generalize for a moment) motivations towards connecting with Armenia. Back in 2015, following up on my other diaspora research efforts, I launched a first survey designed from such economic development point of view. The survey closed in 2018 with over 500 responses and an incredible wealth of information. Thanks to the online distribution, the survey represented a wide array of socio-economic profiles.

At the time, one of the critical outcomes was a realization of hidden potential, yet untapped by the established community groups (one would be surprised at this) but willing to connect. Missing was a clear-cut engagement infrastructure, which I ventured to propose to be a digital portal connecting individuals

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Canada Drops Weapons Export Embargo To Turkey, Including Drone Technology

OTTAWA (Reuters) — Canada on January 29 said it had dropped weapons export controls to Turkey, including drone optical technology, according to a notice posted online, saying that from now on it would review all exports on a case-by-case basis.

Canada suspended drone technology sales to Turkey, a fellow member of NATO, in 2020 after concluding its optical equipment attached to Turkish-made drones had been used by Azerbaijan while fighting ethnic Armenian forces in Nagorno Karabakh, an enclave Baku has since retaken.

Canada had linked resolving the export freeze with Turkey’s welcoming of Sweden into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which it did last week.

Ottawa’s announcement on Monday confirms a Reuters exclusive published last week, which suggested that the move followed Turkey’s removing its blocking of Sweden’s membership into NATO.

Under the agreement to restart exports, Turkey will clearly indicate whether the items will be re-exported or transferred

to a non-NATO country, with the exception of Ukraine, and in what form the item will be re-exported, the statement said.

Canada will examine each export on case-by-case basis and said it can cancel permits at any time if there is misuse, the statement said.

The notification process, which is standard under the international arms trade, covers Wescam sensors used in Turkey’s Bayraktar TB2 drones and other dual-use goods and arms-related exports.

The decision was greeted with anger in the Armenian community in Canada.

“The Armenian National Committee of Canada (ANCC) condemns the recent decision by the Government of Canada to lift its longstanding arms embargo on Turkey,” the group said in a statement online.

“This decision has raised alarming concerns within the Armenian-Canadian community, as it compromises Canada’s commitment to human rights, international security, and justice.”

Why Take the 2024 Armenian Diaspora Online Survey?

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in the diaspora with those in Armenia. At the end of the day, it is through the diversity of diaspora initiatives that Armenia has seen some macroeconomic progress since the dark 1990s...

It is odd how history delivers its unforgiving blows. Today we are at the stage where again, one must be asking about what can a diaspora do to provide support to Armenia’s development. Yet, the question is even more complex now: what can Armenia do to sustain diaspora communities in the longer run (a topic also discussed in my IOM report mentioned above) and maintain a mutually healthy relationship. There is a high degree of cross-interdependence that transpires here and the lesson is global as it pertains to the recent rise in generic diaspora studies across the world.

To attempt to tackle these difficult questions one must have a somewhat accurate or at the very minimum directional information on the motivations and potential of the diaspora, as mentioned in the beginning of this essay. The indicators are necessarily subtle and the true mood would rarely be displayed in public, hidden deep within individual diaspora member’s operational mode.

It is for these reasons that I recently launched a new anonymous survey, the Armenian Diaspora Online Survey 2024, without any funding or support from any group. The survey comprises more targeted questions on the socio-economic (including) cultural connection between diaspora and Armenia. The intention here is very explicit to reach those respondents for whom Armenia is indeed an “ancestral homeland” and not only a tangible physical “homeland.” It is an attempt to hear from those voices that often do not have a public platform but are endowed with unyielding enthusiasm and hope and that massive untapped capacity of skills, knowledge, expertise, and professional network building that so many scholars and policymakers search for but rarely find.

So far, the responses to the new survey are as illuminating and educational as ever with strong support for the effort. It is my hope that future surveys by colleagues and scholars in the field will follow. And one day, we will be able to sketch a profile of an Armenian diaspora. For now, even if we think we know, we do not really know and the survey’s preliminary results confirm that, about what constitutes a true Armenian diaspora beyond the visible surface.

Until that day come’s here’s a direct link to the Armenian Diaspora Online Survey 2024 <https://forms.gle/dov2xvwrBZkkGx-gk7> and I would be thankful for anyone who is willing to take the survey and help spread the word and reach larger audiences.

Our engagement can only be as strong as the knowledge about who we are and our true motivations.

(Aleksandr V. Gevorkyan, Ph.D., holds the Henry George Chair in Economics and is an associate professor at the Peter J. Tobin College of Business at St. John’s University in New York City. He is a Senior Research Fellow at the Vincentian Center for Church and Society; a Research Fellow at the Center for Global Business Stewardship; an expert (economics) for the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations; and on the boards of the Henry George School of Social Science and the Armenian Economic Association. Dr. Gevorkyan is the author of *Transition Economies: Transformation, Development, and Society in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union* (Routledge, 2018). Contact him via e: gevorkya@stjohns.edu | w: <http://agevorkyan.com> | X @avgevorkyan)

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Sunday 24 to 26.03

Wedn. 27.03

Thursday 28.03

Good Friday 29.03

Saturday 30.03

Sunday 31.03

Monday 01.04

Tuesday 02.04

Wednesday 03.04

Rep Meet, assist at Cairo international airport & transfer to Sonesta Hotel. Goganian club at night

Half day visit Citadel of Mohamed Ali & Gayer Anderson museum and Khan El Khalily & El Moezz St., lunch at Ain El Sira restaurant.. HMEM at night

After breakfast, visit of Egyptian Museum in El Tahrir & Abdin Palace - Lunch

Breakfast and check-out, transfer to Cairo airport flight CAI/ASW, visit the High Dam, transfer to Basma hotel, Fullucka tour on the Nile. (optional Nubian village visit as optional visit)

Abu Simbel visit, check in Nile cruise M/S Beau Soleil, Aswan market visit

Aswan visits: Philae temple & the unfinished Obelisk, lunch on boat, Kom Ombo city & sail to Edfu City

Edfu temple by Hantour (horse carriage), sail to Luxor city crossing Esna Locks
Upon arrival you will visit Luxor East bank, Karnak temple & Luxor temple. Sound & light show in Karnak temple

Visit west bank in Luxor, Valley of the Kings & Hatshepsut temple and two statues of Memnon, lunch and transfer from Luxor to Hurghada Prima Life Makadi resort

Free days to enjoy the beach, the red sea & the resort.
All-inclusive basis (Alcoholic beverages excluded)

Breakfast, check-out and Hurghada flight to Cairo, bus trip to Alexandria, check-in Romance Alexandria hotel, bus tour & free time

Alexandria tour: Qaitbay citadel, Alexandria library, Pompey's pillar, Kom el Shoqafaw catacombs, Montazah Palace - lunch at Yacht club (Not included)
(Optional visit: Al Alamein. Early departure, visits and joining group upon return – will miss some of Alexandria visits)

Breakfast and check-out, visit of Pyramids & Sphinx area PLUS tour of Sheikh Zayed city, check-in to Baron Hotel in Heliopolis. Armenian club at night

Full day visits: Civilization Egyptian museum & Old Cairo and lunch at Andrea restaurant. Armenian club at night

Easter at church, Armenian cemetery and KEF night at HMEM

Shopping spree after breakfast - CFC (Cairo Festival City Mall) in the morning, small ride into New Cairo till reaching AUC and back to Almaza City Center

FREE day, at night bus transfer to the Nile Pharos night cruise, dinner & oriental show (2 hours Nile cruise) – Farewell party

Breakfast & check-out, final transfer to Cairo international airport for final departure

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