

New Armenian Government Sworn in

YEREVAN (RFE/RL, Arka) – Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and the members of his cabinet were sworn in on Monday, May 21 in a ceremony led by President Armen Sarkissian.

- Mher Grigoryan, former Ardshinbank board chairman, was appointed deputy prime minister.

- Davit Tonoyan was named Minister of Defense.

- Armenia's former ambassador to UN Zohrab Mnatsakanyan was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs.

- Mane Tandiliyan, from Pashinyan's Yelk parliamentary faction, was appointed Minister of Labor and Social Affairs.

- Artak Zeynalyan of Yelk will head the Ministry of Justice.

- Former deputy finance minister Atom Janjughazyan will serve as Minister of Finance.

- Arsen Torosyan was appointed as Health Minister.

- Former governor of the Shirak region, Artur Khachatryan, will head the Ministry of Agriculture.

- Former nature protection minister, Artsvik Minasyan will lead the Ministry of Economic Development and Investments.

- Levon Vahradyan will serve as the country's Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs.

- Suren Papikyan will head the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Development.

- Arayik Harutyunyan will head the Ministry of Education and Science.

- Former sports minister Hrachya Rostomyan was appointed Emergencies Minister.

- Artur Grigoryan is the new Minister of Energy Infrastructures and Natural Resources.

- Lilit Makunts is Culture Minister.

- Erik Grigoryan is Minister of Nature Protection.

- Ashot Hakobyan is Minister of Transport, Communication and Information Technology.

- Mkhitar Hayrapetyan was appointed Minister of Diaspora.

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The ADL delegation with President Armen Sarkissian, sixth from left.

President Armen Sarkissian Receives ADL Delegation

YEREVAN – President Armen Sarkissian of the Republic of Armenia received a delegation of leaders from the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (ADL) Central Committee and Supreme Council in his offices on Monday, May 21.

For over half an hour, a series of critical issues were examined which concern the Armenians of the homeland as much as the Armenians of the diaspora. The judgments and observations generally were positive under the circumstances created by the Velvet Revolution.

In particular, the possibility of forthcoming elections, the question of repatriation, the manner of assuring economic investments were discussed, along with the new trajectory of Armenian diaspora-homeland relations.

The ADL delegation included Vartan Nazerian, president of the Supreme Council, Hagop Avedikian, president of the Central Committee, Edmond Y. Azadian, Hagop Vartivarian, Kevork Marashlian, Armen Manvelyan, Khoren Kalinian, Edward Manoukian, and Karen Kakoyan.

Diaspora Minister, TCA Central Board Delegation Meet

YEREVAN – Newly appointed Armenian Minister of the Diaspora Mkhitar Hayrapetyan received a delegation of members of the Central Board of the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada in his offices on May 18. The delegation was composed of Edmond Y. Azadian, Hagop Vartivarian and Kevork Marashlian.

The delegates congratulated the young minister and reported on the plans of the Tekeyan Cultural Association in Armenia as well as the diaspora. In particular, possible plans for repatriation were discussed.



From left, Hagop Vartivarian, Kevork Marashlian, Minister of the Diaspora Mkhitar Hayrapetyan, and Edmond Azadian



SARDARAPAT, Armenia – In events marking the centennial of the Battle of Sardarapat, 450 youths joined the ranks of the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party. See article on page 3 and related editorial on the Battle of Sardarapat on page 17.

NEWS IN BRIEF

President Urges Prisoner to End Hunger Strike

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – President of Armenia Armen Sarkissian urged the president of the “Founding Parliament” initiative Garegin Chugaszyan not to jeopardize his health and stop his hunger strike. Sarkissian met with Chugaszyan on May 18 near the Matenadaran yard.

Chugaszyan is on hunger strike to seek the release of his fellow Founding Parliament members who are still in prison.

The parents of Armen Sarkissian and Garegin Chugaszyan have known each other for a long time and their families are friends.

Chugaszyan, 53, was chairman of the Founding Parliament initiative, an opposition movement, and was detained in 2015 for organizing riots ahead of April 24 – the Armenian Genocide commemoration day. However, the prosecution changed the detention a few days later and Chugaszyan was released on bond.

Chugaszyan later failed to appear before court. He had changed his place of residence without notifying authorities as required by law, thus violating the terms of his release.

The court issued an arrest warrant for him.

Police apprehended Chugaszyan on April 24, 2018 when he was visiting the Tsitsernakaberd memorial complex. He was arrested but after a few days released by the petition of Ararat Mirzoyan and Lena Nazaryan, MPs representing “Yelk” bloc. Ararat Mirzoyan later was appointed First Deputy Prime Minister of Armenia. Chugaszyan declared a hunger strike on April 24, the day of his arrest.

More Reserves Needed In Armenia

YEREVAN (Arka) – The number of natural reserves in Armenia should be increased, said Aram Aghasyan, the head of a department at the Ministry of Nature Protection, overseeing specially protected natural areas and arboreta.

Speaking at a news conference on May 22 he said some 452 species of plants, 40 species of mushrooms, 155 species of invertebrates and 153 species of vertebrates are included in the Red Book of Armenia. In his words, some 70 percent of the flora and fauna species are in special nature conservation areas, which means that ‘we need to create new reserves to preserve the other 30 percent of species.’

According to Aghasyan, since 2009 the territory of reserves throughout Armenia has increased by 100,000 hectares. He also noted that the latest edition of the Red Book of Armenia was released in 2010, and the next one is planned to be released in 2020, but research work should begin now.

There are now 34 specially protected natural areas in Armenia, including national parks, natural reserves, and game preserves. Their total area is 383,000 hectares.

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Leading MIT Economist Calls on Armenian People to Be Active in Political Process

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Renowned economist Daron Acemoglu, who has agreed to assist Armenia in developing its economy, said on Monday, May 21, that the youth in Armenia must turn its engagement in politics into a positive trend of changes.

“I’m happy to share my knowledge as it’s an exciting time, and at least I can do that. It’s the Armenian people who should make a step, rather than the prime minister, the MPs or judges, as well as neither me nor the Diaspora. The Armenian people, youth, who have been silent for a long time, must be engaged in politics, they should find a way to keep their participation in this and turn it into a positive trend of change. But this doesn’t mean that people should hold protests every day. They must be involved in, should not allow the repetition of mistakes made in the past two-three decades,” the economist said via live video at a discussion titled “Armenia Tomorrow: Citizen Diplomacy at Work” organized by the Institute of Armenian Studies of the University of Southern California.

Acemoglu added that citizens should be vigilant, find the right way to control via media and civil society structures in order to be assured that the new leadership is not the previous one, they are the continuation of the positive change.

“This is really a perfect opportunity of preconditions for us to move forward. At the moment it is important to create a system where there is an equal game field, there are promoting factors, opportunities and people are encouraged to effectively participate in the country’s social and economic life,” he said.

Yerevan Mayor Refuses To Quit Despite Protests

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Yerevan’s Mayor Taron Markarian ruled out his resignation on May 16 in the face of continuing protests by supporters of Armenia’s new central government whose members accuse him of corruption and mismanagement.

Markarian has been under pressure to step down since opposition leader Nikol Pashinyan replaced Serzh Sargsyan as the country’s prime minister on May 8.

More than 30 protesters broke into the municipality building on May 16 after it emerged that trees have been cut down in a nearby public park undergoing a complete reconstruction financed by a private charity. Police officers stopped them from advancing further towards Markarian’s office.

The angry protesters blocked a corridor leading to the office for nearly three hours, demanding that the mayor explain what they see as the park’s destruction and resign. They rejected a proposal by Markarian’s two deputies to vacate the building and meet with the mayor in an adjacent conference hall.

The municipal administration publicly demanded that the Armenian police take action against the intruders. The police chief, Valeri Osipian, discussed the incident with Markarian by phone afterwards.

“Why didn’t they inform us before cutting the trees?” one protester told RFE/RL’s Armenian service (Azatutyun.am). “Why didn’t they say what they are going to do?”

Alen Simonian, until now a member of Yerevan’s municipal council representing Pashinyan’s Yelk alliance, backed the protesters’ demands when he arrived at the scene. He said that Markarian, who is affiliated with Sargsyan’s Republican Party (HHK), must quit because he is part of a “political team” that has lost power in the country. Simonian also criticized Markarian’s track record.

The mayor rejected these demands when emerged from the building later in the day to speak to reporters in the presence of several dozen supporters holding a counterdemonstration there. “I condemn that,” he said. “It’s clear that there was a violation of the law. The activists broke into the municipality building and tried to disrupt the normal work of the municipality.”



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and members of his government pose for a photograph with President Armen Sarkissian after being sworn in at the presidential palace in Yerevan, May 21.

New Armenian Government Sworn in

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• Valery Osipyan was appointed chief of Police.

• Artur Vanetsyan was named director of the National Security Service.

Pashinyan said on Monday that he remains determined to force fresh parliamentary elections in Armenia.

“As I have said, pre-term elections are a priority for us,” Pashinyan told reporters after the oath of

office. “But it doesn’t mean that this is the only issue that we must solve,” he said. “The government has to function normally and it has and will have long-term programs. One thing doesn’t contradict the other.”

“After all, this government will also be taking part in the pre-term parliamentary elections. In what format? That’s a different issue,” he added.

Pashinyan called for such elections

immediately after tens of thousands of his supporters demonstrating in the streets of Yerevan forced Prime Minister and former President Serzh Sargsyan to resign on April 23. He said last week that he expects the polls to be held later this year.

Pashinyan made clear on Monday that his political team will draft such amendments before the end of June.

2018 Tekeyan Awards Winner Announced

By Sylva Asryan

YEREVAN — This year the Vahan Tekeyan Awards ceremony of the Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA), supported by the Shake Tekeyan-Ghazarian Fund of the TCA of the United States and Canada, took place on May 17 at the Tekeyan Center. These annual awards recognize and encourage the best work in various fields of Armenian culture. During its existence, over 100 worthy individuals have been recognized.

Rouben Mirzakhanyan, president of the TCA of Armenia, announced the winners, congratulated them, and thanked the committees of specialists for their work in the awards process.

Poet Manvel Mikoyan received the award in the field of literature for his collection of poetry, titled *Stvernerits andin* [Beyond the Shadows]. Edmond Y. Azadian, overseas member of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia, presented the award, declaring, “The volume *Stvernerits andin* characterizes the universal thoughts of contemporary man.” He added that the poet also “expresses his poetic anxiety concerning the nightmare of an emptying homeland.”

Azadian remarked that Mikoyan, like the Istanbul Armenian poet Zahrad, could poetically present aspects

from the course of daily life and evinced the spirit of the poet Rouben Sevak through universal and complex generalizations.

The drama award was given to the Vardan Achemyan State Theater of Gyumri for its presentation of Gabriel Garcia Marquez’s “Eyes of a Blue Dog.” Armen Elbakyan, president of the award committee, noted that the staging of Marquez’s works was as complex as the latter’s prose. However, the youth succeeded in presenting Marquez’s “black and white world, [his] sharp, laconic environment,” where it is difficult to determine the boundary between illu-

sion and reality.

The award in the field of music was given to Eduard Topchyan for his activities in 2017. Hagop Avedikian, editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Azg*, considered the competition an extraordinary phenomenon, and the award the recognition of years of effort and accomplishment, though a little late. He stressed that thanks to Topchyan, Yerevan had become a capital city of music.

In turn, Topchyan, the conductor of the Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra, declared, “It is important for me that I am a small part of music, and not the director of a musical group, and it is pleasing to receive such an honorable award.”

Khachatur Abovyan State Pedagogical University docent



Tekeyan award winners

Misak Melkonyan’s sculpture “The Violinist” received the notice of the specialists of the award committee for visual arts and sculpture. Doctor of Art Hravard Hakobyan evaluated this and Melkonyan’s sculpture “Homeland,” pointing out that in “The Violinist,” the artist wishes to make the viewer forget about the surroundings and remain only immersed in music.

All the awardees expressed their thanks for the honor of receiving these awards bearing the name of the great poet Vahan Tekeyan.

(Translated from the Armenian)



ARMENIA

The Second ADL Youth Assembly Convened at Sardarapat

SARDARAPAT, Armenia – The second Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (ADL) youth assembly took place on May 20 in the Sardarapat Complex.

Approximately 450 newly enrolled ADL members participated, along with some party leaders from Armenia and various diasporan communities, such as Vartan Nazerian, president of the ADL Supreme Council and Hagop Avedikian, chairman of the Central Committee.

Ozheni Avetisyan, chair of the ADL youth group of Armavir, led the opening ceremonies and acted as master of ceremonies throughout the event. After she spoke, Andranik Surenyan, representative of the Vanadzor Province ADL, took the floor.

Edmond Y. Azadian, member of the ADL Supreme Council and president of the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada, delivered his words of welcome, recalling the vital role of the Battle of Sardarapat and



At the Sardarapat Museum

its significance in the history of the Armenian people. He noted the undeniable participation of the ADL in this victory.

Azadian said, “Sardarapat is not a monument. It is not stone and wood. Sardarapat is blood. Today we stand on the blood of the martyrs of the heroic Battle of Sardarapat of one hundred years ago. I want you to be aware of this because we turned that blood into life. Thanks to that blood spilled here one hundred years ago, we today have an independent homeland, and in that matter, the ADL had its role. Today we humble ourselves before that blood, we humble ourselves before those heroes, who spilled that blood. We



From left, Vartkes Kourouyan, Edmond Azadian, Vartan Nazerian, administering the ADL oath

humble ourselves so that today you, you youth, proudly stand in front of this monument and swear in their name that our homeland will continue for one hundred more years, and for one thousand more years. It will continue, since we are taking an oath on the blood of our heroes that the Armenians are a people who have the right to live. Dear youth, you are the generation inheriting Sardarapat. You must live long so that our homeland lives long.”

The centennial ceremony of the Sardarapat Battle coincided with the solemn oath-taking ceremony of the newly enrolled young members of the ADL. Nazerian, Azadian and Vartkes Kourouyan conducted it in unison.

Afterwards, Nazerian spoke, stressing the pivotal role of the youth for the building of Armenia today and the future. In particular, he stressed the necessity for the strength and energy of the youth to serve towards the progress and prosperity of Armenia. Nazerian remarked that henceforth the

youth too can hold positions in the political party's administrative bodies. Finally, he added that the change of generations is not revolution, and that while realizing this change, the sacrifices and labor of senior party members must be always remembered.

Nazerian exclaimed, “The motto of our party is ‘Of the people, with the people and for the people.’ Now I wish to declare that henceforth our motto is ‘Of the youth, with the youth and for young Armenia.’ Long live you all! May you quickly grow so strong that we cross to the other shore of the Araxes [River] and view Mount Ararat from the other side. May we meet again next year in Van.”

The ADL president declared 2018 to be the year of the ADL youth. In the name of the Supreme Council and the Central Committee, Nazerian also declared that the party would participate in the next elections of the Armenian National Assembly.



Ozheni Avetisyan, chair of the ADL youth group of Armavir

Vartkes Kourouyan was another one of the speakers, and like the other ADL leaders, he stressed the necessity of incorporating youth into the ranks of the party.

Talented members of the ADL assured the festive nature of the event by presenting Armenian national dances and music to the participants and the guests. The ADL youth and guests also visited the museum of Sardarapat devoted to Armenian ethnography and the history of the Armenian liberation struggle, and began familiar with Armenian culture and the history of the heroic battles of May.



Young ADL dancers

Tekeyan Central Committees of Armenia and US and Canada Meet

YEREVAN – Members of the Central Board of the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada met with their counterparts of Armenia on May 15 at the Tekeyan Center to discuss policies and future joint activities.

The participating members of Tekeyan Armenia included President Rouben Mirzakhanyan and board members Armen Elbakyan, Vahagn Hasmikyan, Kurken Gevorgyan, Stepan Stepanyan, Ara Hakobyan, Sergey Vardanyan, Haroutyun Khachaturyan and Executive Director Gayane Muradyan.

The participating members from the US and Canada included President Edmond Y. Azadian, Hagop Vartivarian, Kevork Marashlian, Kevork Keushkerian, Silva Keushkerian and Executive Director Aram Arkun.

Azadian opened the meeting and reviewed the past activities of the Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) in Armenia. He declared that in this new revolutionary period of Armenian

life, TCA should have more extensive activity and a greater role in people's lives. This meeting, he said, was an opportunity to strengthen the already existing bonds of cooperation.

The introduction of the capitalist system to Armenia and privatization led to the weakening of support of the Armenian cultural sphere, which nonprofit non-governmental organizations must try to bolster in this period. TCA of the US and Canada, he said, is ready to provide support, as it does in some parts of the Middle East and Europe.

Mirzakhanyan then welcomed the visitors to Armenia and thanked them for their financial support of the Tekeyan annual cultural awards. He pointed out that for a variety of reasons Tekeyan's activities in Armenia over the last two or three years were not as extensive as before and that they must now increase.

Mirzakhanyan proposed coming up with plans for new cultural programs that would have great éclat and value both in Armenia and

abroad. Supporting education should also be a priority, he said.

Cooperation in promoting Armenian drama

groups and scholarships were the two initial proposals that the two Tekeyan organizations agreed to explore.



Members of the executives of the Tekeyan Cultural Associations of Armenia and the United States and Canada meet



INTERNATIONAL

International News

US, French Official Visits

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) – US Deputy Assistant Secretary in the State Department's Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs Bridget Brink is expected to visit Armenia next week, Spokesman for the Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Tigran Balayan told a press briefing today.

On May 27-28 Armenia will host French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian, the Spokesman noted.

In addition, he said, thousands of Diaspora Armenians are expected to attend the May 28 celebrations dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the first Republic of Armenia.

Australian Resolution Recognizes Artsakh

RYDE, Australia (Armenpress) – On May 22, the Ryde City Council unanimously adopted a resolution in support of recognizing the independence of the Republic of Artsakh. The City Council called on the central government to officially recognize the independence of the Republic of Artsakh and strengthen Australia's relationship with Artsakh and its citizens, Artsakh's foreign ministry told Armenpress.

Following is the text of the resolution:

The resolution notes that 2018 marks the 30th anniversary of the launch of the Artsakh liberation movement and that it is a free and democratic society.

Russian, Turkish FMs Discuss Syria

MOSCOW (Armenpress) – Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and his Turkish counterpart Mevlut Cavusoglu held a telephone conversation on May 22 during which the ministers discussed the joint work on promoting the Syrian settlement process with the Astana format, the Russian foreign ministry said, RIA Novosti reports.

"The ministers discussed a number of urgent issues of mutual interest, including the joint work in the Astana format on the Syrian settlement based on the UN Security Council's Resolution 2254," the statement said.

Azeri Troops Warned Not To Advance Towards Armenian Border

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – The Armenian military warned Azerbaijani forces against trying to advance towards Armenia's border after an Azerbaijani soldier was shot dead there on Sunday.

The soldier, Adil Tatarov, was reportedly killed by Armenian troops guarding the border with Azerbaijan's Nakhichevan exclave. The Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry accused Yerevan of escalating tensions in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone.

The Armenian Defense Ministry blamed the fatal shooting on "provocative" actions which it said have been taken Azerbaijani troops at some sections of the Armenian-Azerbaijani frontier in recent weeks. The ministry spokesman, Artsrun Hovannisian, said they have been "conducting active engineering works for the purpose of improving and advancing their positions."

"The armed forces of Armenia have periodically, including in the last several days, warned the commanders of Azerbaijani forces deployed on the border with Armenia that this and other provocative actions cause shootouts and could lead to undesirable losses," Hovannisian wrote on Facebook. Such actions "cannot stay unanswered," he said.

Armenia's newly appointed Defense Minister Davit Tonoyan and Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanian jointly visited some of the Armenian army posts on the Nakhichevan border on May 18. According to his press office, Tonoyan told troops serving there to "strictly thwart any adventure by the enemy."

The two ministers inspected the troops two days after Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev visited Nakhichevan and touted military buildup carried out there in recent years. "Long-range missiles deployed in Nakhichevan can destroy any military target of the enemy," Aliyev said.

Ottawa Armenian Genocide Commemoration Includes Canadian Government Officials

By Haykaram Nahapetyan

OTTAWA – The annual Armenian Genocide commemoration took place in Ottawa on April 24. After a prayer at the embassy of the Republic of Armenia, the main gathering was held in front of the Canadian Parliament building. Participants included high-ranking representatives from both legislative and executive branches of the Canadian political leadership such as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Canadian Heritage, members of the Parliament from both ruling and the opposition parties and representatives of the Jewish, Greek, Ukrainian and Rwandan communities.

Minister of Canadian Heritage Melanie Joly thanked the participants for being part of the Genocide commemoration event and praised the Canadian-Armenian "strong and vibrant community" for assisting their compatriots from Middle East who continue to find refuge in Canada.

Bryan May, the chair of the Canada-

Armenia Friendship Group, spoke of his trip to Yerevan in April 2015, where he represented "not only the Canadian-Armenian community, but all of Canada, laying a wreath for the government of Canada." David Cooper, Director of Government Relations at the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, affirmed his solidarity with the Armenian community and highlighted that it was the Armenian Genocide that became the predecessor of the Holocaust and opened the bloody chapter of the atrocities of the 20th century.

"Your struggles for education, recognition, remembrance and finally justice are our struggles too," said Hellenic community activist Dr. Theodore Halatsis, president of the Canadian Hellenic Congress. The Greek community has been working hard to have the atrocities against Greeks committed by Young Turks and Kemalist forces to be recognized as genocide. Even though the recognition on federal level is lacking as of now, about a dozen of cities and various settlements of Canada have already adopted resolutions calling the Greek massacres "genocide."

'We Say: Never again!': Cypriot Parliament's Delegation Visits Armenian Genocide Memorial in Yerevan

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – A delegation led by Demetris Syllouris, president of the Parliament of Cyprus, on May 22 visited the Tsitsernakaberd Memorial in Yerevan to pay tribute to the memory of the Armenian Genocide victims, Armenpress reports.

The delegation members were accompanied by Vice Speaker of the Parliament of Armenia Eduard Sharmazanov.

The Cyprus representatives laid a wreath at the Memorial and flowers at the Eternal Flame.

Acting director of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute Gevorg Vardanyan introduced the history of the construction of the Memorial and its symbolic meaning.

Demetris Syllouris said the recognition of the Armenian Genocide by Turkey and the whole world, as well as the recognition of each genocide has a historic meaning aimed at preventing

similar events in the future.

"This is the fight of the Armenians. We will always stand by Armenians not only as friends and brothers, but also as a state. It's a duty not only towards Armenians, but towards the whole humanity so that genocides will never repeat," Syllouris said.

The Cypriot delegation toured the Genocide Museum and got acquainted with the materials on the Genocide.

At the end of the tour a note was left in the Museum's Honorary Guest Book on behalf of the Cypriot delegation: "We saw yet again, in the humility of a pilgrim, the sufferings of the Armenian people in the hands of barbarity and hatred. We say: Never again!"

Cyprus is among the first states that recognized and condemned the Armenian Genocide. It adopted a law criminalizing the denial of the Armenian Genocide on April 2, 2015.

Turkey Jails Ethnic Armenian Woman For Social Media Post

ISTANBUL (Armenpress) – A Turkish court has remanded Rozerin Zeri, a human rights activist, in pretrial detention due to her social media posts deemed to be "propaganda on behalf of a terrorist organization," the Stockholm Center for Freedom (SCF), an advocacy organization that promotes the rule of law, democracy, fundamental rights and freedoms, reported May 20.

According to SCF, the woman is of Armenian background. The only fact backing SCF's claim on Zeri's Armenian background is a Facebook account with the same name where the user's country of origin is mentioned as Armenia. It is unclear if the account is real and the credibility of the Armenian background claim is uncertain.

According to a tweet posted by Acun Karadag, a history teacher who was fired with a government decree issued by the Turkish government in the

aftermath of the coup attempt on July 15, 2016, Zeri was put behind bars late on Saturday, May 19, because of Facebook posts that are critical of the Turkish government. "Rozerin Zeri. She was arrested today due to her social media posts. She is the mother of a sick child. What kind of crime could she commit with a single tweet? She is innocent. What's with the hurry? What are you trying to do? Enough is enough!" Karadag tweeted.

Turkey has launched thousands of investigations into social media users based on simple criticizing statements which the government deems to be insults. A total of 1,080 people were convicted of insulting President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in 2016, according to data from Turkey's Justice Ministry. Data also showed that 4,936 cases were launched against people on charges of insult in 2016.

MP of Greek origin Emmanuella Lambropoulos was also present at the event. Garnett Genuis, MP from the opposing Conservative party sharply criticized Ankara for sending its troops across the border of her sovereign neighbor Syria and called the Canadian government to stand against it. MP also criticized Azerbaijani leader Ilham Aliyev for waging and arms race in the region.

Turkey and Israel Expel Envoys over Gaza Violence

ANKARA (Reuters) – Turkey and Israel expelled each other's senior diplomats on Tuesday, May 15, in a dispute over the killing by Israeli forces of 60 Palestinians a day earlier during protests on the Gaza border.

Turkey told Israel's ambassador to leave the country on Tuesday after Israeli forces killed 60 Palestinians during protests on the Gaza border against the opening of the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem.

Turkey has been one of the most vocal critics of Israel's response to the Gaza protests and of the U.S. Embassy move, recalling its ambassadors from Tel Aviv and Washington and calling for an emergency meeting of Islamic nations on Friday.

President Tayyip Erdogan described Monday's bloodshed, the deadliest for Palestinians since the 2014 Gaza conflict, as genocide and called Israel a terrorist state. The government declared three days of mourning.

"The Israeli ambassador was told that our envoy to Israel was called back for consultations, and was informed that it would be appropriate for him to go back to his country for some time," a Turkish Foreign Ministry source said.

Hours later Israel's Foreign Ministry said the Turkish Consul-General in Jerusalem had been summoned and told to return to Turkey "for consultations for a period of time."

The dispute appears to mark the worst diplomatic crisis between the two regional powers since Israeli marines stormed an aid ship to enforce a naval blockade of Gaza in 2010, killing 10 Turkish activists and prompting a downgrade in diplomatic ties that lasted until 2016.

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Twitter Erdogan was in no position to "preach morality to us" because he supported the Palestinian Islamist movement Hamas which rules Gaza. "There is no doubt he well understands terrorism and slaughter," Netanyahu tweeted.

Erdogan tweeted back that Netanyahu was the leader of "an apartheid state that has occupied a defenseless people's lands for 60+ years in violation of U.N. resolutions", adding that he was criticizing Turkey to deflect attention.

Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim also said that Muslim countries should review their ties with Israel after Monday's violence.



INTERNATIONAL

Turkish Authorities Turn Focus on Paylan

By Amberin Zaman

ISTANBUL (Al Monitor) — Turkish prosecutors are seeking to lift the parliamentary immunity of an ethnic Armenian lawmaker in order to prosecute and potentially jail him, marking a further escalation of the government's assault on free expression.

Prosecutors in Ankara have invoked Article 301, which criminalizes insulting the Turkish nation, and Article 299, which penalizes insulting the Turkish president, against Garo Paylan of the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), the largest pro-Kurdish bloc in the Turkish parliament.

They were said to be acting on a criminal complaint filed in May 2017 by Turkish academic Aygun Attar and approved for further action by the Justice Ministry in December. Attar was reportedly protesting Paylan's depiction of the mass slaughter of more than a million Ottoman Armenians in 1915 as a genocide in separate comments to the parliament and in an interview with the Armenian-Canadian publication *Horizon Weekly*, among others. Paylan's critical remarks concerning Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's recent alliance with far-right leader Devlet Bahceli and the ensuing crack-down on the media and civil society were likewise deemed to be insulting to the office of the president.

Nine HDP lawmakers, including the party's presidential candidate Selahattin Demirtas, are currently in jail facing a cocktail of terror charges together with hundreds of other party officials. But the accusations against Paylan stand out. The government has prosecuted tens of thousands of alleged operatives of the religious cult led by Fethullah Gulen, the Pennsylvania-based Sunni preacher who is accused of masterminding the failed July 2016 coup. Countless others said to be associated with the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party, including HDP officials, have been rounded up in the thousands on similar terror charges. But prosecutors had largely steered clear of Article 301, which was commonly used in the past against those who dared to call the orgy of bloodletting in 1915 a genocide.

Article 301's targets include Turkish novelist Orhan Pamuk and ethnic Armenian journalist Hrant Dink, who was gunned down outside the office of his *Agos* newspaper in January 2007 by an ultranationalist youth said to be acting under

the orders of rogue security officials. His murder proved a turning point, opening up nationwide debate on the genocide at a time when Erdogan's ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) was still in reformist gear and ready to sign a now frozen peace deal with neighboring Armenia. On the centennial of the genocide in 2015, Erdogan sent a message to the tiny Armenian community: "We share the Armenians' pain with sincerity. The doors of our hearts are open to the deceased Ottoman Armenians' grandchildren." This year's message was not quite as magnanimous, with Erdogan warning some 70,000 Armenian-Turks to spurn those "who are trying to ignite hatred and hostility by distorting [our] shared past," presumably by labeling the 1915 tragedy a genocide.

So what has changed? Yetvart Danzikiyan, the managing editor of *Agos*, believes that Erdogan's partnership with Bahceli, struck in the run-up to the April 2017 referendum on swapping the existing parliamentary system for an executive presidency, is a big factor. "Ever since the AKP established its coalition [with Bahceli] and a suitably nationalist stance, it has reverted to the state's old reflexes and habits on the Armenian question," he told Al-Monitor. Erdogan banked on nationalist support to push through the constitutional changes that will formalize his sweeping powers. The new rules are set to kick in after snap presidential and parliamentary polls that are due to be held on June 24.

Paylan agrees with this assessment. "The charges against me are not a surprise; the climate has changed and there were several clear signs of this," Paylan told Al-Monitor. "I spoke about the genocide many times in the past, but AKP members in the parliament didn't blink. It was only Bahceli's people who protested," he recalled. Then in January 2017, Paylan, who has been a deputy since 2015, was temporarily banned from parliamentary sessions for broaching the subject of the wholesale killings not only of ethnic Armenians but of Assyrians, Greeks and Jews who were "lost" and "driven from these lands in large massacres [and] genocides."

Undeterred, Paylan pressed for formal recognition of the genocide and the establishment of a commission to investigate the events leading up to it in a bill he submitted last month. It was rejected.

The government's waning tolerance was on full display April 24, the day Armenians worldwide mark the anniversary of the deaths of their forefathers. Turkish police detained activists

gathered in Istanbul's Sultanahmet for unfurling banners that read "genocide."

The move against Paylan has sparked rebukes from the European Union. Kati Piri, the Turkey rapporteur of the European Parliament called the case "unacceptable." She told Al-Monitor, "This latest incident is a new front in the attack against fundamental rights in Turkey. If even elected parliamentarians cannot express their

Armenian genocide at a global level. Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim said he was willing to consider the offer but suggested Turkey would only do so if Armenia shelved the genocide recognition campaign.

The two countries were on the brink of reopening their sealed borders and establishing diplomatic ties under a 2009 deal brokered by Switzerland and backed by the United States.



Garo Paylan

opinions, where does this leave ordinary citizens?"

Paylan believes the arrest of prominent businessman and philanthropist Osman Kavala are linked to his long-running support for a broad range of civil society initiatives aimed at promoting peace between Turkey and Armenia. Kavala, who commands global respect for his commitment to human rights, conflict resolution and promotion of the arts, has been behind bars for 198 days. A staunch secularist who spoke up against Gulenist infiltration of the justice system, Kavala has yet to be indicted amid farcical claims that he was involved in the coup.

All of this is unfolding as neighboring Armenia embarks on a new path of reform pledged by its new Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, who swept to power in the mass demonstrations that engulfed the former Soviet republic last month. Pashinyan said he was ready to establish diplomatic relations with Turkey without any preconditions while pushing for recognition of the

But it fell apart when Erdogan, who was then prime minister, insisted that Armenia withdraw from the Nagorno-Karabakh enclave it wrested from Turkey's close ally Azerbaijan in a short and nasty war in the early 1990s. The HDP has pledged to revive the Zurich protocols without any preconditions as part of its campaign manifesto.

Khatchig Mouradian, a lecturer at Columbia University who has done extensive research on the Ottoman Armenians, rues another missed moment. "Following the transformations ushered in by the Velvet Revolution in Armenia, Ankara had a golden opportunity to reciprocate positive signals from Yerevan regarding the normalization of relations," Mouradian told Al-Monitor. "Instead it invokes Article 301, which bears the stains of Hrant Dink's blood, to go after Garo Paylan."

Paylan insisted none of this will stop him from his quest for justice. "They are trying to silence me. They will fail," he said.

Cyprus Parliament President Visits Sarkissian

YEREVAN — President Armen Sarkissian received on May 16 President of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Cyprus Demetris Syllouris.

After a brief tête-à-tête meeting, delegations met in the extended format.

Welcoming the guests, the President of Armenia noted that high-level visits, such as this one, strengthen and expand the bilateral relations. According to the President, the exist-

ing total mutual understanding and support manifest the greatest result of the historically friendly relations of the two peoples.

According to Syllouris, the two nations have always relied on universal human values and principles; because of this, they have been able to withstand all hardships.

The parties concurred that the Armenian-Cypriot relations built on a strong historical foundation and mutual trust have great potential for development. Sarkissian and Syllouris stressed the importance of invigorating the political dialogue and development of economic ties, particularly in the areas of tourism, services and banking.

They also highlighted cooperation in the scientific area and joint programs.

Sarkissian expressed gratitude to the people and authorities of Cyprus for being among the first to recognize the Armenian Genocide and lending a hand to a segment of Armenians who survived the Genocide perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire against Armenians at



Meeting between President Armen Sarkissian, right with the president of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Cyprus Demetris Syllouris and their staffs



President Armen Sarkissian, right with the President of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Cyprus Demetris Syllouris

the beginning of the last century. They were given a shelter, and later, the opportunity to live and work.

At the meeting discussed was the importance of ratification and implementation by the countries of the European Union of the Armenia-EU Comprehensive and Enhanced

Partnership Agreement.

Syllouris expressed support of the Cypriot side to the negotiations on the NK issue conducted in the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group. In his turn, President Sarkissian hailed the constructive and balanced position of Cyprus on this issue.

Community News

Boyajian Exits NY Congressional Race In Favor of 107th Assembly District

CAMBRIDGE, N.Y. (Post-Star) – Democrat Don Boyajian announced on the afternoon of May 15 that he is dropping out of the 21st Congressional District race in favor of seeking a seat in the 107th Assembly District this November.

“After speaking with thousands of residents across upstate New York, I have realized that one of the most important ways to make a real difference in our communities is to effect change right here at home,” said Boyajian in a news release. “Ensuring that every child has access to high-quality public education, addressing the heroin and opioid epidemic, creating stable new jobs and protecting our environment all starts within our state government.”

The municipal and environmental lawyer will take his campaign finances, totaling more than \$200,000, to help launch his bid for the Assembly. Boyajian has picked up endorsements along the way, including from 113th Assemblywoman Carrie Woerner, D-Round Lake.

“I strongly endorse Don Boyajian to represent the 107th District in the New York State Assembly,” said Assemblywoman Woerner. “As an upstate New York native and Washington County resident, Don understands the needs of our local families, business owners, and farmers. As a lawyer experienced in the public and private sectors, Don also has the practical knowledge and skills to effect real change in state government to meet those needs. I am highly confident that Don is the best candidate to represent residents of the 107th Assembly District, and that his experience and priorities will shape our community for the better.”

Washington County Democratic Committee Chair Melissa Shea has also offered backing for Boyajian. “We are so excited and supportive to have Don run for the 107th Assembly District,” Shea said in a news release. “He is a strong candidate and a team player who understands the importance of Democrats working together to provide real advocacy for working people throughout upstate New York.”

Republican Jacob Ashby defeated Democrat Cynthia Doran to replace former Assemblyman Steve McLaughlin, who is now the Rensselaer County executive, in a special election held in April. Ashby will serve through the end of the year.

The 107th Assembly District encompasses the towns of White Creek and Cambridge, Rensselaer County, excluding the city of Troy and town of North Greenbush and parts of eastern and northern Columbia County.



Don Boyajian



COAF Founder Dr. Garo Armen with two children in Lori

Cutting Edge COAF SMART Center Set to Transform Lori Region of Armenia

YEREVAN/NEW YORK – Children of Armenia Fund (COAF) has worked on advancing rural communities throughout Armenia since 2004, with nearly \$40 million being raised over the years in support of numerous infrastructure improvement projects and comprehensive community-led programs in education, healthcare and social services. On its 10th anniversary, COAF announced its novel SMART Initiative as the vehicle for expanding its vital work in each of Armenia’s rural provinces.

The innovative rapid expansion strategy will establish state-of-the-art educational SMART Campuses throughout Armenia, offering rural populations with groundbreaking programs in education, economic development and healthcare. The flagship COAF SMART Campus will open its doors in the Lori region of Armenia on May 27, providing its 150,000 people with access to technology-driven programs from a broad and diverse range of disciplines.

As one of the most trusted organizations engaged in rural development in Armenia, COAF has been empowering the country’s rural population by utilizing collaborative and inclusive approaches. COAF’s main objective has been to serve as a catalyst in fostering a sense of ownership among Armenia’s rural inhabitants, encouraging them to become active stakeholders in their future advancement. Customized approaches addressing the specific needs and challenges of each community have provided COAF with crucial knowledge and experience on how to bring about dramatic changes in rural education, as well as raising awareness on a global level.

The COAF SMART Initiative will continue connecting rural Armenia to the international community via technology, providing access to experts worldwide. The COAF SMART Campuses will offer rural teachers, healthcare professionals, social workers and businesses with vital skills that will spawn a new era of creativity and innovation. Additional emphasis will be placed on language and communication, local entrepreneurship/economic development, active citizenship and personal development. Information technology and foreign languages are a priority for SMART programs; hence, all programs and learning materials will utilize digital solutions and English.

During the opening ceremony of the COAF SMART Campus on May 27, guests from around the world will have the opportunity to tour the regional educational hub and learn about the various SMART programs being offered, such as blockchain technology, robotics, agriculture, child development, media literacy, arts, science and health education.

A number of COAF SMART partners will also be showcased at the official opening. One highlight is the SAP Next-Gen Lab which will bring the latest blockchain technology to students at the COAF SMART Center. Students in the region will gain access to SAP’s instructional resources in virtual reality design and iOS application development. Other key partnerships include Arlopa, a leader in augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) founded in Armenia and operating globally.

COAF is also collaborating with PicsArt, an app that allows over 100 million monthly users worldwide, the ability to edit and share photos in fun and creative ways. A new partnership has also been forged with Instigate Robotics and Instigate Training Center, aimed at bringing diverse technology and educational knowhow to the COAF SMART Center.

Creative Educational Technologies (CET), the official representative of LEGO in Armenia, will also be conducting workshops with children on the day of the opening. Arpi Solar, a producer of clean energy and solar power will also support the opening. In addition, artwork by Syrian-Armenian children will also be exhibited on loan from the Cafesjian Center for the Arts.

Glendale Cop Tied To Mexican Mafia And Armenian Organized Crime, Feds Say

By Alene Tchekmedyian and Richard Winton

GLENDALE (*Los Angeles Times*) – As far back as 2015, a Glendale narcotics detective used burner phones to tip off gangsters about upcoming raids, once allowing a top target of federal law enforcement to elude arrest for a month, authorities said on May 15.

John Saro Balian is also suspected of collaborating with other criminals to steal cars, presumably to sell abroad, and taking money to hunt someone down.

When confronted by federal agents in four interviews over the last year, authorities say Balian, 45, lied about his ties to the Mexican Mafia and Armenian organized crime in Southern California.

“I’m not [expletive] on anybody’s payroll,” he told the Los Angeles Police Department and FBI in one interview.

Now, the veteran officer who once served as the spokesman for the Glendale Police Department is facing up to five years in federal prison. Prosecutors this week charged Balian with one count of making false statements to federal investigators, according to a criminal complaint filed in U.S. District Court.

“Mr. Balian moved in criminal circles and operated as though he was above the law by repeatedly lying to hide his criminal activity,” Paul Delacourt, assistant director in charge of the FBI’s Los Angeles field office, said in a statement. “His alleged actions impeded legitimate investigations into organized violent crime and consequently presented a threat to public safety.”

It’s unclear whether Balian has retained an attorney.

Balian was identified as a person of interest by the FBI’s Eurasian Organized Crime Task Force, which in 2016 was probing ties between the Mexican Mafia and Armenian organized crime.

Since then, three confidential informants have described a series of troubling interactions with the detective – known to them as “Saro” – that are detailed in a 47-page affidavit supporting the complaint. In some cases, Balian appears to have instigated clashes between the two sides, according to court records. Investigators corroborated some of the informants’ stories with cellphone records, police reports and interviews.

In one incident, Balian allegedly offered an informant and a second man \$100,000 to “scare” the bodyguard of an Armenian businessman in Commerce, a request that led to a shooting in July 2016.

After the encounter, the second man spoke with the informant.

“I think I hit him,” he said, according to the filing. Later, he added, “I think I killed him.”

The alleged shooter gave the gun to the informant, who said he gave the gun to Balian, according to the filing. It’s unclear whether the bodyguard lived.

In one case, that same informant described a situation in which Balian offered a tip about a gang sweep, allowing a top target – a Frogtown gang member – to flee before agents arrived.

“Tell your boy Bouncer that he’s the No. 1 on the list for tomorrow,” Balian warned, according to the affidavit. It took agents another month to arrest the target.

The informant also said Balian gave him locations of marijuana grow and drug stash see GLENDALE, page 7



COMMUNITY NEWS

Julien Zarifian to Lecture on US and Armenian Genocide, 'From Humanitarianism to Abetting Denial'

WATERTOWN — Dr. Julien Zarifian, Associate Professor in American History at the University of Cergy-Pontoise, France, and Fulbright Visiting scholar, University of Southern California (USC) Shoah Foundation Center for Advanced Genocide Research, will present a lecture titled "From Humanitarianism to Abetting Denial: The US and Recognition of the Armenian Genocide" on Wednesday, May 30, at 7:30 p.m. at the AGBU Center, 247 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown, MA.

The lecture is sponsored and organized by the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR)/Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Series on Contemporary Armenian Issues and Outreach Lecturing Fund (OLF) of

the Fulbright Scholar Program.

The United States under President Woodrow Wilson became heavily involved in providing humanitarian and political support to the Armenian survivors of genocide and displacement during World War I. However, US support began to falter during the 1930s, and in the post-World War II period American authorities responded ambiguously to Armenian demands that the mass killings be recognized as genocide. The executive branch systematically blocked efforts to pass legislation recognizing it as such.

In this lecture, Zarifian will analyze why, despite decades of efforts and some positive results, the Armenian-American advocacy

groups have not yet obtained the full recognition of the Genocide by the US federal authorities and how Turkey and Turkish groups have lobbied to prevent such a recognition.

Zarifian is associate professor in American History at the University of Cergy-Pontoise, France, and this academic year he is a Fulbright scholar with the USC Shoah Foundation Center for Advanced Genocide Research. His research interests involve US foreign policies in Eurasia, the role of ethnic groups in US political life, and the importance of memory issues in US political life. Currently, his main research project focuses on "The US and the Question of the Armenian Genocide, from 1915 to the Present."



Dr. Julien Zarifian

Glendale Cop Tied to Armenian Organized Crime, Feds Say

GLENDAL, from page 6

houses — information he was privy to as an officer — and told him to "hit them" before law enforcement could execute their search warrants, according to the court filing.

Balian also allegedly instructed him to "slap around" people to persuade them to pay money. Armenians would not respect or pay him, Balian told the informant, if they didn't fear him, the filing said.

Another informant met with Balian up to 15 times in 2015 and occasionally saw him wearing a badge and a gun. That person admitted to stealing more than a dozen high-value cars for Balian and his associate, the filing said. He said he'd leave the keys inside the car and park it on a designated street, where someone else would pick it up.

During a search of a third informant's home, investigators found handwritten notes in the trash referencing "Saro" and possible cocaine



John Saro Balian, shown in 2006, after he became a spokesman for the Glendale Police Department. (*Times Community News*)

shipments from Mexico. It's unclear whether a transaction occurred and if Balian was involved.

Federal authorities Tuesday afternoon were searching Balian's Seal Beach home, an FBI spokeswoman said. They were looking for evidence of racketeering, interference with commerce by robbery or extortion, and bribery, according to the affidavit.

Investigators first interviewed Balian in April of last year. He told them he was an expert on the Mexican Mafia when he worked for the Montebello Police Department, so he used to "stay on top of all these guys."

Balian was one of five Armenian American officers who sued Glendale in 2010, alleging discrimination, retaliation and harassment. The city eventually agreed to settle the case, paying \$7,500 in Balian's attorney's fees, and depositing 250 hours of sick time and 50 hours of vacation time into his leave bank.



Tekeyan Cultural Association, Inc.

Dr. Nubar Berberian Annual Awards

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

ELIGIBILITY AND REQUIREMENTS

- 1) Eligible recipients are college students of Armenian descent who major in either International Law or Political Science.
- 2) Applicant must be enrolled in a full-time graduate program in a fully accredited college or university in the world.
- 3) Applicant must provide all of the information requested on the application form.
- 4) Applicant must submit a copy of his or her most recent college transcript.
- 5) Applicant is to include a small head and shoulders self-portrait.
- 6) Application could be received by requesting from Tcadirector@Aol.com.
- 7) Applicants should submit applications electronically (via email) to: Tcadirector@Aol.com. The Paper submissions will be accepted by the deadline at:

Tekeyan Cultural Association, Inc.

Dr. Nubar Berberian Trust Fund

755 Mt. Auburn Street

Watertown, MA 02472

USA

but electronic application is preferred.

- 8) The deadline of receiving the applications is **August 30, 2018**.
- 9) The administrators and managers of the fund will vote the qualified winners in **October, 2018** based on the merits of each applicant.
- 10) The winner or winners will receive their awards in **November, 2018**. Applicants who were not selected will be notified in writing and invited to apply next year again, if they are eligible.
- 11) Winning applicants are not eligible to apply again.
- 12) This announcement is published in Armenian, English, French and Spanish.

Watertown, MA, April 23, 2018

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Diocesan Clergy Gather for Annual Conference

WHITE PLAINS, N.Y. — The annual Clergy Conference of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America convened April 30 to May 2, 2018, at the Renaissance Westchester Hotel in West Harrison, NY, hosted by the St. Gregory the Enlightener Church in White Plains.

Several dozen clergymen active as parish pastors and in other capacities throughout the Eastern Diocese came together for the three-day gathering to pray and plan for the future.

Diocesan Primate Archbishop Khajag Barsamian presided. He opened the meeting with a prayer for God's guidance over the Diocesan Assembly's upcoming deliberations, which would include a decision on the election of a successor to the office of Primate.

Elected chairman of the conference was Fr. Diran Bohajian (of Fair Lawn, NJ), with Fr. Ghevond Ajamian (Dallas, TX) as co-chairman, Fr. Hovhan Khoja-Eynatyan (Evanston, IL) as Armenian secretary, and Fr. Hovnan Demerjian (St. Petersburg, FL) as English secretary.

Fr. Mesrob Hovsepian, of the host parish in White Plains, gave a message of welcome.

A message from the Catholicos of all Armenians, Karekin II, was read to the conference. Visiting representatives from the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin — Fr. Daniel Tumanyan and Fr. Arnak Harutyunyan — spoke about the work of the Department of Social Doctrine at the Holy See and about aspects of church life and ministry in Armenia.

In his last address to the clergy as Diocesan Primate, Archbishop Barsamian reflected on the work of the Diocese, manifested in the building of St. Vartan Cathedral, which would celebrate its 50th anniversary later in the week. He stressed the unifying significance of the cathedral, which represents the Diocese in its entirety, from its local parishes to the ministries undertaken at the Diocesan Center in New York.

At the conclusion of his remarks, several clergy with long experience serving in the Diocese under Archbishop Barsamian's leadership expressed their gratitude for his long, dedicated service to the Eastern Diocese, and for his fatherly love of all the clergy.

Clergy Presentations

A presentation by Fr. Hovhan Khoja-Eynatyan and Fr. Gomidas Zohrabian (Hartford, CT) of the Sacred Music Council (SMC) revealed their ongoing work on a website, mobile app, Divine Liturgy e-reader, development of parish Junior Choirs, and new print editions of the rubrics for Holy Week and wedding services and The Sacred Music of the Armenian Church.

Fr. Yeprem Kelegian spoke on his work with the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR), and made a plea for more clergy and parishes to support FAR's many initiatives.

Dr. Roberta Ervine gave an inspirational talk to encourage the common work of grace which unites and inspires all clergy and people of our church.

Diocesan Director of Ministries Fr. Mesrop Parsamyan spoke on the workings of the Diocesan Ministry departments and the effort to increase cooperation among the ministries and local parishes. He introduced the staff members Elise Antreassian, Kathryn Ashbahian, Gilda Buchakjian Kupelian, Arpi Nakashian, and Dn. Eric Vozzy.

Dn. Artur Petrosyan and Dn. Eric Vozzy presented a new tool for clergy, based on feedback from the clergy from last year's assembly, called Kavazan: a phone app which is a private communication tool for clergy of the Eastern Diocese.

Findikyan gave a presentation titled "Life and Death in the Holy Badarak," giving clergy an inspired new lens through which to view the life-giving heart of worship and faith.

Fr. Kapriel Mouradjian (New Britain, CT) introduced returning guest speaker Dr. Richard Bedrosian, who spoke on the issue of addiction and suggested practical steps and resources for pastors to play a role in addiction awareness, treatment, and recovery.

Fr. Tadeos Abdalian introduced Pennsylvania State Police Lieutenant John Yunk, who addressed the clergy on how to be prepared and protected in the event of active shooter situations in church and other public places.

Diocesan Council member Paul Mardoian and Fr. Hovnan Demerjian presented the positive early results of a test program for parishes to adopt pledge stewardship in place of dues membership.

Diocesan Council chair James Kalustian spoke to the clergy conference about the leadership transition the Diocese was about to embark upon. As a result of the clergy's deliberations, a full slate of candidates for the office of Primate was presented to the

Diocesan Assembly later in the week. During the conference, the clergy of the Diocese voted unanimously to endorse all three of the candidates.

In the course of the conference, the clergy prayed the Peace Service of the Hours. Fr. Stepanos Doudoukjian (Watervliet, NY) offered a personal meditation during one of the evening prayers. A special prayer was offered by Fr. Hratch Sargsyan (Cleveland, OH) for peace and God's protection on all of Armenia's citizens in a fraught time of transition for the homeland.

The conference concluded on the morning of May 3 with the Divine Liturgy at the St. Gregory the Enlightener Church, celebrated by Fr. Avedis Kalayjian (Racine, WI).



Diocesan Women's Guilds Hold 32nd Annual Assembly

WEST HARRISON, N.Y. — Women's Guild representatives from local parishes across the Eastern Diocese met in early May for the 32nd annual Women's Guild Assembly. The gathering at the Marriott Renaissance Hotel was hosted by the St. Gregory the Enlightener Church of White Plains, and organized by the Women's Guild Central Council (WGCC).

The attending 44 registered delegates — some 20 of whom were first-time delegates — represented 25 of the 34 active Women's Guilds in the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America.

A business session on Thursday, May 3, included committee reports, proposals, amendments to bylaws, and elections.

Fundraisers included a "Hye Raffle" involving some 45 donated prizes, a 50/50 raffle, and a Women's Guild pin sale.

Friday, May 4 was devoted to workshops and interactive sessions. Special presentations were made by Garnig Nanagouljian of the Fund for Armenian Relief, and Yn. Sirarpi Ayvazian. Nancy Kassabian led the delegates in an interactive session titled "Guilds in Motion." Delegates left with a renewed sense of excitement and new ideas to take back to their local communities.

The Women's Guild delegates also welcomed Diocesan Primate Archbishop Khajag Barsamian and Primate-elect Fr. Daniel Findikyan, as well as a number of clergymen, to their meetings.

Awards Luncheon

The culmination of gathering — the 8th Annual "Women of Wonder" awards luncheon, sponsored by the Women's Guild Central Council — was held on Saturday, May 5.

This year's honorees, Aida Pisani and Beatrice Postian, were both

members of the hosting St. Gregory the Enlightener Church. The luncheon was well attended by family and friends of the honorees, as well as clergy and delegates from the Diocesan Assembly meeting, all of whom expressed their warm congratulations to the honorees.

In addition to tributes to Aida Pisani and Beatrice Postian, the program included recitations by Hasmig Minassian and Louisa Baghdasarian (both of the WGCC) and a beautiful performance on the oud by John Berberian (brother of Beatrice Postian).

Elections and Officers

The Women's Guild Assembly sessions were chaired by Charlotte Sebazlian, with Yn. Patricia Buttero as vice chair and Robin Williams as recording secretary.

Election results from the assembly (pending the approval of the Primate and Diocesan Council) are as follows:

Women's Guild Central Council: Charlotte Sebazlian (chair), Nancy Kassabian (vice chair); Robin Williams (recording secretary); Liz Barone (corresponding secretary); Hasmig Minassian (treasurer); Yn. Patricia Buttero (assistant treasurer); Deborah DerAsadourian, Meline Grigorian, Louisa Baghdasarian (advisors); Marian Varteresian (alternate).

Nominating Committee: Barbara Haroutunian (chair), Robin Williams, Manooshak Penrose, Christine Chorbajian, Angela Nakashian (members); Hasmig Minassian (alternate).

Proposals Committee: Adrienne Damian (chair), Lucy Murad, Lucy Chaghachbanian (members); Sherry Edwards (alternate).

Auditing Committee: Karen Dederyan, Janice Kavjian, Sandy Raphaelian.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

At Diocesan Assembly Banquet, History is Honored – and Made

WEST HARRISON, N.Y. – The Eastern Diocese's annual Awards Banquet went forward in a family-like setting of mutual admiration, affection, and encouragement, on the evening of Friday, May 4 at the Renaissance Westchester Hotel in West Harrison, NY.

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian presided over the banquet, which was hosted by the St. Gregory the Enlightener Church of White Plains. In the course of the evening, several distinguished individuals were applauded for their support of the Armenian Church and community.

The banquet was the culmination of the 116th Assembly of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), and was thematically linked to the 50th anniversary celebration of St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral.

It was a night that acknowledged history – and made some history, as well, as it marked the first public event for the new Primate-elect of the Eastern Diocese, the Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan.

Maria Stepanian, who chaired the host parish committee, welcomed all, recalling her upbringing in the church, and expressing her gratitude to Barsamian as he departed from the role of Primate after having served for 28 years.

Diocesan Assembly chair Diran Jebejian toasted the “amazing moment the Armenian Church finds itself in tonight,” referencing both the new era of leadership for the Diocese, and the stunning events transpiring concurrently in the Republic of Armenia.

Host parish pastor Fr. Mesrob Hovsepyan paid tribute to Archbishop Barsamian as an inspiration to him as a priest, and extolled Fr. Findikyan and former St. Gregory pastor Fr. Karekin Kasparian as teachers and mentors who had shaped his ministry.

He thanked Maria Stepanian, the parish assembly committee, and the legion of parish volunteers for making the week a success.

Hope, Truth, Gratitude

AGBU President Berge Setrakian offered heartfelt remarks extolling the role of the church in Armenian history, and affirming the need to support the young Republic of Armenia and its institutions.

Diocesan Council chair James Kalustian introduced the evening's honorees, beginning with Nazar and Artemis Nazarian – recipients of a special award, the “St. Vartan Cathedral Golden Anniversary Medal,” in honor of the cathedral's milestone. Nazar Nazarian is one of the last survivors of the original 35 godfathers of the cathedral consecration in 1968.

Mr. Kalustian called the Nazarians “a couple who are already greatly honored – and greatly beloved – by this community, and by Armenian communities across the globe.”

“In awarding them this Golden Anniversary Medal,” he said, “we also honor that golden generation that endured the Genocide, survived to live another day, built the great institutions of the reborn Armenian heritage – and remain in our hearts as a light of hope and inspiration for the future.”

The crowd rose in applause for the couple, as Artemis Nazarian graciously thanked the well-wishers and the Eastern Diocese for their warm congratulations.



Nazar and Artemis Nazarian and Archbishop Khajag Barsamian

The 2018 “Friend of the Armenians” recipient – Dr. Stephen Smith of the USC Shoah Foundation – was introduced by Melanie Dadourian, who has been working with Smith on the foundation's Armenian Genocide resources.

In accepting the award, Dr. Smith gave a charmingly animated talk in which he honored the memory of his personal hero, Armin T. Wegner, the early human rights pioneer and documenter of the Armenian Genocide. Smith remembered Wegner as figure who had risked all to stand up for the truth; and he thanked the Armenian community for their friendship in their mutual stance to uphold truth.

Receiving this year's “Armenian Church Member of the Year” award was Toros Mangassarian of the White Plains parish. In introducing him, Mr. Kalustian called him “an Old World Armenian gentleman; a patriot and a true Christian; a devoted son of Armenia, and of its greatest institution: our church.”

He continued: “Toros is a man loved by his family; admired by his peers; respected by the people who work for him. He's a man of gracious hospitality and humility; a friend to people in their time of need – and, in all things, animated by a deep faith in his heart: all qualities that have exemplified the Armenian spirit at its best.”

Accepting the award, Mr. Mangassarian expressed his deep pride in the Armenian heritage and church. Reflecting upon a life of achievement and dedicated service, he offered “my sincere hope that the torch will be passed

to the future.”

In a tribute to the bonds of family – in his own life, and as a force that has kept the Armenian people vital and contributed to their survival against great odds – he said: “The power of a loving family can never be overcome.”

The Brightest of Futures

An official visitor from the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, Archbishop Nathan Hovhannisian, representing His Holiness Karekin II, the

phere of the evening, and congratulated each of the honorees in turn.

He called Smith “a true friend of our community, who has stood with us in commemorating the deepest wound of our history, the Armenian Genocide.”

He thanked Toros Mangassarian for being “a pillar of the Westchester community,” and also “a dear friend, whose continuing friendship has been extremely meaningful to me.”

And regarding the Gold Medal recipients, he said: “Nazar and Artemis Nazarian are quite simply the patriarch and matriarch of the Armenian Church community. Their generosity has graced every institution, supported talent and achievement among our people, and benefited the progress of Armenia. I value this moment to show them, once again, our admiration and love.”

He offered gracious thanks to Hovsepyan, Maria Stepanian, and the entire St. Gregory the Enlightener parish, and expressed profound confidence in the forward movement of Armenia and the Armenian world.

Recalling the Diocesan Assembly theme, “Under One Roof,” Archbishop Barsamian asserted that an Armenian Church united in spirit and aspiration could look forward to the brightest of futures.

During the banquet, Alvard Mayilyan sang the national anthems of the US and Armenia, and the Shushi Armenian Dance Ensemble performed a spectacular dance number in their exquisite native Armenian costumes.

During the banquet, Alvard Mayilyan sang the national anthems of the US and Armenia, and the Shushi Armenian Dance Ensemble performed a spectacular dance number in their exquisite native Armenian costumes.



Berj Setrakian at the banquet

Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, read a special message from the Catholicos and offered his own words of personal warmth towards Archbishop Barsamian, Fr. Findikyan, and all the people present.

To conclude the program, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian remarked on the beautiful atmos-

The Diocesan Assembly Committee of St. Gregory the Enlightener Church was led by Fr. Mesrob Hovsepyan and Maria Stepanian as committee chair. The central committee consisted of Ann Guiragosian Daw, Lisa Kouzoujian, Zaven Tachdjian and Mary Tatarian, and included dozens of volunteers from the local community.



COMMUNITY NEWS

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COMMUNITY NEWS

ATP Hosts Kentucky Derby Watch Party

WALTHAM, Mass. – More than 110 supporters, clad in their most festive and colorful attires, attended the inaugural Armenia Tree Project's Kentucky Derby Watch Party at the historic Gore Place estate in Waltham. Party goers were treated to mint juleps and Derby-themed hors d'oeuvres while watching "the Greatest Two Minutes in Sports" on big screen televisions.

Vanessa Hale of 103.3 AMP Radio served as mistress of ceremonies as she attended her first Armenian event in Boston.

The Kentucky Derby Watch Party event committee led by Linda and Karnig Ostayan included John Aftandilian, Kristin Asadourian, Berge Ayvazian, Karen Gilbert, Kelly Higgins, Gohar Diana Hovsepien, Marie Mabardi, Susan Piligian and Daniele Sarkisian.

Along with having the opportunity to win prizes that were generously provided by local businesses by "picking" the Derby winners, after the race attendees spent the evening playing roulette, black jack, and craps at the casino set up especially for the evening.

"A good time was had by all," exclaimed Executive Director Jeanmarie Papelian. "We enlisted volunteers from all over the community and everyone seemed to enjoy this new approach to fundraising. And it's all done to support ATP's mission in Armenia. We're asking people to Get Rooted with ATP, and if you are planning to visit Armenia, please reach out to us so we can arrange a visit to one of our nurseries!"



Cheryl Ourfalian Smith, Susan Demirjian Kingsley, Grace Bottomley, Jeanmarie Papelian and Julia Mirak Kew



Armik Malkhassian, Annette Ghahremanian, Ani Ghahremanian, Ralph Rafaelian



Jeanmarie Papelian (ATP executive director) and Vanessa Hale (103.3 AMP Radio personality)



Avik and Haikouhie Deirmenjian, Ray and Diana Hovsepien, Linda and Karnig Ostayan

The photographers are Aleen Ostayan and Mira Musallam.



Gail Guzelian, Ronald Iberson, Krista and John Aftandilian



Jason Sohigian, Susan Piligian, Cheryl Ourfalian Smith, Jeanmarie Papelian



Rachel Bolyan and Cheryl Ourfalian Smith



COMMUNITY NEWS

Knights Honor Arzruni, Kalfayan for Their Contributions to Culture

By Taleen Babayan

NEW YORK – Two lifelong musical members of the New York community who have contributed greatly to the Armenian heritage and culture – Sahan Arzruni and Kris Kalfayan – were honored for their decades of service in a special banquet hosted by the Knights and Daughters of Vartan at the Eastern Diocese in New York City on Friday, May 18.

It was a fitting occasion, fulfilling the theme of “A Legacy of Dedication, Commitment and Service,” to highlight the talents and generosity of both men who have enhanced the rich cultural tradition of sacred and classical music, which was under the auspices of Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern).

For both Arzruni and Kalfayan, their musical and cultural roots were instilled in them in a young age in Istanbul, Turkey, before they emigrated to the US to pursue opportunities, but maintaining the Armenian Church and community as priorities in their lives.

Director of the Diocesan Gomidas Choir for over three decades, Kalfayan attended the Dadyan School as a youngster and his local Armenian Church in Bakirkoy.

“My father would take me to church on Sundays and once he and the choir-master taught me to read Armenian notation, I started singing along,” said Kalfayan. “The seed was planted without me having a clue.”

The seed flourished when his family moved to Washington Heights, NY, just a few blocks from Holy Cross Church, where he became further involved in the church’s rituals and music where “Saturdays and Sundays were spent at church.”

Paralleling his experiences in church, he sang in the Children’s choruses of the Metropolitan Opera and the New York City Opera and attended the High School of Music and Art in New York. During his high school years, he sang with the All City High School Chorus and in college he was a member of the Men’s Glee Club at Fordham University.

His friend and fellow Fordham Glee Club member, Dr. Joseph Van Houten, in his remarks, reflected on his 45-year friendship with Kalfayan and his “generous spirit that has manifested in his lifelong service to the Armenian Church.”

“Through his love of music and dedication to God, Kris has enriched religious services and celebrations throughout his life,” said Van Houten.

In service to the Armenian Church, Kalfayan was the organist at Holy Cross Church and St. Vartan Cathedral, where he was also the director of the St. Vartan Cathedral Boys Choir

and the St. Vartan Cathedral Choir. Since 1981 he has been serving as musical director of the Diocesan Gomidas Choir and was recently invited by Barsamian to conduct the choir for the Pontifical Divine Liturgy on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the consecration of the St. Vartan Cathedral.

“The nourishment for me has been the beautiful music of the hymns of our divine liturgy,” said Kalfayan, who was awarded the Pontifical Encyclical and the St. Nerses the Graceful Medal from Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of all Armenians in 2008.

Dr. Vartan Abdo, founder and director of the Armenian Radio Hour of New Jersey, served as master of ceremonies of the banquet, acknowledging the significance of the evening’s honorees.

In his remarks, composer and pianist Arzruni elaborated on the meaning of his Armenian ancestry.

“Being Armenian is the most important aspect of my exis-



Sahan Arzruni



Tigran Sahakyan, Sbarabed of the Mamigonian Lodge, presenting Kris Kalfayan with his certificate and medal

tence,” said Arzruni, who has achieved recognition as an ethnomusicologist, teacher, recording artist and producer. “We all want to belong and we all need to belong so to endure.”

“We need to retain at all costs our Armenian script,

language and land, the most important things Armenians possess,” said Arzruni, who holds degrees from The Juilliard School and has pursued doctoral studies at New York University. “Let us not lose that.”

Motivated by ethnic awareness in the United States, Arzruni has continuously researched the musical roots of his Armenian heritage, recording anthologies of Armenian piano music as well as instrumental and vocal Armenian music. He has also delivered academic papers and organized symposia for Harvard University, Columbia University and University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, in addition to writing books and contributing articles for academic journals.

Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin I awarded him an encyclical and the Sts. Sahak and Mesrob Medal in 1996; and in 2016, Arzruni he received the Movses Khorenatsi medal for promoting the cultural ties between Armenia and the Diaspora.

During the Knights and Daughters of Vartan awards ceremony, Tigran Sahakyan, Sbarabed of the Mamigonian Lodge and Christine Akyemeniciyan, Dirouhie of the Anahid Otyag, presented Arzruni and Kalfayan with their medals.

“I’m truly humbled to be honored for doing something I love to do, serving our church and our community to the best of my ability,” said Kalfayan, who recognized the legacy of the founding members of the Gomidas Choir.

“It’s an honor and privilege to direct the Gomidas Choir,” said Kalfayan. “I’m here this evening because 70 years ago, three dedicated, faithful servants of the Armenian Church decided to continue what they were a part of in Istanbul.”

“There is a need for a renewed spirit of collaboration, a need to stay faithful to our ageless values, a need to reclaim our language and culture, and a need to endure under the guidance of our noble Armenian characteristics,” said Arzruni. “The Knights and Daughters of Vartan is an organization that helps us reach such a goal.”

Continuing the musical richness of the evening was a cultural presentation by Maria Sahakyan, founder and director of Astghikner Junior Vocal Ensemble of St. Gregory the Illuminator Parish in Brooklyn, accompanied on the piano by Lina Panfilova.

“As an artist, I feel it’s very important for the community to honor lifelong musical contributors, such as Kris and Sahan, because they are the people who are keeping Armenian music alive, and making the whole world recognize Armenian music and culture,” said Sahakyan.

In his benediction, Barsamian expressed thanks to the Knights and Daughters of Vartan who gave everyone an opportunity to “come together to honor dedicated and committed members of our community.”

“I can say proudly that Sahan and Kris are my brothers,” said Barsamian. “Each one of us are given so many gifts by God but it is our choice to use those gifts in our selves and share those gifts with others.”

The honorary banquets, the brainchild of chairman emeritus, Hirant Gulian, has become a tradition for the Knights and Daughters of Vartan. The objective of the event is to shed light on the tireless participants in the community, who drive the Armenian people forward, while also benefiting Armenia.



Maria Sahakyan performing during the cultural program

Proceeds from the evening supported the organization’s educational program at American University of Armenia.

Photos by Ohannes Tercan

Arts & Living

‘The Women Who Mapped The Stars’

Van Dyke’s Newest Play
Brightens Cambridge Skies

By Nancy Kalajian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — The Nora Theatre Company’s “The Women Who Mapped the Stars,” just finished a month-long run at the Central Square Theater, as part of the Brit d’Arbeloff Women in Science Production Series, and the Catalyst Collaborative@MIT, a Central Square Theatre and MIT program that creates and presents plays that deepens public engagement and artistic and emotional experiences with science.

An engaging tribute to the power of women to look beyond time and circumstance to further our understanding of the universe, playwright Joyce Van Dyke’s world premiere of “The Women Who Mapped the Stars” hits the mark with plenty of factual scientific information, winning dialogue, clever timing and quick wit. Aspiring characters, ranging from young in age to the more experienced, interact in a convincing style under good direction with simple but effective sets.

Working at Harvard College Observatory in the late 1890s, the fervent accomplishments of five hard-working “women who mapped the stars” were kept in the shadows even though their contributions to astronomy were, frankly, astronomical. Numerous struggles for women in the workplace — from inequality in pay to not having the same rights as men — were depicted in the play. In one instance, women weren’t



At Press Night for “The Women Who Mapped the Stars,” playwright Joyce Van Dyke stands with two cast members: Sarah Newhouse (in the center) who played Annie Jump Cannon, and Christine Power (on the right) who played Antonia Maury.

allowed to use telescopes in the workplace but men were. Then there was the man who years later took credit for a scientific discovery that had been initially made by a woman.

The Poet’s Theatre and director Jessica Ernst provided early script development assistance to Van Dyke during four workshops over two years. Some of the greatest writers were quoted when appropriate to the dialogue including Shakespeare’s “Look how the floor of heaven is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold!” from “The Merchant of Venice.” Fastidious research was conducted at various scientific institutions and libraries.

“Some of the research was done at the Center for Astrophysics where we were able to look at the actual notebooks kept by the women astronomers in the play, as well as photos, and the equipment they used,” shared Van Dyke, continuing, “Also the Harvard Archives which has collections of the women’s papers. I also read some of the scientific papers that these

see PLAY, page 16



Gyumri artists with Suzi Banks Baum in front of the Matenadaran by Anush Babajanyan

Our Eyes Are On Armenia

GYUMRI, Armenia — The world is a small and marvelous place. Those who are fortunate to know the sweet bite of preserved Armenian apricots stirred in to fresh yogurt or honeyed green walnuts eaten with a cup of thyme tea sipped on a chilly afternoon in Gyumri know that vast beauty and a difficult reality make life in Armenia a challenge for the strong, resilient people who live there.

By Suzi Banks Baum

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

I have traveled to Gyumri three times in the past two years to develop a project called New Illuminations which unites women artists with the ancient practice of hand bound books, known to many as illuminated manuscripts. New Illuminations connects women to their heritage while empowering them through personal narrative writing and brings the book art form in to contemporary and eager hands. These hands are ready to meet the world with a feminine perspective on life told from a densely patriarchic society. This project has improved the lives of over 75 artists and has an active audience in the cultural hub of Armenia.

What brought me to Armenia in the first place was John Stanmeyer, world-renowned *National Geographic* photographer and humanitarian. During a workshop with him, and Nazik Armenakyan and Anush Babajanyan of 4Plus in Gyumri, I interviewed and photographed women artists to learn about the challenges they face in daily life and in pursuing their profession as artists. In that first visit I met with 25 women in their homes, in parks or cafes, in the schools they attend or



Suzi Banks Baum, left, interviews Mariam Simonyan (Photo by Knar Babayan)

teach in, and at the offices where they work. It was a whirlwind immersion in to the lives of women who are mostly well-educated, but subsumed after college into marriage and family life, many forgetting the fires of passion that fueled their education in the first place; so many told me “no one cares about the women of Armenia.” They are truly under the radar of world attention, many living in poverty

see ARTISTS, page 15

Curated Art Exhibit At Diocese

By Taleen Babayan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

NEW YORK — The striking, handcrafted images on display, ranging from a blue dove enmeshed in red and orange hues, to the intricately coiled letters of the Armenian alphabet, marked the centennial anniversary of the first republic of Armenia, both in word and in deed, in a special art exhibition from May 17 to 19 at the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern).

Throughout the course of the weekend, close to 100 pieces from lifelong artist Avedis Baghsarian’s collection were sold to support the Fund for Armenian Relief’s Avedis and Arsho Baghsarian Scholarship Program, the mission of which is to educate talented young students in Armenia who are pursuing careers in journalism and the fashion industry.

Curated with diligence by Vicki Shoghag Hovanessian, an advisor to the Minister of Culture of Armenia, the event was sponsored by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Armenia, the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Armenia to the United Nations and the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR) and



Vicki Shoghag Hovanessian, curator, delivering her welcoming remarks

sought to combine the influential art of Baghsarian while educating the next generation of creatives in the homeland.

The filled-to-capacity crowd at the opening reception on Thursday, May 17, brought together supporters and art aficionados who had a chance to engage with Baghsarian, who has had an illustrious career photographing renowned figures, and to learn more about his process and inspirations behind each of his pieces.

“Avedis is not only a pioneer in many artistic forms but he is also an inspiration to the younger generation,” said Hovanessian in her welcoming remarks. “In addition to his artistic talents, Avedis is a true philanthropist.”

Hovanessian reflected on Baghsarian’s career that has spanned six decades and includes multiple art forms, including sculpture and industrial design. While establishing himself on an international platform, he maintained his ties to his homeland and to the city he has lived in for over 50 years. During the emotional aftermath of September 11, Baghsarian was awarded a solo exhibition by

see EXHIBIT, page 14



ARTS & LIVING

Curated Art Exhibit at Diocese

EXHIBIT, from page 13

Citibank, evoking his artistic take on the shadows of Manhattan's skyscrapers.

"He is an accomplished artist, whose works have been recognized all around the world and today, you will be able to discover his art yourself," said Hovanessian, who has championed artists in Armenia over the last 20 years to "keep them on the Armenian soil."

"His talent in art and his love for Armenia is truly an inspiration," she concluded.

A graduate of the School of Visual Arts and Parsons School of Design, Baghsarian, who is originally from Jerusalem, acknowledged the support of his wife, a successful shoe designer in her own right, who "stood by me during my days as an aspiring photographer and pushed me to follow my dreams."

He expressed appreciation for Hovanessian's effective leadership and insights, noting, "her drive and her knowledge of art was the force behind the show."

Thanking guests for their support of the children of Armenia, he shared his artistic philosophy with humility.

"As far as the work, it is what I saw," said Baghsarian. "Composers write music, writers what they feel and photographers capture what they see, and that's what I did."

Mher Margaryan, deputy permanent representative of Armenia to the UN, focused on the 100th anniversary of the Republic of Armenia, reflecting on the country's short life whose "historic lessons are still very relevant." He cited the challenges facing Armenia but expressed confidence that "with the joint efforts of our compatriots in the Diaspora, we can realize the dream of many generations and have a strong and successful Armenia."

(Armenia's UN Ambassador Zohrab Mnatsakanyan was named the country's new foreign minister earlier in the month.)

A testament to these joint efforts and connection of the Diaspora to the homeland are Ruzanna Gishyan and Armine Sahakyan, two recipients of the Avedis and Arsho Baghsaryan Scholarship Program, who shared their educational and professional updates, along with words of gratitude from Armenia.

Gishyan, who studied journalism and media studies at Yerevan State University, earning both her bachelor and master degrees with honors, is currently a journalist and news anchor at Radio Liberty Armenian Service.

"I love my work because it gives me an opportunity to truthfully present people's lives and try to help those who are in need," said Gishyan.

Sahakyan, who studies at the State Academy of Fine Arts in Armenia specializing in Fashion Design, also expressed her warm sentiments to the couple.

"It means so much to me that my benefactor has the same passion for creating arts as I do," said Sahakyan, who is especially inspired by the Armenian alphabet and balances her art with service work, volunteering at FAR's summer camp for orphans.

She looks forward to earning her diploma and presenting her first collection in a profession she "loves more and more every day."

"We are proud to run the Avedis and Arsho Baghsarian educational fund that supports talented students to realize their dream of higher education," said Garnik Nanagouljian, Executive Director of FAR, who along with Sandra Shahinian, a member of the Board of Directors, served as advisors to the exhibition. "Through this benefit exhibition we witnessed the magnificent art of a multi-talented Armenian-American artist, for whom being Armenian means to share together in a proud culture and heritage."

That pride in the Armenian culture was instilled in Baghsarian by his family while growing up in Jerusalem's Old City and it is what motivates his desire to fund art students in Armenia so they can nurture and pursue their creative visions, just as he did as a 10-year-old when, at the encouragement of his father, he apprenticed with a local photographer. Immigrating to the US in 1955 to continue his education, he was drafted

into the U.S. Army where he served as a combat photographer, later opening his own photography studio where he focused on fashion and commercial assignments and won numerous awards in the ensuing decades. Shifting gears in 1992, Baghsarian fulfilled new artistic callings by designing and producing a collection of tabletop accessories, winning the prestigious International Design Magazine Award, while simultaneously publishing several photography books.

In a post-event interview, Baghsarian said he was "overwhelmed" at the opening reception, particularly by the "enthusiasm and excitement of guests."

The highlight for him was interacting with the Armenian school students from the metro area, who visited the exhibition over the course of the weekend.

"I received so much satisfaction from meeting the students, who asked brilliant questions," he said. He appreciated their dialogue and taught them that "the eye, not the camera" takes the photos.

The chance to meet with the artist in an educational platform was at the behest of Hovanessian, who recognized the importance of "the spiritual nourishment of art, particularly for young students."

Baghsarian's relationship with FAR dates back many years when he sold his large collection of sculptures and earmarked the proceeds for Armenian students, ultimately laying the groundwork for he and his wife's scholarship program.

"I'm very proud to read the letters the scholarship recipients send us every year," said Baghsarian. "Learning about their accomplishments and bright futures gives us great joy."

Fostering the artistic ambitions of the next generation comes full circle for Baghsarian who "fell in love with photography" as an adolescent.

"I saw for the first time the process of making a print and I thought, that's magic," he said. Over the years, he perfected new techniques while formulating his own unique style, portrayed through his alphabets - a combination of his computer drawings and photographing certain patterns with his iPhone - as well as a photo of a symbolic dove, where Baghsarian intricately injected dyes with hypodermic needles and used a tiny brush air gun for effect.

The image, he says, was inspired by the raising of the Armenian flag at the United Nations in 1992, when he found himself explaining the colors of the flag to a curious bystander. "To me, red represents the past, blue as the color of peace and

orange symbolizes harvest, which is the future."

Baghsarian's brand of contemporary art is in line with Hovanessian's artistic inclinations and she praises his versatility and multi-pronged talents as an artist, while also being "completely devoted to helping students in Armenia," an endeavor Hovanessian is equally dedicated to in her ongoing mission to shine the spotlight on artists from Armenia.

"The world is going toward contemporary art and it's very important Armenia stays in step with the rest of the world," said Hovanessian. "Armenia was behind the iron curtain for so long and now with the blockades, it's difficult for artist to be introduced to the outside world."

When Armenia gained independence almost three decades ago and the Diaspora began initiatives in the homeland, Hovanessian realized "no one was helping the artists survive," so she took it upon herself to help pave the way for the country's contemporary artists to receive recognition in the international arena.

"Art balances one's life by expressing humanity and imagination while bringing emotions, desire and thoughts to light," she said. "The past is already in the present, so we have to showcase new artists because if we don't do it now, then when will we?"

Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian Datian

Chilled Summer Squash and Potato Soup



INGREDIENTS

6-7 medium zucchini, yellow crookneck or pattypan squash, sliced or diced
1 large onion, diced
2 medium garlic cloves, minced
2 cups potatoes, peeled, cubed or diced
2 medium stalks celery, diced (plus tops)
2 medium carrots, diced
6 cups low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth (to taste)
2 tablespoons unsalted butter and 2 tablespoons olive oil (to taste)
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice (to taste)
1 teaspoon Kosher or sea salt
1/2 teaspoon white or black pepper
Pinch of dried thyme
Non-fat plain yogurt as garnish
Chopped chives, basil, parsley, paprika or mint as garnish
Half and half or fresh ricotta and juice of 1/2 lemon

PREPARATION

Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees. Mix bread crumbs, one tablespoon melted butter, and nuts together in a medium bowl and set aside.
Boil carrots until tender, drain, mash, and set aside.
Sauté onions, bell pepper, green onions and garlic in 1-2 tablespoons of olive oil for 5-8 minutes, toss, and set aside.
In a large bowl, combine the carrots, milk, eggs, cooked vegetables, cheese, and spices together, and mix well.
In a separate large bowl, combine the flour, salt, dry mustard, and baking powder; add the carrot mixture to the dry ingredients, toss, and mix thoroughly.
Turn into a buttered 9 X 13 baking dish and sprinkle with bread crumbs and nut mixture. Dot top of casserole with butter and bake for 35-45 minutes at 350 degrees or until bubbly.
Garnish with chopped parsley and dill before serving.
Serves 6-8. In a large pot, sauté zucchini, onions, garlic, potatoes, celery and carrots in butter and olive oil for 10-12 minutes or until vegetables are tender, tossing occasionally.
Add the broth, lemon juice, salt, pepper and thyme, stir, and bring to a boil; reduce heat and simmer for 20-25 minutes. Remove from heat and cool for 10 minutes.
In a food processor or blender, puree soup (in batches) until medium smooth, but there are traces of zucchini and carrots visible.
Serve at room temperature, if desired, or place in a container, cover, and chill for 4-6 hours or overnight.
To serve, whisk soup with half and half or ricotta, if desired, and a little lemon juice. Top with a dollop of yogurt and sprinkle with choice of chives, basil, parsley, paprika or mint.
Drizzle with olive oil and serve lemon wedges on the side.
Serves 4-6.



*Christine's recipes have been published in the *Fresno Bee* newspaper, *Sunset* magazine, *Cooking Light* magazine, and at <http://www.thearmeniankitchen.com/>



ARTS & LIVING

Our Eyes Are on Armenia

ARTISTS, from page 13

and with the effects of trauma in their families and communities, with few services to support healthy family life or opportunities for meaningful work.

It was a hard visit, but while I was there, I fell in love. I fell in love with Gyumri and the people who allowed me to photograph them on the street, the women who sweep the streets at dawn, and the many women who shoved furniture away from walls to show me paintings, who dug out stacks of images to share with me, who told me stories that they longed to write but did not think anyone cared about.

I care. I care about women's voices the world over. This is the work that I pursue in the United States and abroad. I am a writer and visual artist. I utilize the book arts and photography to tell the stories I hear. In Armenia, I found women eager to gather in community to learn new skills furthering their own artistic explorations and connecting them to the world in a new way.

"My book has become my real friend, all my emotions, my life's events are shared with him, and my book has become my true companion, the best occupation I can ever do. I want to deepen my knowledge of book art and also have a collection of my books," said one of the women, Hasmik Gasparyan, 25.

One step towards uniting these artists with the Armenian tradition of illuminated manuscripts was to bring them to the Matenadaran as a group. The Matenadaran is a world-renowned scriptorium, museum, and research center in Yerevan. Dedicated to the preservation of its collection and furthering the study and understanding of the volumes of over 26,000 books, the museum is a unique resource for Armenians. Yet, most of the women I worked with in Gyumri, which is just 2 hours away from Yerevan, had never visited this place.

Facilitated by my coordinator Ani Ginosyan, and with special permission from the leadership at the Matenadaran, the advanced artists of New Illuminations were invited to a special tour of the museum. Of the 11 women who took a bus from Gyumri, only three had been there before. My Armenian guidebook calls this museum, "a shrine to the Armenian language and the soul of the nation." The museum contains illuminated Gospels, books about botany, animal husbandry, and philosophy. For generations, Armenians have had personal relation-

ships with these illuminated manuscripts. Villagers go to the Matenadaran to visit the sacred books that once resided in their village. The museum is home to books up to 1,600 years old. The illuminated manuscripts were created in workrooms in monasteries, entirely created by men until the years of the Armenian Genocide. Then, during the Soviet occupation, the practice of making these sacred texts fell away. There are no surviving manuscripts created by women, though many of the people work-

"This project helped me to be more self-confident, to know myself not only as a person, but as a woman. Most importantly, with the help of this project, I was able to drop all my fears. I could be myself. After the project I started creating different books. And every book has its own story. I find my consolation in the books. The book is man's best friend... These books have become a part of me. Every book created by me, have its own character. The book is me," said Yunona Kirakosyan, 20.



Main Gallery New Illuminations (photo by Raffi Berberian)

ing at the Matenadaran are women, skilled, educated, and devoted to preserving this icon of Armenian culture.

These lavishly embellished, hand-made books, which have extensive historic, spiritual, and artistic value, are missing half of the population's vision and voice. The illuminated manuscripts shed a light, through language, on the non-physical entity that is the soul of Armenia and its people. But, when women's stories are not told in the archives of human history, we cannot say we know the whole truth. New Illuminations seeks to carve a new history of the women of Armenia by empowering them with skills to create contemporary manuscripts blazoned with the beautiful and difficult reality of their lives.

This November, I will return to Gyumri for my third residency. Thanks to the generous support of the NAREG Foundation, the workshops take place in a clean, well-lit space on Ghorganyan Street in central Gyumri. I provide all the materials for the book making along with lunch for everyone in the workshop, which includes two translators from Gyumri, and two photographers, one from Gyumri and another from Stepanakert. We work closely and intensively. Since my first visit to Gyumri, I have worked with Ani Ginosyan as my translator. Both in the interviews with artists and conducting the workshops, Ani is integral to the project. She lives and works as a teacher and translator in Gyumri. The workshops are four full days long, attended by at least 15 women. This year, aided by a specialist from the Matenadaran, the advanced artists will learn the Armenian book binding style. Recognition of New Illuminations by the Matenadaran adds a very rich layer of validity to this project.

During my original residency in 2016, HAY-P Pop-up Gallery of Yerevan produced and curated the first exhibition of the work of New Illuminations. Produced in an old stone house on Shahumyan Street in the city center, the exhibit was curated by the HAY-P team of Anna Gargarian and Charlotte Poulain. This exhibit showed work by three international Armenian book artists including Dana Walrath (US),

Marsha Nouritza Odabashian (US) and Nairi Khatchadourian (FR) along with 30 books made in the initial workshop. Hundreds of people attended the month-long exhibition and accompanying events, including grandmothers with grandchildren from the neighborhood and art lovers from Yerevan. In November 2017, we produced our own exhibition at Café Nancy in Gyumri of the 50 new books made during my second residency. Over 125 people attended this one-night event.

Upon seeing the first exhibition of the work of New Illuminations, Fulbright Scholar Erin Piñon wrote, "New Illuminations is a formative, multifaceted exhibition and bold surge of creative production, which will be written into our new and evolving history of manuscripts as a critical moment for female artists and creators in Armenia."

We weave even closer into this ancient art form with the vigorous curiosity of artists seeking to make a new future for themselves in the rapidly evolving country that we love. Our eyes are on Armenia.

I will deliver two public talks about New Illuminations this summer, one for the Jewish Federation of Pittsfield, Mass. on June 7 at 10:30 a.m. and the second at the Cook Memorial Library in Tamworth, NH on Wednesday, June 13 at 7 p.m. Fundraising will begin in earnest in July to fund this project, which requires \$16,000 to run successfully. Donations made through our fiscal sponsor, Fractured Atlas, are fully tax-deductible. *Link to Fractured Atlas <https://www.fracturedatlas.org/site/fiscal/profile?id=14652>

For more information, please go to NewIlluminations.com. *Link <http://www.suzibanksbaum.com/new-illuminations/>

(Suzi Banks Baum is a writer, artist, actress, teacher, community organizer, and mom. With roots in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, she lives in the Berkshires of western Massachusetts. Suzi uses the written word, hand bound books, and photographs to say what she means. Her first book, An Anthology of Babes, celebrates the writing of women artists. Deeply curious about the thresholds we cross in to creative practice, she writes personal narrative with an ear for transformation



Family studies an artist's book (Photo by Raffi Berberian)

though engagement with the ordinary. She inspires us to live from the space of creative spirit and to value our contributions to the world and one another through workshops steeped in book arts, ritual, and writing. Suzi teaches in the Berkshires and for the International Women's Writing Guild. Published in The Collection: Flash Fiction for Flash Memory by Anchala Studios and Writing Fire by Green Fire Press. Visit her blog at, www.suzibanksbaum.com)

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ARTS & LIVING

CALENDAR

FLORIDA

JANUARY 20-27, 2019 — Armenian Heritage Cruise XXII 2019. Western Caribbean Cruise aboard the Royal Caribbean’s Allure of the Sea. Traveling to Nassau, Cozumel, Roatan, Costa Maya. Cabin Rates, starting from \$949/person based on double occupancy, including port charges and ACAA registration fee. Government rates of \$137.45 are additional. Armenian entrainment, Armenian cultural presentations, Armenian Festival Day, Tavlou and Belote Tournaments and much more. Call Travel Group International at 1-561-447-08750 or 1-866-447-0750 ext. 108, contact person Janie.

MASSACHUSETTS

MAY 31 — Annual Spring Dinner and Drawing sponsored by the Friends of Holy Trinity 1000 Club, 6:30 p.m., Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Open to all. You don’t have to be a member of the 1000 Club to join us for a delicious losh kebab and pilaf dinner, \$9.99 per person; tickets on sale at the door. Regular monthly raffle drawing at 8 p.m., plus 5 \$25 door prizes. “One-time” numbers will be sold on the night of dinner; special offer: purchase five “one-time” numbers for \$20, save \$5. For further info, contact the Holy Trinity Church office, 617.354.0632, or log onto www.htaac.org/calendar/event/560/

JUNE 1-2 — Armenian Food Festival Sponsored by the Hye Pointe Church Women’s Guild, 11:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Armenian Apostolic Church at Hye Pointe, 1280 Boston Post Road, Haverhill. Chicken Kabob, Losh Kabob, and Kheyima Dinners, Armenian Delicacies including Lahmejoon, Cheese Beoreg, Spinach Pie, Tourshi, Cheoreg, Kataif, Paklava, and many more delicious items. For more information call the church at (978) 372-9227.

JUNE 9 — The Friends of Armenian Culture Society will host the 67th annual Armenian Night at the Pops on Saturday, at 8 p.m. at Symphony Hall in Boston. Talented violinist Haig Hovsepan, a winner of the 2017 Boston Symphony Orchestra’s Concerto Competition and a rising sophomore at the Cleveland Institute of Music, will appear as soloist with the Boston Pops Orchestra under the direction of Keith Lockhart. He will perform the Sibelius *Violin Concerto in D-minor*. The Pops will present Dance to the Movies with Dancing Celebrity Pros, So You Think You Can Dance top finalists, and singing stars from American Idol and The Voice. Tickets \$95, \$70 and \$35, available at: www.FACSBoston.org

JUNE 10 — St. James Armenian Festival. Delicious Armenian Food! Live Music! Raffle! Children’s Activities! Moon Bounce, Balloons, Face Painting, Caricatures and More! Rain or Shine - On Church Grounds. Sunday. 465

Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown MA info@stthagop.com. www.stjameswatertown.org/festival

JUNE 16 – Book presentation by Adrienne Alexanian (editor) of her father’s memoir Forced into Genocide: Memoirsof and Armenian soldier in the Ottoman Turkish Army Worcester Library – Saxe Room – 2 - 3:30 pm 3 Salem Square – Worcester MA – (508) 799-1655 ext. 3 Book signing will follow the presentation – proceeds will be donated to charity

JUNE 18 — The Gregory Hintlian Memorial Golf Tournament, sponsored by Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston at the Marlborough Country Club, Marlborough; 9:30 a.m., registration; 11 a.m., “Shot Gun.” Join us for a day of golf - player’s fee: \$175 (includes hospitality, lunch, dinner, green & cart fees, prizes and gifts) – or just dinner and a social evening (\$50 per person). Limited to 128 players. Tournament and tee sponsorships available. RSVP deadline, June 11. To register or for further information, log onto www.htaac.org/calendar/event/562/ call the Holy Trinity Church Office, 617.354.0632, or email office@htaac.org.

JUNE 20 — Tea & Tranquility, Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston, Wednesday, 5-6:30 p.m. Meet & Greet! Enjoy Tea & Desserts hosted by MEM Tea Imports and The Bostonian Hotel. Walk the Labyrinth. For first-time walkers introduction to walking a labyrinth at 5:30 p.m. RSVP appreciated. hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

JUNE 28 — Under a Strawberry Moon, Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston, Thursday, 8:30– 9:30 p.m. Meet & Greet! Moonlit Labyrinth Walk. Enjoy chocolate-dipped strawberries, hosted by Vicki Lee’s and Ice Teas, hosted by MEM Tea Imports. RSVP appreciated. hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

JUNE 7 — Talk by Suzi Banks Baum about New Illuminations, the Jewish Federation of Pittsfield, 196 South Street, Pittsfield. 10:30 a.m. Baum has traveled to Gyumri three times in the past two years to develop a project called New Illuminations which unites women artists with the ancient practice of hand bound books, known to many as illuminated manuscripts. New Illuminations connects women to their heritage while empowering them through personal narrative writing and brings the book art form in to contemporary and eager hands. For more information, go to NewIlluminations.com or <http://www.suzibanks-baum.com/new-illuminations/>

JULY 7 — Save the date! Armenian Church of Cape Cod second annual Kef Time dinner and dancing at the Cape Club, 125 Falmouth Woods Road, North Falmouth. Leon Janikian Band with DJ and special appearance by Harry Minassian. Details to follow.

JULY 18 — Tea & Tranquility, Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. Wednesday, 5- 6:30 p.m. Meet & Greet! Enjoy Tea & Desserts hosted by MEM Tea

Imports and The Bostonian Hotel. Walk the Labyrinth. For first-time walkers introduction to walking a labyrinth at 5:30 p.m. RSVP appreciated. hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

AUGUST 15 — Tea & Tranquility, Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston, Wednesday, 5-6:30 p.m. Meet & Greet! Enjoy Tea & Desserts hosted by MEM Tea Imports and The Bostonian Hotel. Walk the Labyrinth. For first-time walkers introduction to walking a labyrinth at 5:30 p.m. RSVP appreciated. hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

SEPTEMBER 16 — Sunday Afternoon at the Park for Families & Friends. Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway. 2-4 p.m. Enjoy Boston Hye Guys Ensemble with Ron Sahatjian, clarinet; Joe Kouyoumjian, oud; Art Chingris, percussion. RSVP appreciated. hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

NOVEMBER 14 — Najarian Lecture on Human Rights at Historic Faneuil Hall, Boston Wednesday. Doors open at 6:45pm, Program at 7:30pm. Reception follows at The Bostonian Hotel An endowed public program of Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway. Details forthcoming.

NEW JERSEY

SEPTEMBER 30 — Save the Date! Armenian Fund USA and Ardzagang Armenian TV are proud to present Artash Asatryan and band, guest singer Grisha Asatryan, from Armenia! The concert is dedicated to Armenia’s and Artsakh’s independence celebration. Don’t miss the performance by the son and grandson of the legendry singer Aram Asatryan. Proceeds to benefit Fruitful Artsakh Project. 4 p.m. Bergen PAC, 30 N. Van Brunt St., Englewood.

RHODE ISLAND

JUNE 16 — The Cultural Committee of Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church Presents A Tribute Concert Honoring Garo Nichanian (Bass – Baritone, Canada), for his 40 years of contribution to the Arts and Culture. Invited Performers: Janette Khalarian, singer, Mari Panosian, piano, David Griego, flute, Nazeli Dance Group Saturday, 7 p.m. Egavian Cultural Center 70 Jefferson Street, Providence, RI. Wine & refreshments will be served. Admission \$20

Calendar items are free. Entries should not be longer than 5 lines. Listings should include contact information. Items will be edited to fit the space, if need be. A photo may be sent with the listing no later than Mondays at noon.

Armenian American Museum Announces Major Community-Wide Events

GLENDALÉ — The Armenian American Museum Governing Board has announced three major community-wide events following Glendale City Council’s historic approval including Museum Day on August 5, Telethon on September 9, and Gala Banquet on December 9.

The Armenian American Museum is a landmark project governed under the united leadership of ten leading Armenian American cultural, philanthropic, and religious non-profit institutions. In April 2018, the Glendale City Council agreed to negotiate the final Ground Lease Agreement for the Museum’s Downtown Glendale site with a lease term of up to 95 years at \$1 per year, marking a major milestone for the project.

“We are excited to announce the Armenian American Museum’s upcoming community-wide events and urge our community members to mark their calendars and participate to celebrate and support the project,” stated Museum Executive Committee Chairman Berdj Karapetian.

The following community-wide events have been scheduled:



The Armenian American Museum Day on Sunday, August 5, will bring together hundreds of community members for a special ceremony and celebration to mark the historic day at the future site of the cultural and educational center in Downtown Glendale’s Central Park.

The Telethon on Sunday, September 9, will be broadcast from Los Angeles and streamed online worldwide to educate the public on the Armenian American Museum and raise awareness for the historic project. Proceeds will benefit the construction of the Museum.

The Gala Banquet on December 9 at the Ray Dolby Ballroom in Hollywood will be the signature event of the year for the Armenian American Museum. The inaugural event will bring together donors, supporters, public officials, and community leaders for a memorable evening to celebrate and support the landmark project.

Visit www.ArmenianAmericanMuseum.org for more information.

Van Dyke’s Newest Play Brightens Cambridge Skies

PLAY, from page 13

women published, as well as books and articles by historians of science who wrote about them, and most recently Dava Sobel’s *The Glass Universe*.”

Armenian audiences may be more familiar with Van Dyke’s earlier works, such as “Daybreak” (earlier titled “Departed/a dream play”) about two women survivors of the Armenian Genocide, or “A Girl’s War.”

“The play is different from my earlier work, but I see connections too. Women and their struggles and their relationships are center stage. Time and space are fluid. The plot is not linear. Characters conjure up those from another time that they need to interact with. Because it was going to be a play about the work of these women at the Observatory, it had no overlap with my own family history. But ‘Daybreak’ is the only play I’ve written about my own family history. ‘The Women Who Mapped the Stars’ is not connected to my Armenian roots, but it is deeply connected to my experience as a woman and to the struggle of women to do meaningful work. In spite of all the research I needed to do in order to write this play, I wrote it faster than any other. At some level I believe it was already in me,” Van Dyke remarked.

COMMENTARY

COMMENTARY

The Battle of Sardarapat and its Aftermath

By Edmond Y. Azadian

One hundred years after the historic Battle of Sardarapat, a visit to ground zero allows a visual survey of the landscape, along with resurrecting the memory of those who sacrificed their lives at that spot and the memory of those who witnessed the victory which sealed Armenia's fate for posterity.

Armenians may not have demonstrated unity in their self-rule. However, that unity was amply visible during the battles of survival. Some of those battles took place in Sardarapat, Bash Abaran and Ghara Kilisa (Vanadzor) in May 1918, with the decisive victory scored on May 28. That date signifies the victorious outcome of a war and the founding of the first independent Republic of Armenia.

After a century-long debate, discussions and controversies among Armenians, the dust has already settled and bare historical facts are there to stay.

The Battle of Sardarapat enjoyed a groundswell of support from all Armenians, including refugees from Sassoun and Van who joined the army and the popular forces for a last stand in history.

The Turks were not satisfied with exterminating our people in historic Armenia and usurping their native land. They aimed at the last haven of the Armenians in the Caucasus to finish up the grizzly job and connect Turkey with the lands of their brethren in Central Asia, on their way to the pan-Turanic dream. But their march was interrupted on the slopes of Ararat, where Armenia was reborn on a sliver of its historic homeland.

gy. A case in point is the participation of the future Catholicos of Cilicia, Bishop Garegin Hovsepien, who was dubbed at the time as Yeghishé, a historic figure in the Battle of Avarayr, 451 AD, for inspiring the warriors through his patriotic fervor.

For a long time, Dro and Aram Manoukian had been depicted as the only true heroes of the battle, sometimes overshadowing the professional military, who were the real architects of the victory, because those military leaders did not have political heirs. Today, they are all on a pedestal for the entire Armenian nation. They were the ones who collectively fought without distinction, saved a piece of historic land from calamity and created an ancestral homeland for posterity.

For a long time, there was also historic injustice when comparing and contrasting the first independent republic to the Soviet-era republic. As we revisit historic facts without prejudices and biases, we realize the three republics complement each other in unity.

As much as the Soviet-era leaders are maligned as corrupt communists, many of them harbored true patriotism and nationalism in their hearts to generate pride in the battle of Sardarapat and inspire respect for our martyrs.

Aghasi Khanjyan, Grigor Haroutunyan (who barely spoke Armenian and who claimed Western Armenian territories), Yakob (Hakob) Zarobyan, Andon Kochinyan and Garen Demirjian, pretending to be devout communists, sometimes more Catholic than the Pope, were the ones who built the monumental edifices at Tsitsernakabert and Sardarapat, contravening the Soviet foreign policy which treated Turkey with kid gloves, hoping to lure that country away from the

embrace of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

Those leaders took such initiatives at their own peril; Khanjyan was assassinated by Lavrenti Beria and Zarobyan was demoted. Yet they all stand tall before history and their own people.

This year, Armenia also celebrated the 50th anniversary of the construction of the Sardarapat monument, which challenges the gardens of Versailles in its ambition. Sardarapat has more than architectural symbols. It denotes the survival of a beleaguered people in the tumult of history. It was

designed by the prominent architect and sculptor Rafael Israeli. The Sardarapat Memorial Complex is composed of a curved wall depicting the details of the war as well as two bullheads and a row of dignified falcons keeping watchful eye on Yerevan.

On the centennial of the Battle of Sardarapat, a visit to the site is a journey into history where the war cries come alive, the agony of the dying soldiers is painfully felt.

That visit becomes more significant on the heels of the soft landing of the Velvet Revolution.



The victory at Sardarapat belongs to all Armenians as well as to the fledgling republic, which was born from the blood and sweat of heroes.

The fighting force at Sardarapat had many components: professional military commanders, highly educated in the collapsing Tsarist army, like Gen. Movses Silikian, Tovmas Nazarbekian, Daniel bek-Piroumian (general commander) and General Boghos bek-Piroumian. Also vital were heroes like Dro (Drastamat Kanayan) who rose from the ranks of fedayees, civilian volunteers as well as members of the cler-

LETTERS

Libaridian Clarifies Point Regarding Government Actions

To the Editor:

I read with much interest and admiration Aram Arkun's article (May 12, 2018 issue of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*) titled "Boston Renaissance Discusses Events in Armenia." The article was comprehensive and quite informative, even for one who was present.

It is necessary for me, nonetheless, to make a correction in the segment that relates to my comments during that event. The article states that "Libaridian ... then made the controversial claim that two years ago in April 2016, it was the Armenian government 'which started action on the border and then said

that the Azerbaijanis are attacking.'"

It is possible that I misspoke or that the author misheard. I do not have a recording of my talk. But that is not important. It is very possible that I misspoke.

What I meant to say was "ten years" ago, that is in 2008, when the country was also gripped by a popular and wide protest movement, following Serzh Sargsyan's first contested election as president.

The 2016 four-day war was certainly initiated by Azerbaijan.

Jirair Libaridian
Cambridge, Mass.

Aram Arkun Responds:

Dear Dr. Libaridian,

I appreciate your kind words. I did make a recording of the evening's program, which confirms the accuracy of my quotation of your statement about the April 2016 events. Thank you for clarifying for the record your understanding of the cause of those events.

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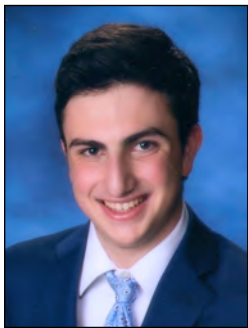
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COMMENTARY

Armenia’s ‘Velvet Revolution’ Should Be Model for Other Countries to Follow



By Michael Melkonian

On April 23, under immense pressure, Armenian Prime Minister Serzh Sargsyan resigned. This resignation was prompted by 11 days of protests in Armenia, with hundreds of thousands of Armenians peacefully protesting Sargsyan’s appointment to PM

after his presidential term ended earlier this year. The protests were led by former journalist Nikol Pashinyan, who heads the opposition party, Civil Contract, and who rebuked the advice of other opposition party leaders in calling for protests against Sargsyan’s appointment. Pashinyan was arrested in the early days of the protest under an unclear charge, which prompted even more protests by Armenians even more dedicated to remove Sargsyan from power. All of these protests were peaceful, as the impression was meant to peacefully protest government corruption, not to try and violently overthrow a government. Everyone from all walks of Armenian life joined in on these protests, with young student activists, liberal politicians, civil society workers, and even the military forming a large group of the people protesting the blatant corruption in the Armenian government. These protests have been brewing for years, with many

Armenians being disillusioned by its politicians pulling out from closer military and economic ties with Europe and choosing to align itself with Putin’s Russia. Sargsyan was a main proponent of closer Russia ties, with him pulling out of numerous EU deals as president and choosing Russian economic and military deals instead. Sargsyan appointing himself as PM to continue his hold on power was the last straw for many Armenians. It was reminiscent to what Vladimir Putin did in 2008 when he appointed himself PM after his presidential term ran out. To his credit however, Sargsyan resigned his position without bloodshed, which is something that many leaders in post-Soviet countries have failed to do. These protests showed the world that people power still meant something. Sargsyan, who was an Armenian lion in politics, resigned and surrendered to an unarmed nonviolent crowd. His resignation prompted mass jubilation across Armenia, with young people especially celebrating their historic achievement on getting the corrupt out of Armenia. The next step for the Armenian people should be to hold new elections, monitored by the U.N. for fairness, to get a government that is fairly elected by its own people. This new government will sanguinely help cast aside the chains of government corruption in Armenia and help prepare Armenia for a new era of freedom and prosperity. Hopefully, these protests inspire oppressed people from countries such as Iran, Russia and Turkey that peaceful demonstrations are still the most effective way for change, and that violent means never solve the problem, as seen with the failed coup of Turkish President Erdogan in 2016. History proves this point,

with every great movement being sparked by nonviolent protest, such as the peaceful protests of Indians wanting freedom and self-determination from the British and the peaceful American civil rights protests of the 1960s calling for racial equality. Lastly, this revolution proved a point to puppet masters like Putin that his efforts to control smaller countries like Armenia through its politicians will not be tolerated by the people for long, as it is human nature for people to want freedom, something that Putin and his corrupt political puppets lack. As President Ronald Reagan once said, “Freedom is never more than one generation from extinction,” and the Armenian people proved that their freedom will never be extinct because of this generation or the next.

(Michael Melkonian, from Los Angeles, is a senior at Clark Magnet High School who will begin his college career this fall majoring in political science and economics, hoping to one day make positive changes through public policy. He has been interning in the Political arena since his junior year of high school, which included Brian Mast’s Congressional Campaign, Marco Rubio’s Senatorial Campaign, and Donald Trump’s Presidential Campaign. For the past year, he has been interning for the political consulting firm, Majority Strategies, and is currently working on their client Cole Harris’s campaign as the Republican Candidate for Lieutenant Governor of California.)

An Angry Erdogan Stands to Harm Israel-Turkey Economic Ties

By Sami Peretz

RELATIONS between Israel and Turkey haven’t been warm in recent years, but they certainly improved after Israel agreed to provide \$20 million in compensation to the victims of Israel’s Mavi Marmara raid. Now that appears to be at risk as the two sides engage in a staccato duel of recalled and expelled envoys and insults. The war may not end with words but rather endanger economic ties. Until the Mavi Marmara incident in 2010, Turkey-Israel ties encompassed a close defense relationship as well as trade and tourism. The defense links, which included joint air force exercises and big contracts such as a \$1 billion project by Israel to upgrade 170 Turkish tanks, evaporated in an instant. But the trade and business ties remained apart from the political tension and even grew stronger in the years that followed. As much as Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan raged at Israel, he let business go on as usual for fear of the damage it would do to his country. Who has gotten the most over the years from the relationship isn’t easy to quantify. If an Israeli buys a low-priced shirt made in Turkey who benefits the most? The seller who earns a profit or the buyer who gets a low-cost shirt? That is the magic of the market economy: When it works it works to everyone’s benefit. That’s why the politicians left it alone even as they traded insults and accusations. For logistical reasons, foreign trade is usually conducted with a country’s nearest neighbors. But Israel does virtually no business with its Arab neighbors, so Turkey has always held out big promises, albeit promises that have never been fulfilled. In any event, economic ties between the two countries began to warm without any direct connection to the agreement they came to in 2016 over the Mavi Marmara affair. Instead, it was due to the Israeli government’s efforts to lower the cost of living and to the Syrian civil war. The cost-of-living drive included creating more competition

in the aviation sector to lower airfares. That led to a surge of air travel to Turkey by Israelis, not to stay there but to use Istanbul for connecting flights to their final destinations. In 2012, before Open Skies went into effect, 686,000 people traveled to Turkey from Israel on 4,706 flights; last year nearly 2 million did on 12,400 flights. Both sides have benefited from this. Israelis get much cheaper airfares and Turkish airlines and airports benefit from the business. Turks don’t travel to Israel in big numbers, but the Syrian civil war suddenly made it an important transit point for Turkish agricultural and other exports to Jordan, since they could no longer ship their goods by truck through war-torn Syria. Nowadays Turkish freighters arrive in Haifa Port with trailer trucks and drivers onboard. The trucks and their Turkish drivers travel through Israel to the Sheikh Hussein Bridge and on to Jordan. About 30-40 trucks do the route every week, a relatively small number that could be a lot bigger if Turkish companies decided to service the giant Saudi market via the same route. David Behrisch, managing partner at Tiran Shipping, an Israeli shipping agency, says that so far the ups and downs of Israeli-Turkish diplomatic relations have had no effect on the convoys. “I haven’t felt any tension, even after the Mavi Marmara. I don’t think I’ll feel it now either, I spoke with the Israeli consulate in Istanbul and they told me that it’s business as usual and it will stay that way,” he said. Israeli-Turkish trade came to \$4.3 billion in 2017, with a significant surplus for Turkey. Israeli exports to Turkey amounted to \$1.4 billion while imports from Turkey were \$2.9 billion. Israeli exports to Turkey are mainly chemicals and refined oil and its imports mainly cars, metals, machinery and textiles. The real opportunity for boosting trade is natural gas. Turkey needs it and Israel has big reserves. Turkey is dangerously reliant on imported Russian gas and Israel wants to use its energy resources to enhance its standing in the region. The two sides have held talks for many years, but nothing has resulted. As one source put it, “There are always talks underway with Turkey. I assume that if they were to get strong support from both governments, they would advance.” One reason Israel isn’t giving full-throated support is that it would prefer to export its gas to Europe through Cyprus and Greece, which is a more politically reliable option than Turkey, said Prof. Eyal Zisser of Tel Aviv University. No one will invest the \$2 billion required to construct a pipeline to deliver the gas to Turkey from Israel’s Leviathan field without guarantees of long-term contracts. Zisser says Erdogan has always been careful to contain his anger when it comes to the Turkish economy and knows how to distinguish between politics and business. “He knows the limits, but in the dynamic of the Middle East it’s hard to know where he will take his next step,” he says.

(This commentary originally appeared in *Haaretz* on May 16.)

US and Israel Should Recognize the Armenian Genocide

By Zev Chafets

Last week Turkey recalled its ambassadors to America and Israel. That decision came in response to Israeli forces killing 60 Palestinian protestors attempting to cross the Gaza border. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan called Israeli actions a “genocide” on Turkish TV; Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu shot back on twitter: “I suggest that he not preach morality to us.” Erdogan’s attack has opened an unanticipated window of opportunity, both in Washington and Jerusalem to break a decades-long refusal to join historians and many governments in recognizing a real genocide that Turkey continues to deny – that against Armenian Christians. This, of course, is history. The genocide took place during World War I. It was carried out by an Ottoman Turkish caliphate which is long gone. But in the Middle East, history matters. Turkey has made it a policy to baldly deny the genocide, and demand acquiescence in this lie as the price of good relations with Israel and other countries. In 2011, when France recognized the genocide, Erdogan accused the French of doing even worse in Algeria. Five years later, when Germany followed suit, Erdogan again lashed out. “Look at your own history,” he instructed the government of Angela Merkel. “You are proud of having burned people alive in ovens.” Despite such rhetoric, almost 30 countries have now officially classified the mass murder of Armenians as “genocide.” Israel and the United States are not among them. For years, the Armenian community in America has petitioned the government to officially recognize the genocide. U.S. presidents, acting on expert advice and the pressure of the Turkish lobby, have refrained doing so. This year, on “Armenian Remembrance Day,” President Trump issued a statement to mark the occasion that managed to omit the words “Turkey” and “genocide.” Less than a month later, Erdogan rewarded Trump’s kow-towing by labeling him an accomplice to what he called Israel’s genocidal actions against Palestinians. The best answer Trump could give now would be to demonstrate American leadership by officially recognizing the Armenian genocide.

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COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Diaspora Minister Proposes Forming A Parliament for the Diaspora in Armenia

The new Diaspora Minister Mkhitar Hayrapetyan, appointed by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on May 11, announced that a second legislative body would be created in Armenia to represent Diaspora Armenians.

This is a fascinating concept, but not a novelty. Interestingly, former Diaspora Minister Hranush Hakobyan, during her visit to Los Angeles on January 30, 2011, made a similar announcement, proposing the creation of a Senate in Armenia in addition to the existing Parliament that would partially include Diaspora Armenians.

I wrote an editorial in 2011, a few days after Minister Hakobyan's announcement, and raised several questions which also apply to the proposal made by the new Diaspora Minister earlier this month.

The most important issue is that the creation of a second legislative chamber requires amending Armenian's constitution — not an easy task! Without such an amendment, the structure of the Armenian government cannot be altered. Interestingly, the new diaspora minister did not mention that his proposal would require constitutional changes. This is a serious issue as

the constitution was last revised in 2015 and it is neither likely nor desirable that it be altered so soon. Even the newly-appointed prime minister acknowledged that it is not a good idea to tamper with the constitution every so often. It is also important to note that despite the former diaspora minister's 2011 announcement, when Armenia's constitution was eventually amended in 2015, the concept of a second legislative chamber for the diaspora was not included in it.

Since the new diaspora minister asked for input from Armenians overseas about his new proposal, I would like to raise a number of questions:

1) Is the Armenian government willing to amend the constitution to create a second legislative chamber? An alternative option, that may not require a change of the constitution, would be to include Armenians from the diaspora in the present Parliament. Several countries have adopted such a mechanism. A thorough study should be made of how other countries have resolved the participation of their diaspora representatives in their legislative bodies.

2) What exactly would be the mandate of the new chamber? Would it only discuss pan-Armenian issues such as the Armenian Genocide, demands from Turkey, the Artsakh conflict, and matters related to Diaspora Armenians or would it be also deal with Armenia's internal problems? Minister Hayrapetyan, in one of his interviews, stated that the new chamber would be a consultative, not a decision-making body. This would raise all sorts of questions both in Armenia and the Diaspora. Would Diaspora Armenians be content to go to the trouble of electing representatives from their communities and spending their time in endless hours of meetings in Yerevan merely to give advice to the Armenian Government that may not be listened to? Would Diaspora representatives after a while lose their interest and stop attending the meetings of such a consultative body? On the opposite side, would residents of Armenia welcome decisions or even advice from

Armenians who do not live in Armenia?

3) How would the representatives of the new legislative body be chosen? Would they be elected by their communities around the world or would they be appointed by the Armenian Government? In my opinion, Diaspora representatives should be elected by their community members, no matter how difficult it would be to organize such elections throughout the world. The Armenian Government should not be involved in elections to be held in the Diaspora. Representatives appointed by the Armenian Government or selected from Armenian organizations would not be able to claim that they truly represent the Armenians of the diaspora, since the public-at-large has not elected them. The leaders of Diaspora organizations represent only their own members, not the majority of Armenians in the Diaspora, since most Armenians are not members of any organization. It is also not a good idea to have two legislative chambers in Armenia, one of which is elected by the citizens of Armenia (the present Parliament) and the second one is composed of appointed, not elected members.

4) What would be the criteria for candidates and voters for the Diaspora chamber? Would it be acceptable that the candidates be Armenians who are citizens of foreign countries or should they be asked to acquire at least dual citizenship? Otherwise, it would be odd to have a group of foreign citizens, albeit Armenians, sitting in Yerevan and making decisions or giving advice that would affect Armenia's population.

5) Would Diaspora representatives of the new legislative body move to Armenia to participate in year-round sessions or simply come to Armenia for brief periods to attend meetings dealing with pan-Armenian issues?

Certainly, there should be no rush to form a second legislative body. As Minister Hayrapetyan suggested, extensive consultations should be held in Armenia and the Diaspora to find a solution that is in the best interest of all Armenians.

An Ethical Dilemma with a Happy Ending

By Agop Y. Bedikian MD

Life and death decision taking puts patients, relatives and caregivers in a very difficult situation. The decision taking is harder when a young patient has terminal cancer. The patients take the diagnosis of cancer as a death verdict. They are afraid of pain, suffering and disfiguring associated with it. The intense emotional effect and the adverse impact on body image drive some patients to depression and suicide. The general attitude among physicians in the West in the recent past changed from giving limited information to full disclosure about the disease, treatment and prognosis.

I devoted the first four decades of my life to treat patients with advanced cancer with the best therapies the clinical research could provide. More importantly, I always made myself available to them and their families as cancer therapy is complicated and affects the patients' family in numerous ways. Very often, I received communication (letters, phone calls, e-mails etc.) from patients, families I have never met. They asked questions about the diagnosis, staging of the disease, management, and treatment options. I have never declined answering these requests. Most of the time, I do not hear from them again. On few occasions, I am involved in their therapy even though it is outside my field of subspecialty i.e. malignant melanoma. One such occasion was related to a young plastic surgeon from Armenia.

It all started with a phone call from the office of Mrs. Louise Manoogian Simone, the former president of Armenian General Benevolent Union. Her assistant, Barbara Boghosian, a member of the team responsible for AGBU Armenia Medical Programs was desperate. She said "excuse me for intruding; we wouldn't have called you if we had an alternative. We have a young doctor in Armenia with the diagnosis of advanced lymphoma, we have been waiting for a second opinion from a pathologist in MD Anderson Cancer Center, and we have heard nothing during the past six weeks. We sent the pathology slides with the help of a charity organization in Houston; we chose your name from the short list of Armenian doctors and are seeking your assistance to expedite the process as the patient's condition is deteriorating in the interim."

I inquired about the patient's medical history so that I could narrow down as to who may have received the pathology slides. Apparently, the patient was treated with antibiotics for tonsillitis in September 1999. The tonsillitis resolved but his flank pain persisted. A nephrologist thought it may be due to pyelonephritis. He was given multiple antibiotic treatments but

Armenia. He looked at the slides under the microscope and said, "this is not lymphoma, it is testicular cancer." Immediately, I called the AGBU office in New York office and conveyed the new diagnosis and also I requested that the doctors in Armenia do a blood test to measure the serum Beta-HCG and alfa-fetoprotein levels; which are often elevated in association with

the normal level and the liver enzyme level has tripled, indicating tumor progression in the abdomen. Then I inquired about the local availability of the anticancer drugs known to be effective against testicular cancer in addition to antiemetics and other supportive care medications.

Fully aware of the latest information about the patient and the limited availability of local resources for appropriate treatment, I told Mrs. Simone that the patient has very high chance of developing life threatening complication from chemotherapy because of hepatic and renal insufficiency. In addition, the prognosis of patients with similar liver and kidney dysfunction is very poor as half of them die in 6 to 8 weeks.

I stressed the fact that we have only one shot to reverse the deteriorating process in this patient. Therapy of such patients would require oncologist with detailed knowledge about the pharmacokinetics of the anticancer drugs chosen for treatment to make the appropriate dose adjustment based on the deteriorating kidney and liver functions. These drugs should be administered in a fashion different than that is a common practice in Armenia. Then Mrs. Simone told me that despite the grave prognosis, she has not given up on this doctor, she will do whatever it takes to try to save him. She asked me what would I need if I take charge of the management of this case. I told her that I need a person willing to administer the anticancer drugs as per my instruction with no modification or delay, monitor the patient closely and inform me via e-mail at least twice a day. I would prefer working with a person with limited knowledge in cancer care than with an oncologist because that will eliminate the tendency and temptation to modify the treatment or alter the way the drugs are administered. In addition, I asked her commitment to purchase and delivery of the needed cytotoxic and supportive care drugs including antiemetics, antibiotics and bone marrow stimulant growth factors to make them available when needed locally. I provided her with the list of the drugs we needed and started to take the necessary steps to initiate systemic chemotherapy using the then locally available cytotoxic drugs while we procure and ship the long list of needed drugs. Dr. Armine Kharatian, (Anesthesiologist, see ETHICS, page 20



Dr. Karen Danielyan and Dr. Agop Y. Bedikian

he persisted in remaining febrile. In addition, he complained of weight loss and night sweats.

A complete physical examination showed that Dr. Karen Danielyan had an abdominal mass which histologically was diagnosed as lymphoma. It was decided to have confirmation of the diagnosis before he is brought to United States for treatment. I traced the pathology slides and took them to Dr. Mario Luna, the pathology colleague who had collaborated with me in several projects before. I asked him if he could have a look at the pathology slides ASAP and give me preliminary verbal diagnosis as a favor while I do the necessary paperwork to request official pathology consultation; in view of deteriorating condition of the patient in

metastatic testicular cancer. A day later, Mrs. Simone was told that the Beta-HCG level was over 200000, the highest dilution they could perform in their lab. Mrs. Simone told me that they can no longer bring the patient to the States for therapy as his condition has deteriorated significantly while waiting for the confirmation of the diagnosis. She asked me if I could help. I told her I will be visiting my daughter who was living in New York in few days and that I do not mind passing by the AGBU office in New York and find out the status of the patient then and what could be done in Yerevan. When I called his local oncologist for an update about the patient's status, he told me that the patient's serum bilirubin level was over twice



Armenian President Visits Yerevan Physics Institute

YEREVAN — On May 3 President Armen Sarkissian, accompanied by the chairman of Yerevan Physics Institute's board of trustees, Nerses Yeritsyan, visited Yerevan Physics Institute (YerPhi) headquarters. The president, who himself has a PhD in physics, met the new director and staff.

In April, the Board of Trustees of the Alikhanyan National Scientific Laboratory, YerPhi approved the appointment of Ani Aprahamian, professor of physics at Notre Dame University, as YerPhi's new director. Aprahamian takes over YerPhi's leadership from Prof. Ashot Chilingarian who held this position for 10 years while simultaneously continuing his role as the head of its Cosmic Ray Division (CRD).

Chilingarian introduced Sarkissian to some of CRD's ongoing research projects including the Space Environmental Viewing and Analysis Network (SEVAN), a network of astroparticle detectors, and CRD's Light

Detection and Ranging (LIDAR) facility.

The SEVAN network was designed and deployed by CRD scientists and engineers to monitor cosmic radiation in the atmosphere. Networked cosmic ray detectors are installed in a number of Eastern European countries as well as in Armenia and Artsakh. Data from the detectors is relayed to CRD's headquarters where it is analyzed and made available to scientists worldwide.

Chilingarian spoke about CRD's annual international summer school. Included are both lectures on topics of modern physics, as well as exercises and the solution of simple problems by students. Attendance is free for qualified high school and college students. More information is at www.spc.yerphi.am/index.php/en/events.

The president also was informed about CRD's upcoming international conference Thunderstorms and Elementary Particle Acceleration (TEPA), held at its Nor Ambert



From left to right: Scientists Vahan Elbakyan, Ruben Dallakyan, Andranik Manukyan, Gurgen Elbakyan; head of the Radioisotope production laboratory Dr. Albert Avetisyan; Director Prof. Ani Aprahamian; Armenian president Prof. Armen Sarkissian; Chairman of AANL board of trustees Nerses Yeritsyan; Head of Nuclear Medicine Arthur Rostomyan; Eghishe Elbakyan. Prof. Ashot Chilingarian, who took the photograph, is not pictured.

center from September 17-20. YerPhi scientist Dr. Albert Avetisyan introduced the president to YerPhi's medical isotope center where research is being conducted to produce medical isotopes. Aprahamian, a parti-

cle physicist herself, will also enhance opportunities for fundamental science at YerPhi using this cyclotron. She will also bring her network of contacts, which will add to the scientific presence of YerPhi.

An Ethical Dilemma with a Happy Ending

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colleague and friend of the patient) agreed to assist me in the delivery of the therapy, monitoring and supporting the patient based on instruction sent from Houston through the internet.

Within few days, we were ready to start chemotherapy with appropriate dose modification. In view of the patient's compromised renal function, I omitted the use of cisplatin, started the chemotherapy with Adriamycin and Cytoxan at reduced doses on January first, 2000. With the return of serum creatinine to normal before the second chemotherapy course, cisplatin was added to the regimen. When the drugs procured and sent from the US became locally available, I incorporated them in the treatment regimen as appropriate. Within 6 weeks, there was significant improvement of

the renal and liver function test results accompanied with clinical improvement as well. At the time, the patient was offered travel to the States for treatment; he declined preferring receiving therapy close to her family. The patient received therapy with close monitoring for possible nephropathy and neuropathy before each course. With this regimen, his beta HCG dropped by about 99 percent and his metastases shrunk by 90 percent compared with his pre-therapy evaluation. Concerned about the peripheral neuropathy (which could prevent him to practice plastic surgery), the treatment was modified. The cisplatin dose was reduced and, etoposide, and bleomycin were introduced in the treatment. After 2 courses of this regimen, his beta HCG decreased to 15 (normal level is < 5). Bleomycin was subsequently dis-

continued in view of the possibility of pulmonary damage that may prevent future surgical procedures for resection render him free of disease. In summer of 2000, he was started on therapy regimen including etoposide, Actinomycin D, methotrexate, and leucovorin rescue. After 3 courses his beta-HCG returned to normal level. The repeat Ct Scans of chest and abdomen showed residual abnormalities in the lungs, liver metastases and necrotic mass adjacent to the left kidney partially obstructing the left ureter in the abdomen. In view of persistent abnormalities on CT scans despite the return of serum beta-HCG to normal we could not be sure that the last cancer cell had died.

When the patient recovered from the generalized effects of the systemic therapy, the patient came to Houston for resection of the residual abnormal areas seen on the CT scans. He underwent extensive abdominal surgery under the direction of Dr. Richard Babaian. The left kidney and the necrotic abdominal mass were removed; the microscopic examination of the specimens showed calcification consistent with metastatic necrotic germ cell tumor. There were no viable cancer cells was present. Left testis showed mature teratoma with scar, no other germ cell tumor component. There were viable cancer cells. Over 2 dozen lymph nodes were removed; none showed viable cancer cells. Six weeks later,

Dr. Ara Vaporciyan resected over 2 dozen pulmonary nodules and lymph nodes; microscopic examination they showed necrosis and fibrosis but no viable cancer cells in them.

During the subsequent year, the patient had follow-up visits every 3 months together with repeat radiologic tests and determination of serum Beta-HCG. The results were negative for tumor recurrence. Then the patient had yearly evaluation with no sign of tumor recurrence. After 5 years, all tests were discontinued. On August 18, 2000, I received an e-mail from Karen he said "I finally climbed Mount Ararat. This I dedicated this climbing to my Mother and you, my doctor, two persons who gave life to me. I reached a peak height of 5,135 meter above sea level. It was difficult. It is at 5,000 meter level, that the eternal ice starts. With love, Karen."

The last time I saw Karen was during my visit to Yerevan in June 2016. He was practicing plastic surgery and remains free of cancer. He had built a new surgical unit about 10 miles from his clinic in Yerevan. This happy outcome could not be achieved without the foresight, determination, persistence and support of Mrs. Louise Manoogian Simone. As a result of her support, hundreds of Armenian children are living a normal life without the stigma of cleft lips, palates and club feet under Karen's care.

US and Israel Should Recognize the Armenian Genocide

RECOGNITION, from page 18

Meanwhile, Erdogan's outburst and the harassment of the Israeli ambassador on his way home from Ankara, have lit fires in Jerusalem. Two members of Knesset, the ruling Likud Party's Amir Ohana and Itzik Shmuly from the opposition Zionist Unity Party, have introduced legislation to end Israel's embarrassing silence on the Armenian issue.

That silence had been a matter of sheer pragmatism. Once, when Turkey was a secular, pro-Western country, Israel relied on it as a strategic partner in a hostile Arab neighborhood. That rationale no longer holds. Israel can now take care of itself. And Erdogan, an aspiring caliph, is now an enemy. Shortly after he accused Israel of mass murder, he received a call from his new best friend, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, praising him in the name of Islamic solidarity for standing up to the "Big and Little Satan," that is, the US and Israel.

In Israel, circumstances have altered consciences. Truth is now in style. "It's not too late to do justice," says Knesset member Ohana. "When Hitler presented Wehrmacht officers with his plan for mass extermination in Poland, including women and children, he soothed the

concerns about the world's reaction by saying, 'Who, after all, speaks today of the Armenians?' For that reason alone we should have already officially recognized this genocide."

At least five senior ministers in the governing coalition have come out for measures that would punish Turkey and recognize its genocide. So have the speaker of the Knesset and the heads of the major opposition parties. It is hard to recall such trans-partisan enthusiasm.

Still, nothing will change without Netanyahu's say-so. No legislation can pass without his consent and no new diplomatic policy can be adopted either, as he is also Israel's foreign minister.

Netanyahu is a strategic thinker, and Turkey, like it or not, is a player in the regional game of thrones now underway. He will officially recognize the Armenian Genocide only if he thinks it fits his purposes. That may be the wrong reason, but for once in this debate, for both Israel and the U.S., raw national interest and moral obligation are perfectly aligned: In a war against fanatics, truth is a powerful weapon.

(This opinion piece originally appeared on Bloomberg. To contact the author of this story: Zev Chafets at zchafets@gmail.com)

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