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Jivan Gasparyan, Armenian Musician Beloved By Rock Stars And Hollywood, Has Died

By Anastasia Tsioulcas

NEW YORK (NPR) — Legendary duduk player Jivan Gasparyan died on July 6, according to a Facebook post by his grandson and protégé, Jivan Gasparyan Jr. He was 92.

He was a prolific performer, playing on the soundtracks of many movies, from “The Last Temptation of Christ” to “Gladiator.” He was also a collaborator of musicians Peter Gabriel, Michael Brook, the Kronos Quartet, Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, Lionel Richie and Queen’s Brian May, among many others.

No other details were provided.

Gasparyan (whose names are sometimes transliterated as “Djivan” and “Gasparian”) was born October 12, 1928 in Solak, Armenia, in a village near Yerevan. At age six, he began learning the duduk — a double-reed



instrument close to the Western oboe — from his father, who was also a musician. Years later, though, he said in interview with English music journalist Simon Broughton that his biggest inspiration was going as a boy to the cinema, and hearing duduk players accompany the films with their own improvisations.

Within his own country, Gasparyan’s talent was recognized early. He coaxed a whole world of emotional expression out of his simple instrument — one made of apricot wood, with only a one-octave range. By the time he was 20, Gasparyan was soloing with the Yerevan Philharmonic Orchestra. He had a notable career in Armenia and the then-Soviet Union; in 1973, he was the first musician to be given the title of the People’s Artist of Armenia.

see GASPARYAN, page 9

Farewell to Ambassador Varuzhan Nersesyan

WASHINGTON — The Armenian Embassy here hosted a farewell reception on Monday, July 19, for Ambassador Varuzhan Nersesyan and his family, who after two and half years of service has been reposted to Great Britain, starting August 1.



John Armstrong speaks during the ceremony for outgoing Ambassador Nersesyan. (Photo by Haykaram Nahapetyan)

Participants at the event included US State Department officials, members of the US Congress, other ambassadors in the US and Armenian Community religious and organizations representatives in the US.

Primate Bishop Daniel Findikyan opened the program, followed by Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary Bureau of European and Eurasian affairs of State Department John Armstrong, Rep. Jackie Speier, (D, CA) and Ambassador Nersesyan.



Foreign Diplomats Visiting Shushi Become Part of Azerbaijan Propaganda Campaign

BRUSSELS, Belgium — The European Armenian Federation for Justice and democracy (EAFJD) issued a statement deploring the visit of foreign ambassadors and diplomats in Azerbaijan to occupied Shushi in Nagorno Karabakh (Artsakh).

The diplomats’ unfortunate decision to join this propaganda tour organized by the Azerbaijani government is a regrettable act of approval and legitimization of the war crimes committed by the same authoritarian and criminal Azerbaijani regime against the native Armenian population of Shushi and Nagorno Karabakh in general only few months ago.

In fact, with a massive support of Turkey and the deployment of paid Syrian

terrorist fighters, the Azerbaijani armed forces deliberately destroyed Shushi’s civilian infrastructure and bombed the town’s main cathedral twice during the 44-day war in the autumn 2020. As a result of this disastrous war unleashed by the Turkish-Azerbaijani tandem, the centuries-old Armenian town of Shushi is now completely ethnically cleansed of its Armenian population for the first time in history. The Azerbaijani President later publicly and proudly announced that they “chased the Armenian population like dogs”.

It goes without saying that the refusal of the ambassadors the three co-chair countries of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) see PROPAGANDA, page 5



Foreign diplomats visiting Shushi earlier in July

Armenian Democratic Liberal Party Eastern District Committee Praises Amb. Nersesyan’s Tenure in US



The following letter was sent by the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party Eastern District Committee to Amb. Varuzhan Nersesyan, the now-former ambassador of Armenia to the US.

July 12, 2021

Your Excellency Varuzhan Nersesyan
Ambassador, Republic of Armenia
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Ambassador,

At the conclusion of your term as Armenia’s diplomatic representative to the United States, we salute you and wish you well in your future mission for Armenia.

During your tenure we witnessed extensive and productive diplomatic activity promoting and developing meaningful relations between Armenia and United States, during which momentous events took place in the Caucasus and around the world, posing challenges for the execution of your mission. We are proud to state that you met those challenges

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ARMENIA

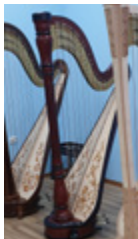
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ARMENIA

NEWS from ARMENIA

Reconstruction Works Continue at Amaras Monastery Supported by Serzh Sargsyan

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — "Reconstruction works continue at Amaras Monastery complex in Artsakh," Deputy Chairman of the Republican Party of Armenia (RPA) Armen Ashotyan wrote on Facebook, adding the initiative is supported by Luys Foundation and the continuous support of former President Serzh Sargsyan. "This is Amaras - the ancient Armenian spiritual and education center standing alone in the face of the enemy forces. This the place, where Mesrop Mashtots established the first Armenian school. The old mulberry tress at the monastery yard know more about the history of our people than thousands of our compatriots. Visit Artsakh!" Ashotyan wrote, sharing photos from the scene.

Makunts Gives up Parliament Seat for Reported U.S. Envoy Job

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Lawmaker from the ruling Civil Contract party Lilit Makunts has relinquished her seat in the Armenian parliament. This was confirmed by Armen Smbatyan, the Secretary of the country's Central Electoral Commission on July 20, Sputnik Armenia reports.

According to earlier reports and comments from Makunts herself, the former lawmaker is expected to be appointed Armenia's ambassador to the United States. Makunts was named the Minister of Culture in Armenia back in 2018, and was elected a member of parliament later in the year. She confirmed in January that her appointment as the Armenian Ambassador to the United States was on the table. While critics said the lawmaker does not have sufficient experience in diplomatic work for such an appointment, Makunts claimed back then that "in some cases" such experience does not play a "priority role." (See related story on Page 1.)

Russian Peacekeepers Use UAVs to Monitor Karabakh Ceasefire

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — The military personnel of the Joint Russian-Turkish Center continue to carry out tasks to monitor compliance with the ceasefire regime in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone. Monitoring of the situation is carried out around the clock with the help of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) Forpost and Orlan-10, the Russian Defense Ministry said in a July 20 statement. "The UAV crews carry out measures to control the situation in the zone of the Russian peacekeeping contingent according to the tasks of the Joint Russian-Turkish Center. The crew of the UAV Forpost conducts aerial surveillance 24 hours a day, 7 days a week," said crew leader of unmanned aviation, Igor Petreev.

Armen Grigoryan Tapped to Become Armenia's New FM

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Former secretary of Armenia's Security Council Armen Grigoryan has been appointed first deputy minister of foreign affairs in a move that ruling party representatives see as a prelude to his appointment to the currently vacant ministerial position.

Grigoryan, 38, is a member of the ruling Civil Contract party. He graduated from the Department of International Relations of Yerevan State University and later from the American University of Armenia, but has no experience of diplomatic work.

Grigoryan coordinated electoral programs for the anti-corruption organization, Transparency International, before becoming one of the key figures of Armenia's 2018 "Velvet Revolution." He was appointed secretary of the Security Council after the revolution.

Chief of Pashinyan's staff Arayik Harutinyan introduced Grigoryan to the staff of the Foreign Ministry on Wednesday, July 14. In his remarks he expressed confidence that Grigoryan will encompass the tasks set to him by the government.

Grigoryan, for his part, said that he was convinced that "we will jointly implement all the tasks outlined in the electoral program of the Civil Contract party that will also be reflected in the government's program."

Armenia has had no foreign minister since May 31. In his farewell speech to the ministry staff former Foreign Minister Ara Ayvazyan made it clear that he had resigned because of policy disagreements with Pashinyan.

"The reason for my decision to resign was to make sure that there are never any suspicions that this ministry could take some steps or agree to some ideas, initiatives going against our statehood and na-



Armen Grigoryan

tional interests," he said.

Later it was Grigoryan who accused Ayvazyan of torpedoing the government work on the repatriation of Armenian prisoners of war from Azerbaijan by lying that Yerevan had no minefield maps that it could pass on to the Azerbaijani side.

Ayvazyan's resignation was followed by the resignations of all four of his deputies. The resignation of one deputy minister, Armen Ghevondyan, was not accepted by the government and he continued to serve not to leave the ministry without the leadership altogether.

Lawmaker Artur Hovannisian, a member of the Civil Contract party, confirmed that Grigoryan is also their candidate for the post of foreign minister. He said that there was a discussion within the party on this issue. "There are difficult processes that we must go through, and, yes, we need people who can make decisions in difficult situations based on the interests of the Republic of Armenia and implement these decisions," he said.

For the first time since coming to pow-

er Pashinyan has made an appointment in the Foreign Ministry, bypassing the diplomatic corps. Acting Deputy Prime Minister Tigran Avinyan said that "the political appointment is needed for establishing a certain connection between the diplomatic corps and the political leadership in order to remove the differences that have existed to some extent." "I think that on the whole this is a positive appointment," Avinyan said.

Grigoryan was one of the few officials who criticized the decision of the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) not to support Armenia in its current border standoff with Azerbaijan, advising that the CSTO's secretary-general show restraint in his public remarks.

Political analyst Armen Baghdasaryan believes that if Grigoryan is appointed foreign minister, there will be drastic changes as Armenia will start pursuing a pro-Western foreign policy.

"Considering his track record, his numerous statements, I think it will be very difficult for him to pursue a pro-Russian foreign policy. In case of a sharp change in Armenia's foreign policy, Russia will try to react as harshly as possible," Baghdasarian said.

Baghdasarian believes that career diplomats would not agree to cardinal changes in Armenia's foreign policy, so Pashinyan has been looking for a candidate for the top post outside the Foreign Ministry.

"It is searching for and finding allies that is the main task of diplomacy. But Armenia's dependence on Russia today in all respects, and primarily in the security sphere, is so great that I think it would not be a reasonable decision to appoint someone whom Russia absolutely does not trust," he said.

Arrests of Armenian Opposition Mayors Continue

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Law-enforcement authorities arrested on Friday, July 16, the elected heads of two more communities of Armenia's southeastern Syunik province affiliated with the main opposition Hayastan bloc.

Four other local government officials were arrested earlier this month on different charges condemned by the bloc as politically motivated.

The latest detainees run the Syunik communities comprising the towns of Goris and Sisian and surrounding villages.

Goris's Arush Arushanyan, was remand-



Mayor Arush Arushanyan of Goris

ed in pre-trial custody after being charged with trying to buy votes ahead of the June 20 parliamentary elections.

The Special Investigative Service (SIS)

claims that Arushanyan ordered the head of a village close to Goris to provide financial aid to local residents who will promise to vote for Hayastan. It says that the village chief, Lusine Avetyan, refused to do that.

Avetyan herself was arrested about two weeks ago for allocating such aid from the community budget to several villagers in May. The SIS says that the cash handouts ranging from 100,000 drams to 220,000 drams (\$200-\$440) per person were vote bribes.

Arushanyan strongly denied the accusations when he spoke to journalists before a Yerevan court allowed investigators to arrest him. He said the poverty benefits approved by the local council were allocated on a regular basis and had nothing to do with the elections.

"The law stipulates that every year sums equivalent to 5 percent of our budget ... must be provided to socially vulnerable families," said Arushanyan.

According to Arushanyan's lawyer, Armen Melkonyan, the charges brought against his client are based on Avetyan's "contradictory testimony." Melkonyan said he will challenge the Goris mayor's pre-trial detention in Armenia's Court of Appeals.

The head of the Sisian community, Artur Sargsyan, was detained overnight by another law-enforcement agency. The Investigative Committee charged him with abuse

of power and forgery of official documents.

One of the two other arrested Syunik mayors, Manvel Paramazyan, ran the town of Kajaran, while the other, Mkhitar Zakaryan, headed a larger community comprising the towns of Meghri and Agarak and nearby villages. Like Arushanyan and Sargsyan, they are senior members of Hayastan.

The bloc, led by former President Robert Kocharyan, finished second in the snap elections won by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's party. It has condemned the arrests, saying that the Armenian authorities are trying to suppress the country's leading opposition force.

The arrested mayors were already charged with other crimes this winter. They were among the heads of more than a dozen Syunik communities who issued in December statements condemning Pashinyan's handling of the autumn war with Azerbaijan and demanding his resignation. Some of them encouraged supporters to disrupt Pashinyan's December visit to Syunik. The prime minister faced angry protests when he finally toured Goris, Agarak, Meghri and the provincial capital Kapapan in May.

During the election campaign Pashinyan vowed to wage "political vendettas" against local government officials supporting the opposition.



ARMENIA

Artsakh's Economy

The Post-war Syndrome And Recovery Efforts

By Haykaram Nahapetyan

Mirror-Spectator Video Correspondent

STEPANAKERT/WASHINGTON — Every day Zorik Balayan sells souvenirs near Stepanakert's iconic We Are Our Mountains (aka Grandmother and Grandfather) monument. When I approached him last month, there was only a small group of tourists, although the site was more crowded during my previous visits. Tourists from the US, Europe, or even China were not uncommon in Artsakh before 2020.

"First coronavirus hit us. The borders were basically locked for months. Then the war started. We have had almost no tourists here last year. Now we have some visitors — a tiny number compared to what used to be before," said Balayan.

Perhaps another reason why there are fewer visitors is that the number of accessible tourist sites has been reduced due to the most recent aggression. More precisely, Shushi is under occupation, Tigranakert's millennia-old archeological site and museum are lost, and Dadivank is accessible to only a limited number of pilgrims who



Zorik Babayan and Vrezh Babayan

must await quite a process of negotiations that the Russian peacekeepers have to conduct with the Azerbaijanis each time.



Hotel Europe in Stepanakert



Donara Ghazaryan baking authentic flat bread (zhengyalov hatz) in Stepanakert's market

However, Artsakh has had a vibrant history, and therefore, despite losses, Karabakh still has many ancient monuments scattered throughout this millennia-old land, from Gandzasar Monastery to Amarass, where Mesrop Mash-

tots had set up a school 16 centuries ago. "Visit Artsakh, so that 100,000 Armenian compatriots of this land will not feel they are abandoned," wrote Artsakh's Human Rights Defender Gegham Stepanyan on his Facebook page on June 29.

In Stepanakert's market, I met Donara Ghazaryan, whom I interviewed during my previous trip to Artsakh in 2019. As before, she bakes and sells the delicious *zhengyalov hatz* - Artsakh's authentic flat-bread rolls stuffed with herbs - right at the market center.

"During the combats, I was not selling *zhengyalov hatz*, she said. "I was collecting the herbs and baking rolls for the soldiers, not for sale. One day I was not here, and the missile struck the market. The explosion broke my fridge. Luckily we were not here; however, I had to buy a new fridge," said

Donara, pointing to the new refrigerator next to her.

According to Nagorno-Karabakh's government, Artsakh has had only 997 visitors during the first five months

of this year. Although by May the curve began to improve, the total number of visitors before COVID and before war was notably different, nearing 50 thousand tourists annually.

Those who carry Armenian passports can still enter Artsakh easily; the Russian peacekeepers and Artsakh's patrols conduct routine checking only. However, "foreigners" might need to apply for visas in advance.

"The economic situation in Artsakh before and after the war is significantly different," said Aram Verdyan. Together with his fiancée, Aram became known as part of the first, and so far the only, couple who married in Dadivank after the territory came under Azerbaijan's control. The images of their marriage flashed in Armenian media last December. Now Aram works as an adviser to Artsakh's state minister (prime minister).

"The diaspora's role in post-war recovery efforts can be huge. I don't mean just donating to Artsakh, but rather connecting the business people of our diaspora with Artsakh's business community in an attempt to advance the economy here," added Aram while we were sitting in one of Stepanakert's main cafeterias.

Whether through its IT industry, which can develop working remotely, business consultation, or sending manufacturing technologies — any form of cooperation can be helpful for the people of Artsakh, who love to work and learn, added Aram. Those who have a permanent job will more likely stay here. Those who merely get donations are more likely to go, summarized Aram as his professional opinion.

Later, after returning to the United States, I connected with Levon Gulyan, a young professional from Artsakh who aims to develop a website that will connect any potential investor from the diaspora with a likely counterpart in Artsakh. His organization, called the "High Technologies and Strategic Planning Center" of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, is setting up online resource that, as Levon worded it, "will serve as a platform, where investors will see various fields of opportunities: from IT to agriculture and the hotel industry."

"We will retain only monitoring functions: if the investor is interested in how a business functions here, our organization will conduct the investigation and provide the results. We will supervise but not charge for it. Our sole goal is to create conditions for Artsakh's progress," said Levon during our Zoom discussion.

His ahim-nadram.com website is nearly ready and an additional media presentation for diasporan media outlets is planned soon.



The author, at right, with Aram Verdyan

INTERNATIONAL

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Armenian Shot Putter Competing for Georgia at Tokyo 2020

TOKYO (PanARMENIAN.Net) — An Armenian athlete competing for Georgia is participating in Tokyo Olympics, which open on July 23 in Tokyo, Japan, Armenpress reports. Benik Abrahamyan is a shot putter who also competed at the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. He is a multiple champion and record holder, a participant of five Pan-Armenian Games and winner of the last four and. He lives in Tbilisi.

Georgia will compete in 11 sports events at the Olympic Games in Tokyo: wrestling, judo, weightlifting, athletics, fencing, swimming, tennis, boxing, karate, rhythmic gymnastics and shooting. A total of 35 athletes will represent the country in the Japanese capital.

Putin, Aliyev Meet in Moscow

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Russian President Vladimir Putin and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev met in Moscow on July 20. The official Kremlin website informs that Putin thanked Aliyev for “finding compromise solutions” in normalization of the regional situation, emphasizing that “if we want settlement, we must pursue the path of finding compromises.”

“Definitely, the solution of the regional situation remains one of the key issues. I know that you, naturally, attach great importance to that and I want to thank you for finding compromise solutions, which are always very hard, but if we want settlement, and we all want that, we must pursue that path. So far we have been able to do that for which I want to thank you,” the Russian president said. Earlier Dmitry Peskov, spokesperson of Putin, had said that no document was to be signed.

Turkey Destabilizes Other Countries through Mercenaries – Greek Foreign Ministry

ATHENS (Panorama.am) — Greek Foreign Ministry spokesman Alexandros Papaioannou on July 19 accused Turkey of destabilizing other countries by keeping its forces and mercenaries in their territory. “Turkey is trying to distort reality and create a smokescreen in order to hide its own constant violations of international law,” he said in a [statement](#), continuing: “As is well known, Turkey has issued a threat of war against Greece if Greece exercises its lawful rights (casus belli); it violates national sovereignty and contests Greece’s sovereign rights; it illegally occupies territories of other states and destabilizes other countries by maintaining troops and mercenaries in their territory.

“At a time when it has one of the largest landing forces facing the Greek islands, Turkey is shamelessly asking Greece, a country which is fully committed to the observance of international legality, to renounce its fundamental right of self-defense.”

Yury Dokhoian, Chess Coach Who Guided Garry Kasparov, Dies at 56

By Dylan Loeb McClain

Athletes are not the only ones who need coaches. All top chess players have them too. They are often experts at particular elements of the game, or openings, that a player feels he or she needs to work on.

But they can fill many other roles. They can be confidants, friends, providers of consolation, psychologists and even, on

tired as a chess professional, Mr. Dokhoian went on to have a successful career coaching other elite players and Russian national teams.

The International Chess Federation, the game’s governing body, announced Dokhoian’s death on Twitter. His daughter, Anastasia Dokhoian, said the cause was Covid-19.

In an appreciation on his website, Mr.

Kasparov, whose mother, Klara Kasparova, died of Covid-19 on Christmas, explained how important Dokhoian had become to him as a coach. Dokhoian took on that role in 1994, when Kasparov was the world champion.

“Working, walking, eating, talking, it was a true relationship. I spent more time with him than anyone else before my retirement in 2005,” Kasparov wrote. “He gave me more than chess preparation; he gave me stability and confidence.”

Yury Rafailovich Dokhoian was born on Oc-

tober 26, 1964, in a small village in Altai Krai, a southern region of Siberia, to Rafael and Raya Dokhoian. He learned to play chess from his father and soon demonstrated so much aptitude for the game that his family relocated near Moscow so that Yury could study at one of the chess schools there.

The genial Dokhoian became a strong player. From 1986 to 1993, he won or shared first place in eight international tournaments; for a time, he was ranked among the top 35 in the world, according to Chess-

metrics, a widely followed ranking system. He was awarded the title grandmaster, the highest in the game, by the International Chess Federation in 1988.

He stopped playing professionally when he began working with Kasparov.

After Kasparov retired, Dokhoian started coaching Nadezhda and Tatiana Kosintseva, Russian sisters who became grandmasters under his tutelage. The sisters are among only 38 women out of more than 1,700 grandmasters worldwide.

Dokhoian was also the coach of the Russian national women’s team from 2006 to 2011. In 2010, with the Kosintseva sisters leading the way, the team won the gold medal at the Chess Olympiad.

After that, Dokhoian switched to coaching the men’s team, which had struggled since winning the gold medal at the 2002 Olympiad. In 2012, his first Olympiad as its coach, the men’s team tied for first with Armenia, taking silver when it narrowly lost out on tiebreakers.

Dokhoian began working with Sergey Karjakin in 2009. Seven years earlier, Mr. Karjakin had become the youngest grandmaster in history — he was 12 years, seven months old at the time — but he was struggling to live up to his early promise. With Dokhoian as his coach, Mr. Karjakin rose steadily up the ranks, finally qualifying to play a match for the world championship in 2016 against Magnus Carlsen of Norway, the reigning titleholder. Though Karjakin ultimately lost, he led the match three-quarters of the way through.

In his own tribute to Dokhoian, Karjakin called him kind but demanding. “He was ready to work 24/7,” he wrote, “if he believed in his protégé and saw a desire to improve.”

In addition to his daughter, Dokhoian is survived by his wife, Elena, and his sister, Irina.

Dokhoian’s most recent charge was Andrey Esipenko, a 19-year-old grandmaster currently ranked No. 27 in the world. Earlier this year, Esipenko became the youngest player to defeat Carlsen in a tournament game.

(This story was originally published in *the New York Times*.)



The chess champion Garry Kasparov, left, with his coach, Yury Dokhoian, “Working, walking, eating, talking, it was a true relationship,” Mr. Kasparov said. “I spent more time with him than anyone else before my retirement in 2005.” Credit...Mig Greengard

rare occasions, guardians if there is an actual physical altercation during or after a match.

From the job description, it is clear that not every chess player is suited to be a coach; an unusual skill set is required. By many accounts, Yury Dokhoian, a Russian grandmaster who died on July 1 in Moscow at 56, had the necessary tools.

He became one of the most successful coaches in the world and, for a decade, was the coach of Garry Kasparov, the longtime world champion. After Mr. Kasparov re-

Church in Turkey Vandalized

ISTANBUL (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Two men in Turkey were filmed dancing on the roof of the Armenian Church of Surp Takavor in Kadıköy, Istanbul on July 12.

According to a video posted by HDP member Murad Mihçı on Twitter, the men climbed onto the building near a cross, while a group of others were seen dancing to loud music and drinking nearby.

The church was vandalized in 2018 when the inscription “From Erzurum resident, this homeland is ours” was spray-painted on its walls and garbage was dumped at the front door.

Earlier in the year, a man in Turkey organized a barbecue party in the historic Armenian Sourp Asdvadzadzin Church (19th century) in the village of Germeş, 10km northeast of the city of Urfa. According to local media reports, the kebab seller cooked the local liver kebab for a while and served it to people attending the “event”. The barbecue party, held in the church and shared on social media, created a wave of reaction among users.

Many Armenian churches and historic heritage sites in Turkey have been neglected or destroyed over the decades. Others have been converted into mosques, cattle sheds and warehouses.



The two men vandalizing the church



INTERNATIONAL

AGBU Europe Hosts Lectures on International Impact of Armenian Genocide

By Harry Kezelian

Mirror-Spectator Staff

BERLIN — An academic initiative sponsored this summer by AGBU Europe, “Ideas & their Consequences: Genocide and International Justice after 1919,” took place on June 3 and 4. Co-sponsored by the Lepsius House in Potsdam, the European Union of Jewish Students (EUJS) and the Roma organization Phiren Amenca, the series of talks is leading up to an academic conference to be held in late August in Berlin.

The academic conference began on the 100th anniversary of the Tehlirian trial, which followed the assassination of Ottoman Turkish wartime dictator and architect of the Armenian Genocide, Talat Pasha, by Ottoman-born Armenian revolutionary Soghomon Tehlirian. Tehlirian was acquitted of the charges of murder, though it was admitted that he had killed Talat, an outcome which, as the first two speakers reminded us, had vast implications for international human rights law.

The first two speakers were Dr. Rolf Hosfeld of the Lepsius House and Dr. Stefan Ihrig of the University of Haifa. Both are authorities on the relations between Germany and Turkey during the First World War, including the history of the Armenian Genocide. Both talks were conducted via Zoom and introduced by members of the AGBU Europe team in France. They are available to view on YouTube.

Tehlirian and International Law

Hosfeld’s lecture focused in on the Soghomon Tehlirian trial and examined its implications for international law. Tehlirian’s trial, though little known today in the Western world, is a key reference in Hannah Arendt’s well-known book, “Eichmann in Jerusalem,” where the question is explored of how crimes against humanity can be punished when the customary rules of legal jurisdiction have to be foregone in order to do so. f

Tehlirian’s trial, pointed out Hosfeld, was a politically engineered event on the part of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation and the Operation Nemesis group under the leadership of Shahan Natalie. Tehlirian was sent to kill Talat and specifically to surrender to the police in order to be put on trial for murder. The trial was seen by the Armenian conspirators as an opportunity for the facts of the Armenian Genocide to be proven in a Western court of law. The defense attorneys essentially argued that Tehlirian had been driven to temporary insanity by the experience of witnessing the massacre of his family, which necessitated testimony regarding the atrocities committed against the Armenians by the Ottoman government and the fact that Talat was ultimately responsible for those atrocities. Despite the fact that Tehlirian had actually been fighting on the Russian side when the massacres started, he was highly familiar with what had happened to families like his, and his invented testimony was corroborated as an accurate description of the massacres by German eyewitnesses who commented on the trial.

German, American, and British papers at the time carried the news of the trial and commentators inside and outside the courtroom observed that the trial had become more about the actions of Talat, the ostensible victim, rather than the defendant, Tehlirian. In telling the story, Hosfeld also graces us with many little known facts, such as the Germano-British political games that led up to the assassination (both countries were well aware that Talat was hiding in Berlin) and the fact that one Mehmet Zeki Bey along with his comrades of the Turkish Club in Berlin actually opposed the actions of the Committee of Union and Progress and published an extensive document listing and denouncing Talat’s crimes.

In regard to international law, Hosfeld also noted the fact that prior to the coinage of the word “Genocide,” the phrase “Crimes Against Humanity” was already being used, and that the Tehlirian trial was one of the first times it was used in a judicial setting. A young Raphael Lemkin was following the trial and was troubled by the fact that it appeared typical legal rules had to be flouted in order to punish the perpetrator of the most heinous atrocities imaginable. This became the impetus for Lemkin, when he saw the same thing happening to his own people, to push for a new category of crime: Genocide, a word he coined. The ratification of the Genocide Convention was Lemkin’s brainchild and the punishment of the Nazi commanders at the Nuremberg Trials was ultimately based on an international law theory he had begun to develop after being upset with the unsatisfactory way that Tehlirian’s attorneys and the pro-Armenian side had to proceed in the Tehlirian trial.

Importance of Armenian Genocide to World History

After listening to Ihrig’s talk, Hosfeld’s, while informative, seemed like an introduction. Ihrig spoke on many of the same issues that Hosfeld brought up, but in a more expansive way. His main purpose was to show that the Armenian Genocide was an extremely consequential event not only for Armenian and Turkish history, but for World History, and to explain the vast consequences of this event that Armenians sometimes see as their own issue.

Armenians are often heard stating that the Armenian Genocide was the first of the 20th century and was the precursor to the Holocaust, but aside from Hitler’s alleged phrase “who today remembers the Armenians?” the actual historical connection has been little studied and is little known to Armenians — no matter how educated — alone to the rest of the world.

Ihrig showed decisively that the Armenian Genocide did in fact pave the way for the Holocaust and explained exactly how that happened. Trivia facts like Hitler’s quote and the phrase “first Genocide of the 20th century” are a bit irrelevant as far as Ihrig is concerned. Hitler’s quote, while shown to be legitimate by Kevork Bardakjian, is still debated, and the first Genocide of the 20th century was actually committed by German colonialists against the Hereros of South-West Africa. But after listening to Ihrig’s discourse, one will realize the massive impact the Armenian Genocide really did have and these questionably true trivia facts become just that.

Ihrig showed that while atrocities against the Hereros and other peoples deemed less than equal by European colonizers were a matter of intense debate, it was the Armenian Genocide that really turned mass murder into a philosophical and moral quandary for Europeans. Explaining the European outlook of the time in a non-offensive way, Ihrig noted that it is unfortunate that Germans did not consider tribal Africans as equal human beings, but that is indeed how they were viewed. On the other hand, Ihrig argues, Germans essentially did view Armenians as their equals. After all, they were Christian and highly Westernized. This meant that the slaughter of the Armenians in 1894-1896 and 1915-1918 had to be made sense of, as opposed to the African peoples who could be ignored. Because Germany was pro-Turkish in the 1890s and early 20th century, and because the two countries were allies in the First World War, a public debate erupted in the German press after the end of the war as to how to view and respond to the Armenian massacres. Just as Germany reacted to the imputation of war guilt and the Allied demands for reparations, they also reacted to the Allied condemnation of their wartime ally Turkey, though this is little known today.

Ultimately, in the German public discourse, extreme right-wing voices tried to justify the extermination of the Armenians by depicting them as a war-profiteering, fifth-columnist, shrewd traitor race within the Ottoman Empire who didn’t contribute to Turkish society. These were the same tropes that had been used since the 19th century to denigrate the Jews, and would be used again under the Nazis to justify Hitler’s “Final Solution.” Ihrig presents the postwar debate about the Armenian Genocide as a turning point for European modernity where the

Germans accepted racist, pseudo-scientific, and anti-Semitic narratives as not only a way to blame the Jews for their problems - or the Armenians for the problems of the Turks - but as a justification for mass murder. The victims were the Armenians, in the past tense, but once the door was opened, the same arguments would be used to justify Hitler’s reign of terror. The same far-right streams of thought that existed in Germany in the early 1920s were, of course, the same streams of thought that would create and feed into the Nazi movement in the same decade.

Ihrig also points out the importance of the Armenian Genocide in other aspects of human rights issues. It was the Talat Pasha assassination, he noted, and the Armenian case in general, that inspired Raphael Lemkin to formulate the legal definition of genocide and fight for its recognition in international law after World War II and in response to the Holocaust. Franz Werfel’s well known novel, *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh*, was written as memorialization of the Armenian Genocide, but its immediate context was the rise of Hitler and the Nazi Party to power in Germany. Werfel, touring the country just before Hitler became chancellor, read to audiences excerpts of the book depicting Enver Pasha’s rise to power as a warning to the public against the danger of Nazi rule. Ihrig notes that the novel was extremely popular in the Warsaw Ghetto and elsewhere among Jews under the Third Reich. While reading the book gave some Jews courage and inspired resistance to the regime, others were disillusioned, thinking that if the Western world hadn’t even come to the aid of the Christian Armenians, there was little hope for the Jews.

Ihrig’s takeaway, though he actually mentions it at the beginning of his talk, is that the Armenian Genocide needs to be integrated into the general history narrative because of its importance and stressing the above points, in order to tie it in with general European and World History. The conclusion can be made in an American context, that the World History curriculum in high schools needs to be adapted not just to give a day or so on the Armenian Genocide as an extra and extraneous topic, but to incorporate it into the historical narrative as the important and highly relevant topic that it is, having causes that are major world events and consequences that are other major world events (like the Holocaust).

Ihrig’s argument is that the Armenian Genocide has not attained the status it deserves in the Western world’s historical self-image because of a sort of chilling affect caused by the continued activity of the denialists. Like some kind of worldwide gaslighting campaign, Turkey and its army of denialists have sown doubt into the heart of the average historical generalist, and even the average historian of the First World War, and caused writers to shy away from including the Armenian case in their historical analysis on the chance that it might not have really happened and that if it did, it probably wasn’t that important anyway. According to Ihrig, that could not be further from the truth — not only for Armenians, but for all world citizens.

Both lectures were followed by question and answer sessions moderated by the AGBU-affiliated organizers. They can be watched at <https://www.genocideandjusticeafter1919.com/videos>.

Foreign Diplomats Visiting Shushi Become Part of Azerbaijan Propaganda Campaign

PROPAGANDA, from page 1

Minsk group – France, Russia and the USA, to join this trip, is a clear message that the Karabakh conflict is not resolved yet. As a matter of fact, two of the three OSCE basic principles – non-use of violence and equal right to self-determination of peoples- were blatantly violated during the war by the Azerbaijan authorities.

It is a pity that the diplomats who visited Shushi did not choose to follow the example of the co-chair countries of the OSCE Minsk group. By accepting the invitation, they became part of the propaganda campaign of Azerbaijan’s authoritarian regime. Moreover, they have undermined the efforts of the OSCE Minsk group co-chairs of finding a lasting, peaceful and just resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. Besides, these diplomats have completely ignored the fact that Azerbaijan continues to illegally keep and torture more than 200 Armenian prisoners of war and captives, using them as a political bargaining chip, in violation of the tripartite ceasefire statement of November 2020 which also the Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev signed and which stipulates the return of all the captives and prisoners of war.

Furthermore, Azerbaijan continues to refuse international organizations such as UNESCO to access the Armenian architectural and religious monuments in Nagorno Karabakh. In the meanwhile, documentation of desecration and even complete destruction of some of these religious monuments has emerged. Besides, since May 2021 the Azerbaijani army has encroached on the sovereign territory of the Republic of Armenia in its Syunik and Gheghargunik regions while kidnapping Armenian servicemen.

Community News

Onanian Family Honors Patriarch Through Church Fund

By Stephan S. Nigohosian

When the family of Edward Onanian was searching for a way to honor his legacy in perpetuity, they had many options. But only one of them would reflect the respect and appreciation he had for the staff of the Eastern Diocese, providing them with peace of mind in their retirement years. So, it comes as no surprise that his family recently established a \$500,000 Armenian Church Endowment Fund (ACEF) endowment in his memory to benefit the lay staff of the Eastern Diocese. The high esteem and appreciation for their outstanding service to the church was something Edward had witnessed countless times through his involvement in Diocesan initiatives and activities. "My father was a strong advocate for every member of the Diocesan staff," said Laurie Onanian. "He greatly valued their hard work and dedication, and his background in labor relations fueled his lifelong efforts to ensure a secure future for the non-clergy workers, just as he had previously done for the clergy."

The Onanian family's background in financial and business sectors proved to be one of the guiding factors they used in choosing ACEF for their generous gift, ultimately solidifying their decision to establish the endowment. The ACEF portfolio's consistent track record of growth and positive returns, coupled with its mission of maximizing the financial strength of individual parishes by en-



Ed Onanian with Archbishop Tor-kom Manoogian

abling them to invest as a community, was the stable foundation the family sought to build Edward's legacy upon.

"My entire family felt comfortable establishing this endowment, since we trust the people in ACEF," Laurie said. "We knew that the money would be in good hands and would help those who most certainly deserve it."

The Onanian family's connection to the Armenian church began decades ago, and has played an integral part of their spiritual and social lives to this day. At an early age, Edward became a member of Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Church of Providence, RI, and was active in its ACYOA chapter, later becoming Central Council Chairman. Later in life when his family moved to Washington, D.C., they became parishioners at St. Mary Church.

see OHANIAN, page 7



Diocesan Primate Bishop Daniel Findikyan on one of his visits to St. Gregory the Illuminator Church of Binghamton, NY, which will celebrate its 90th anniversary in October 2021.

A 'Renaissance' Comes to Binghamton's St. Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Church

By Florence Avakian

BINGHAMTON, N.Y. — Michael Findikyan was only 14 years old when he first stepped into an Armenian Church. That church was the St. Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Church in Binghamton, NY.

Now as Bishop Daniel Findikyan, Primate of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, he emotionally recalls how on Christmas Eve of January 1976, he followed his father into the church, and sat in the last pew. "The church was not my home. It was a strange place. I had not grown up in the Armenian Church. I don't remember my feelings at that time."

It was shortly after that first encounter that the church priest, Fr. Kevork Arakelian was invited to the Findikyan home for dinner. The priest's "warm, friendly and loving" demeanor made a deep impression on young Michael. "I felt embraced and loved. That day was the beginning of my association with St. Gregory Church," he states with great feeling.

Following that "life-changing meeting, the St. Gregory Church became my home," says the Primate, his eyes glowing. He became immersed in the church, attending the Armenian School, Sunday School, and becoming the organist at age 14. "Fr. Kevork brought stacks of organ books to my home, and my mother, Ursula of German background, befriended the Armenian women and became Women's Guild chairperson in the 1980s."

For the first time, he felt that he belonged to a church. "The people welcomed me like their own. The kids my age embraced me." American-born Fr. Kevork (George) was the catalyst for Michael Findikyan to become a priest.

Celebrating 90 Years in October

On October 17, 2021, the 90th anniversary of the St. Gregory the Illuminator Church in Binghamton, NY will be celebrated in grand style.

And attending will be the Primate, Bishop Daniel Findikyan, along with many others. Among the most faithful will be 92-year-old Grace (nee Sarkisian) Baradet. The church has mirrored her life since childhood as she has witnessed and been a major part of its evolution.

"I remember the purchase of the church in 1927, its renovation, and especially Fr. Kevork who first came as a deacon. He then became the designated priest with his Yeretgin Sandra for the next five years. He was young and warm and related to the youth. The church was like a family, and still is today," she enthuses.

"When the church was first bought, there was a pot-bellied stove in a tiny kitchen. The edifice expanded in the late 1940s. There were constant renovations, including the sanctuary, the hallways, and the kitchen. Our permanent priest became the Very Rev. Fr. Sooren Chinchinian in the 1980s. And before the 1970s and 1980s, the 'Southside Binghamton Ecumenical Council,' which included clergy and faithful from a number of protestant denominations and two Catholic churches on the south side of Binghamton, joined us for services and discussions."

She remembers that when the weather was sunny, "we had picnics on a nearby farm after church service, like a close-knit family get-together. There were picnic tables and a close-by river for swimming. St. Gregory was not only our church, but our family community."

continued on next page

AAF Delivers \$7.4 Million Of Medicines to Armenia And Artsakh in the last Three months

GLENDAL — The Armenia Artsakh Fund (AAF) delivered \$7.4 million of humanitarian assistance to Armenia and Artsakh during April to June 2021. Of this amount, the AAF collected \$7 million of medicines and other supplies donated by Direct R Relief (\$4.7 million); MAP International (\$2.2 million) and Americares (\$140,071).

Other organizations which contributed valuable goods during this period were the Armenian Missionary Association of America (\$222,000) and the Howard Karagheusian Commemorative Corp. (\$76,000).

The medicines, medical supplies donated during this period were sent to the AGBU Claudia Nazarian Medical Center for Syrian Armenian Refugees in Yerevan, Arabkir United Children's Foundation, ARDA Humanitarian Fund, Kanaker Zeytoun Medical Center, Muratsan Children's Endocrinology Center, St. Grigor Lusavorich Medical Center, and the health ministries of Armenia and Artsakh.

During the first six months of 2021 AAF delivered much-needed medicines and medical supplies for treatment of COVID-19 patients, as well as medicines and medical supplies for oncology, cardio vascular and gastrointestinal patients plus a full container of hygiene products.

In the past 32 years, including the shipments under its predecessor, the United Armenian Fund, the AAF delivered to Armenia and Artsakh a grand total of \$931 million worth of relief supplies on board 158 airlifts and 2,502 sea containers.

"The Armenia Artsakh Fund is regularly offered free of charge millions of dollars of life-saving medicines and medical supplies. All we have to do is pay for the shipping expenses. We welcome your generous donations to be able to continue delivering this valuable assistance to all medical centers in Armenia and Artsakh," stated Harut Sassounian, the President of AAF.

"I would like to thank ARDA (Armenian Relief Development Association) for contributing to the AAF \$11,500 for the shipping and handling expenses of \$2.2 million of much needed medicines in Armenia, acquired by the AAF. I hope the ARDA donation will serve as an example to other donors so AAF can continue its life-saving humanitarian mission in Armenia," stated Harut Sassounian.

For more information, email: sassoun@pacbell.net.



AAF delivering aid in Aleppo, Syria



COMMUNITY NEWS

'Renaissance' Comes to Binghamton's St. Gregory the Illuminator Church

from previous page

The church had a Sunday School, Armenian language school, youth activities, and dinners prepared by the Ladies Guild. Grace Baradet was immersed in church activities, including 60 years in the Ladies' Guild, a member of the parish council, as well as co-director of the youth group, and a singer in the choir. She also organized an Armenian heritage cooking class, collecting recipes from the older women.

Her busy life included working in the U.S. State Department as an administrator for six years. Her husband of French-Armenian background was a top IBM official, and their two sons also "loved the Armenian Church." She remembers the young Michael Findikyan and regards him "like a son. I watched him grow up." She has high praise for "his humility, and devotion to his faith."

But with the economic decline of Binghamton in the 1980s, there followed a great exodus of the younger people. The main businesses being IBM, the Endicott Johnson Shoe business and AGFA camera were huge losses. Also, SUNY University of Binghamton had a student population of 85,000 then.

"Every year since 2002, the Armenian Genocide was and has been commemorated at a stone memorial plaque we installed, and trees we have planted nearby."

However, the church "always remained open and active. We were and are one big happy family. It is our way of bonding," Grace Baradet repeated with obvious pride.

On an Upswing

Now the church and community are on an upswing, she says happily. "New families have come from Beirut and Armenia. And the University has a burgeoning population, and an exchange program with

Then Primate Archbishop Khajag Barsamian appointed a number of visiting priests, including Rev. Frs. Michael Devejian, Daniel Karadjian, Garen Gdanian, Arshen Aivazian, Garabed Kochakian, and the Very Rev. Frs. Daniel Findikyan, and Simeon Odabashian."

Currently, Bishop Daniel has appointed Rev. Fr. Kapriel Mouradjian as the permanent visiting priest in March 2021. She relates: "He will teach religious education and Armenian language classes to children, reinvigorate our choir, and incorporate new ideas. At present there are 40 families in the parish, with seven families from Armenia, and one from Beirut. And we have 20 children who love to come to church and see each other, including Nina Findikyan, niece of the Primate."

Dedication and Service

Ordained a priest on July 17, 2003, after a successful life as a mortgage banker, Rev. Fr. Kapriel Mouradjian "had always wanted to be a priest since childhood." Now the priest appointed by the Primate at St. Gregory the Illuminator Church in Binghamton, he calls his current position as a "great experience in the study of people, and a trust in the future."

Married to Diane (nee Mahtesian), Fr. Kapriel and Yeretzgin have two children, and one grandson. They recently celebrated their 33rd wedding anniversary.

Now 58 years old, he calls his four-year

St. Gregory Church two long weekends a month, complete with home blessings and visitations, and a series of meetings the rest of the week. "The people are so warm, including the youngsters. There were ten or eleven young kids in the choir on Easter. These youngsters are very much a part of this growing parish. I am fortunate to be with all the parishioners."

Fr. Kapriel "loves church life," and loves

with voiced pride.

Findikyan fully agrees. "This Renaissance is a new burst of life. Fr. Kapriel will be the shepherd of the community. He will teach the faith, prayer, Armenian Church life and language to the children. Also, he will train altar servers and deacons. The church and people are the same. Five, ten years ago, Binghamton was on the verge of death. Now the future will be bright for



Fr. Kapriel Mouradjian, permanent visiting priest of St. Gregory the Illuminator Church in Binghamton, NY, teaches children in the parish school. The parish will celebrate its 90th anniversary in October 2021.

going to work as a priest, but acknowledges that there are "people who don't take priesthood seriously, who don't make it easy to make a church vibrant." He has great admiration for all the clergymen who inspired him, and for the "warrior priests" like Rev. Hovhannes, the pastor of the revered Dadivank church in Artsakh "who was both a priest and a soldier, and who symbolizes the unbreakable and indomitable spirit infused with our identity."

He again praises the people of the Binghamton parish for their grit and strength. "Four years ago, one would never have thought that this would be a living parish. It is remarkably a Renaissance," he declared

fifteen years and beyond."

Bishop Daniel calls the church and the community "my family. This is where I grew up and was nurtured. I am the first Primate of the Eastern Armenian Diocese who was born in the Diocese."

"I am a bishop who came out of a small parish and I am sensitive to the values of small parishes. The smallest parishes will take our church forward. They are easily overlooked," he said, adding, "The five priests I have ordained so far have all been assigned to the smaller parishes of our Diocese. I am so happy to say that my spiritual and life experience is from a small parish that is now experiencing a glorious renaissance!"

Saint Gregory Armenian Church

Altar Servers



Rear: (l to r) M. Findikyan, A. Tateosian, S. Findikyan, H. Tateosian, V. Tateosian, D. Kolandjian
Front: (l to r) K. Papazian, Deacon H. Dekmejian, Very Rev. Fr. S. Chinchinian, H. Inajigian, M. Ketchoyan

Bishop Daniel grew up in the Binghamton community, and found his calling by serving its church. A newspaper photo of parish altar servers from the 1980s.

Armenia." Throughout the economic upheaval in Binghamton, the church "always remained open and active. We now have Armenian doctors, professors, lawyers, and other professionals."

Another stalwart soldier of the church and community has been Mary Ann Jamgochian, parish council treasurer, an Italian married to retired engineer Lawrence Jamgochian with two stepchildren. "I feel American and Armenian," she declares proudly. An educator, she taught high school mathematics for 37 years, and was brought up as a Roman Catholic. Since her marriage, she has been a strong foundation for St. Gregory's Church.

"Our city's resurgence began in the 1990s with the University of Binghamton, which is renowned for its engineering, pharmaceutical and nursing programs.

study program at St. Nersess Armenian Seminary 21 years ago "a bonding experience where one learned about oneself and others." At his ordination on his birthday ("not a coincidence"), he prayed for "God to give me strength and make me worthy of this work." He served for 17 and a half years in the New Britain, CT, parish before being assigned to Binghamton.

Several clergymen had a profound effect on his decision to become a priest, including Rev. Frs. Haig Donikian, and Karekin Kasparian, the Very Rev. Fr. Vazken Karayan, Bishop Daniel Findikyan ("I have the highest regard for his education and devotion"), and Archbishop Khajag Barsamian ("whom I love and respect and am forever grateful to for our candid discussions").

His busy schedule includes being at

Onanian Family Honors Patriarch Through Church Fund

OHANIAN, from page 6

Regardless of which parish he belonged to, Edward would serve on parish councils, Building and Investment Committees and immerse himself in any of the activities to strengthen the church. It was during the ten years that Edward served on the



Onanian Family with Archbishop Torkom Manoogian in 1987

Diocesan Council that the staff's high level of dedication made a lasting impression on him. For this reason, he felt it was his duty to make sure they had financial security by way of an annual retirement benefit.

Through the benevolence of the Onanian family, the life and legacy of Edward will carry forward in the spirit with which it began: taking care of those who have taken care of the Armenian church. "My father felt like God had blessed him and that he had a good life," recalls Laurie. "He was a bright person who wanted to use his knowledge and acumen for the sake of the church. Through this endowment, my family has ensured that his wish has become a reality."



OBITUARY

Van Aroian

Urban Renewal and Armenian Community Leader

WORCESTER, Mass. — Van Mihrean Aroian passed away on July 14, 2021.

Born in Boston in 1927, Van was the middle child of Mihran and Satenig Aroian, a survivor of the Armenian Genocide, and had two sisters, Alice (Roat) and Myra (Ellis).

Van grew up in Boston's South End and Jamaica Plain, working family farms around Sterling in summers.

Van was energetic, gregarious, generous, and intelligent. He attended Boston Latin and graduated from Jamaica Plains High School, where he excelled in academics and track.

He served in the US Army during World War II from 1945 to 1947, after which he received a BA in history from Boston University (Phi Beta Kappa) and Master's in Middle Eastern history from Harvard University. He also worked at the Arnold Arboretum and made many lifelong friends.

He lost both parents at a relatively early age. While remembering them with love and honor, he always looked to the present and not the past.

His sharp mind led him to teaching and pursuit of a doctoral degree in geography at Clark University, moving to Worcester in 1959. He met his love and life-long companion and wife of 63 years, Mary Balekdjian, marrying in 1957.

To raise his family, he left Clark University and eventually became Deputy Director of the Worcester Redevelopment Authority, where he dedicated his energies toward urban renewal, amelioration of poverty, and revitalizing the city of Worcester. Helping others and promoting justice and equality were among his passions.

During this time, he and Mary raised two boys, Mihran and Raffi, instilling in them his positivity, strong work ethic, dedication toward helping others, love for family, friends, and their Armenian heritage, being inclusive and welcoming, love of classical art and music, and going out for a drive or for ice cream.

His love of his Armenian heritage was always in the front, with more than 50 years of commitment to National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR),



where he served as treasurer and, until his death, board member.

Van was dynamically involved in the Armenian community of Worcester, including the Armenian Church of Our Saviour Parish Council, Director of the Armenian Children's Milk Fund, the Worcester Armenian Book Commemoration Committee exhibit to commemorate the 500th anniversary

of Armenian book printing, and Project Save's "Looking at Ourselves" with the Worcester Historical Society.

In 1975, Van co-founded Oriental Rug Treasures, a store in Sudbury, selling fine oriental rugs. With his integrity and honesty, he saw this an opportunity to share his love of art and connecting with others.

Following his retirement, Van remained an amazing husband, father, grandfather, and friend.

Based on years of research at the Getty Museum in Los Angeles, Van published a scholarly piece in the *Journal of Armenian Studies* on the important contributions of Armenians to photography in the Ottoman Empire, giving seminars on the East and West Coasts.

Van was a Renaissance man with sharp wit, enormous strength and fighting spirit, generosity, wisdom, compassion, sparkling eyes, and boundless love and optimism. The world has lost a great man.

He is survived by his wife Mary, his sons Mihran and Raffi, their wives Karen and Jeanine, and his four grandchildren Hasmig, Ani, Diran, and Zoe.

The funeral service was on Tuesday, July 20, at the Armenian Church of Our Saviour, 87 Salisbury Street, Worcester. Burial followed at Hope Cemetery.

Barbara V. Dorian

Loving Aunt, Business Leader

BELMONT, Mass. — Barbara V. Dorian of Belmont, MA passed away on July 3, 2021.

She was the daughter of the late Daniel K. and Helene Dorian; sister of Daniel K. Dorian Jr. and his wife Lisa Kolligian, Janice Dorian, and Lois Malconian and her husband Ronald; aunt of Ashley and her husband Scott Martin, Amanda and her husband Matthew Keller, Sarah and her husband Kwasi Mensah, Ronald Malconian and Danielle and her husband Gary Dodakian and great-aunt of Matthew and Daniel Dorian Keller.

Barbara graduated from Belmont High School in 1976 and Bentley University in 1980, where she formed many cherished and lifelong friendships. She served as VP of Mansfield Beauty School and formerly Lakes Region Cinemas, Guilford NH.

Barbara was also a longtime member of Oakley Country Club.

Barbara's gift was to leave a lasting impression on each person with whom she crossed paths. She was a great leader, a trusted confidante, an animal lover, a talented cook, and most of all a truly "great" aunt. Barbara's greatest joys were often simple moments: sitting by the Broken Sound pool with family, taking her nieces and nephew to movie premieres, and cook-



ing elaborate dishes for holiday gatherings. Deeply loyal and protective, Barbara always did all she could for her inner circle of friends and family.

Although Barbara will be deeply missed, her memory will forever shine brightly in all those who loved her.

The funeral services were at Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge on Friday July 9.

Arrangements were by the Aram Bedrosian Funeral Home, Watertown, MA.

Leon William Kachadorian

Active St. James Member

BELMONT, Mass. — Leon William Kachadorian of Belmont passed away on July 2, 2021 at the age of 86.

He was pre-deceased by his parents William and Elize Kachadorian. He leaves his sister Joyce Guleserian of Arlington and was the loving uncle of Mark Guleserian and his companion Debbie Clabough of Powder Springs, GA, Gary and Elizabeth Guleserian of Burlington and Matthew and Terri Guleserian of Westwood. He also leaves his great-nieces and great-nephews Samantha, Michael Charles, Isabella and twins Lillian and Gunther Guleserian.

Leon attended the Belmont schools and graduated from Northeastern University with a degree in business. He served in the US Army from 1957 to 1959 and remained in the reserves until 1963.

Upon his return from the service, he worked for Thompson and Thompson in Boston and Fidelity Investments in Boston and Smithfield, RI.

Leon was an active member of St. James Armenian Church in Watertown, serving as chairman of the Bingo Group and a member of the Boston Chapter of the Armenian



Students Assoc. (ASA), as well as the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR).

Leon loved spending time with family and friends, and he especially adored his cat Becky. Leon will be greatly missed by all.

Funeral Services were held at St. James Armenian Church, 465 Mt. Auburn St. Watertown, on Tuesday, July. Interment followed at Mt. Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge.

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MIRROR SEEKS SUMMER INTERN

The Armenian Mirror-Spectator is seeking an intern for a six-week program this summer

(mid-July through August). The intern will receive a weekly \$150 stipend provided through the Armenian Students' Association of America's Internship Program.

The intern should be in college or graduate school. If interested, please contact Aram Arkun at tcadirector@aol.com or call 617 924-4420



OBITUARY

Jivan Gasparyan, Armenian Musician Beloved By Rock Stars And Hollywood, Has Died

GASPARYAN, from page 1

Brian Eno heard Gasparyan play at a performance in Moscow in 1988, and promptly invited him to London, where Eno introduced him to Michael Brook. Brook produced Gasparyan's first international



At a concert dedicated to the centennial of the Armenian Genocide (Aurora Prize photo)

album, "Moon Shines at Night." (In the interim, Eno managed to license another Gasparyan recording, "I Will Not Be Sad in This World," from the Soviet state label, Melodiya, and issued it outside the USSR on his own label, Opal Records.)

Most international audiences first be-

came acquainted with Gasparyan's music, however, via the soundtrack to the 1988 Martin Scorsese film, "The Last Temptation of Christ," which was curated by Peter Gabriel. Gasparyan also appeared as part of the scores and soundtracks to "Dead Man Walking," "Blood Diamond," "Syriana" and "Gladiator," among other Hollywood films, as well as Armenian-Canadian director Atom Egoyan's "Calendar."

He transformed the duduk from a purely folk instrument — one played by shepherds — into a force on the concert stage. Remarkably, Gasparyan, who grew up not knowing how to read music, enrolled at the Yerevan Conservatory of Music at age 52; later, he became a professor there. But what he accomplished during his career was remarkable — not just in terms of his personal achievement, but also what he accomplished for his instrument's profile.

Gasparyan was also an important ambassador of Armenian culture, for both his country and the far-flung Armenian diaspo-



Flanked by musical friends, Peter Gabriel at left and Brian May

ra. Upon learning of his death, the former president of Armenia, Robert Kocharyan, wrote: "Djivan Gasparyan is one of the greatest musicians who raised the Armenian performing arts and, in particular, folk wind instruments to a new level, giving

them world renown and recognition. I bow with great gratitude before his merit and memory."

To see a performance of Gasparyan with Queen's Brian May, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=14Xyi-5WgAI&t=26s>

Hagop Artin Kitabjian

Hagop Artin Kitabjian was born in Aleppo, Syria on November 24, 1932, to Harutune Kitabjian and Nergiz Minassian. The grandchild of victims of the Genocide against Armenians of 1915, "Hagopig" also lost 4 sisters at young ages, his father when he was only 3, and his mother when he was



18. Raised largely by his older brother Garbis, Hagop was the only family member to receive education past elementary school.

But "Jacko" directed his energy into his church, where he served regularly as an acolyte, and into his school studies, where he quickly became top of his class. Graduating first in his high school and college classes, his intention was nonetheless still to become a silversmith like his brother. But his professors insisted he pursue graduate work overseas, which led him to

the University of Pennsylvania, where he earned a Master of Science in Architectural Engineering.

After facilitating the immigration of his extended family into the US, Hagop settled down with a lovely, American-born Armenian nursing student, Pamela Zartarian, with whom he raised three children in the Philadelphia area, Sona, David, and Paul.

And now, in Hagop's own words: "Although, I was an architectural engineer, but my main purpose in life was more than simply designing and supervising the construction of many multi-story luxury apartment buildings, hospitals, science & engineering buildings, libraries, fine arts centers and six college campuses... My main purpose in life was my strong desire to serve the Armenian Church and the Armenian community."

And he lived up to his goals with a prolific record both professionally and culturally.

Hagop was a registered architect in 3 states and served on numerous professional boards. Anyone travelling through Philadelphia will see several of his high-rises still standing some 60 years later, including: The Philadelphian across from the Art Museum, Penn-Towers, and Park City West. And his buildings are all over the campuses of Hampton Institute, Grove City College, Philadelphia College of Pharmacy and Science, Widener University, Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary, and Westminster Theological Seminary. And his lengthy tenure as Chief Architect for Astra-Zeneca leaves a record equally impressive.

But his contributions to the Armenian church and community leave a wake whose impact on the Philadelphia community and beyond is truly hard to quantify or qualify. Besides having taught Sunday School

and Armenian language & history for 25 years, he became a founding member of the KNAR Armenian Choral Group where he spared no energy singing his favorite Armenian songs with his best friends; founded The Armenian Inter-Communal Committee of Philadelphia out of his dedication to bridge church denominations and political parties that were dividing the Philly Armenian community, and bring us together to celebrate what we have in common; became a member of the Knights of Vartan, performing as Ghevont Yerets for 27-years; became a founding member of the Armenian Sisters Academy; became a charter member of the Ararat Song and Dance Ensemble and so much more, including giving numerous lectures on Armenian Architecture, poetry, and music.

Hagop received a countless number of awards, including appearing in Who's Who in North America. But his greatest legacy may be with the people he knew.

He was extremely proud of his three children, Sona, David, and Paul, and 6 grandchildren, Ellie, Autumn, Matthew, Jesse, William, and Elijah. He cherished his wife Pam dearly, whose photos still adorn his computer desktop and cover the walls at his home some 15 years after her passing, and whose love for him has been the subject of over a half century of stories to families and strangers alike.

And Hagop never forgot an act of kindness or generosity that was ever shown to him, expressing his appreciation to those people incessantly throughout his life, and also recounting their kindness to others. Even in his final weeks, in his pain, Hagop was still making sure the nurses by his bed knew how grateful he was for how they were taking care of him.

Perhaps most of all, Hagop attributed his blessings in life to God, whose human messengers in his life he always referred to as "angels."

Minnie Shoushanian

Dedicated to Church, ARS

FARMINGTON HILLS, Mich. — Minnie Shoushanian passed away June 24, 2021, in her home in Farmington Hills. She was 89.

Minnie (Mannig) Mooradian was born January 7, 1932, in Detroit. Her parents were Arshag and Satenig (nee Aslanian) Mooradian. Growing up in the Armenian community of Delray, she attended Cary Elementary School and graduated from Southwestern High School, where she had played basketball and had earned a Letter Sweater in Fencing.

Upon graduating from high school, she worked in accounting at Revere Copper and Brass.

She married Charles Shoushanian June 4, 1955, and they were blessed with the birth of two daughters, Suzan and Denise.

Minnie, always involved in her community, was an active member of the ARS Sybille chapter and, as a teacher, she taught Sunday School at St. Sarkis Armenian Apostolic Church. Additionally, Minnie had an innate sense of the beauty in life, so she furthered her appreciation of it by earning a degree in interior decorating from La Salle University.

Minnie is survived by her daughter



Suzan and son-in-law Dr. John Zazaian; grandchildren Dr. Danielle and Alexander Zazaian, Chase Shoushanian-Traphagen (James Edayan Jr.), and many nieces, nephews, relatives and friends.

A private service will be held with final resting place next to her late husband, Charles, in Oakland Hills Memorial Gardens, Novi, MI.

Giragosian

F UNERAL HOME

James "Jack" Giragosian, CPC
Mark J. Giragosian

Funeral Counselors

576 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown, MA 02472, TEL: 617-924-0606
www.giragosianfuneralhome.com



COMMUNITY NEWS

St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School 2021 Graduation Ceremonies

WATERTOWN, MA. - In June 2021, despite the Pandemic, St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School (SSAES) successfully completed its 37th academic year. The Graduation Ceremonies were held on June 17 (Kindergarten) and June 18 (Elementary). Due to the State Health and Safety Regulations, only the parents of the graduates were invited to the ceremonies, which were held in the Hovnanian Hall of the Armenian Cultural and Educational Center (ACEC).

Both Kindergarten and Grade 5 students presented poems and an Armenian Dance. In addition, the Kindergarten students presented a short play, while the elementary students read their farewells.

In her remarks, Principal Houry Boyamian announced that in addition to completing fully the curriculum in each grade, the school was able to conduct many extra-curricular activities. The pandemic did not stop us in having virtual celebrations of Armenian Cultural Day, Vartanants Day, May 28, a commemoration of the Armenian Genocide, two talent shows, a State of the School Address, a visit to the Armenian Museum of America, guests authors, roundtables, and a one-week virtual trip to Armenia for fifth graders. As for next year,



SSAES 2021 Elementary Graduates with their Principal and Teachers

support in this most challenging year with the Pandemic.

On June 17, 15 students graduated from Kindergarten. They are: Fiona Abidian, Mona Arzunyan, Alec Avakian, Samuel Barsoumian, Ellen Boyamian, Areni Garabedian, Olivia Ghazaryan, Areni Hamalian, Serop Khatchadourian, Haig Mardiros, Aiki Mikaelian, Hovhannes Sargent, David Simonyan and Lyanna Thompson.

On June 18, 14 students graduated from the elementary division, bringing the number of graduates up to 348. They are: Nellie Aghajanyan, Nara Potookian Behbahani, Avedis Bell, Emma Fontes, Isabel Fontes, Armen Galaian, Stepan Guzelian, Julia Kebabjian, David Oganessian, Lori Panossian, Gassia Sarkissian, Tatevik Sarkissian, Bella Tamburrini and Talia Tarabelsi.

In his remarks, Rev. Antranig Baljian, expressed his appreciation to the administration and faculty for their dedication and effort, in providing an excellent education to all students. Then Fr. Baljian and Principal Boyamian presented the diplomas and the awards to the graduates.

Graduating Class Awards

I-Prelacy Award for Excellence in Armenian History (silver coin of Levon the 1st): Avedis Bell.

II- President's Education Awards- Gr. 5 Presidential Award for Academic Excellence: Talia Tarabelsi, Bella Tamburrini, Avedis Bell

Presidential Award for Outstanding Academic Achievement: Nellie Agajanyan, Julia Kebabjian, Tatevik Sarkissian

Presidential Award for Educational Excellence: The purpose of this award is to recognize the academic success of students who have excelled in their studies and who have earned high scores in the Standardized Tests.

Presidential Award for Educational Achievement: The purpose of this award is to reward students who work hard and give their best effort in school.

III-Certificate of Recognition for their Special Strength (Armenian Studies)

Nellie Agajanyan: Hardworking, Takes Initiative

Nara Behbahani: Great Interest in Armenian Language

Avedis Bell: Great Interest in Armenian History and World History

Emma Fontes: Great interest in Armenian History

Isabel Fontes: Great Interest in Armenian History

Armen Galaian: Demonstrates Armenian Spirit

Stepan Guzelian: Tends to do always his best

Julia Kebabjian: Is Inventive and Skilled in Armenian Grammar

David Oganessian: Reads with Expression

Lori Panosian: Great Interest in Armenian History

Gassia Sarkissian: Skillful in Armenian Language

Tatevik Sarkissian: Hardworking and Expresses herself well in Armenian

Bella Tamburrini: Conscientious and Hardworking

Talian Tarabelsi: Conscientious and Hardworking

IV-Certificate of Recognition for Special Strength (All Subjects)

Nellie Agajanyan: Spirit of Adventure
Nara Behbahani: Hardworking, Esperanza Rising Award

Avo Bell: Spaceship Earth Award

Emma Fontes - Super Speller Award

Isabel Fontes: Class Historian Award

Armen Galaian: The Wonder Award

Stepan Guzelian: Grammar Detective Award

Julia Kebabjian: The Inventor Award

David Oganessian: Reader's Theater Award

Lori Panossian: The Jamestown Colony Award

Gassia Sarkissian: Math Factor Families Expert Award

Tatevik Sarkissian: Number the Stars Award

Bella Tamburrini: Golden Graph Award

Talia Tarabelsi: President Washington Award



Principal Houry Boyamian addressing her Remarks

she announced that the enrollment numbers will be much higher with the addition of many new students. She concluded her remarks by expressing her profound gratitude to the Teaching and Administrative Staff, to the School Board, the Education, Health and Technology Committees, as well as to Der Antranig and the St. Stephen's Church Board of Trustees. She thanked the parents for their encouragement and unwavering



2021 SSAES Elementary Graduates with Fr. Antranig Baljian, Principal Houry Boyamian and Teachers Ardemis Megerdichian and Kiely Goss



SSAES 2021 Kindergarten Graduates with Principal Houry Boyamian, Fr. Antranig Baljian, Teachers Alik Arzoumanian and Diane Chiappinelli



COMMUNITY NEWS

Glendale Y Displays ANI Exhibit on YMCA Volunteers in Armenia during Genocide

WASHINGTON — At the invitation of the City of Glendale Y and the Armenian Assembly of America, a special event was held June 24 at the Y to display the Armenian National Institute (ANI) exhibit titled “The Lifesavers” and to honor David Elder and Louise Lund Elder, whose father John Elder, and fellow YMCA volunteer James O. Arroll, are featured in the exhibit. The exhibit was curated by ANI Director Dr. Rouben Adalian.

Elder and Arroll traveled to Armenia in 1918 and witnessed the dramatic events that led to the founding of the Armenian Republic. They had arrived to open a YMCA facility and ended up in charge of the extensive philanthropic activities of the Near East Relief, whose employees were recalled from the field when the situation in Armenia became too dangerous on account of the warfront advancing toward Yerevan and Alexandropol/Gyumri. Elder and Arroll were ultimately credited with saving thousands of lives as they cared for orphans and refugees when local resources were virtually non-existent.

With over 70 invited guests in attendance, several elected officials spoke at the event and bestowed certificates of recognition on Mr. Elder, Mrs. Lund, and Dr. Adalian. They included City of Glendale Mayor Paula Devine, California State Senator Anthony Portantino, representing California’s 25th State Senate District, and California State Assemblymember Adrin Nazarian, representing California’s 46th State Assembly District.

Assembly Western Region Director Mihran Toumajan, who spearheaded the special event, was joined by several leaders of the Glendale Y who also shared their appreciation of the exhibit that highlighted the role of the YMCA during the Armenian Genocide. Among them were Dr. David Viar, President of Glendale Community College and Chairman of the Board of Di-

rectors of the YMCA of Glendale, who also acknowledged fellow Glendale YMCA board members in attendance, Mr. George Saikaly, President and CEO of the YMCA of Glendale, and Mrs. Nora Yacoubian, YMCA of Glendale Board Member and Chairperson of the Glendale-Artsakh Sister YMCA Committee, who reflected on the YMCA of Glendale’s partnership with the Artsakh YMCA.

continued genocidal actions by Turkish and Azerbaijani militias. His Eminence Abp. Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America, delivered the evening’s invocation and remarks. Reverend Berdj Djambazian, of the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America, delivered the program’s benediction. Ambassador Dr. Armen Baibourtian, Consul General of the Republic of Armenia in Los Angeles awarded the Elder family certificates of appreciation on behalf of their father.

Dr. Adalian explained how the exhibit was created and spoke of Elder and Arroll for writing a new chapter in American humanitarianism by their courageous actions on behalf of the Armenian people. He was warmly praised by David Elder and Louise Elder Lund for recovering the story of their father of which even they were not fully aware.

Louise Elder Lund shared with audience the gift that John Elder received from the Armenian government, the silver souvenir cup that he spoke of in his memoirs, which is inscribed in Armenian “to the unforgettable captain Elder.”

David Elder spoke eloquently of the role of the YMCA during World War I and told the story of how his father reached Armenia during that critical year and how he went about organizing relief work and arranging for the delivery of supplies from Iran when all other avenues were cut off by surrounding forces.

Toumajan also noted that the Elder siblings and Dr. Adalian had received certificates of recognition from California State Assemblymember Laura Friedman (43rd State Assembly District), and Los Angeles County Supervisor Kathryn Barger (5th Supervisorial District). In addition, he acknowledged the attendance of elected officials, including City of Glendale Councilmember Ara Najarian, Glendale Unified

School District School Board Member Dr. Armina Gharpetian, Glendale Police Chief Carl Povilaitis, and Glendale Fire Chief Silvio Lanzas. He also recognized Mr. Ara Kalfayan, owner of Phoenicia Restaurant and YMCA of Glendale Board Member for the generous buffet made available to attendees.

A wide cross-section of the Southern California-based Armenian American community was represented with organizational leaders. Armenian Assembly board members Joyce Stein and Talin Yacoubian were joined by Assembly trustees and members Margaret Mgrublian, Joe Stein, James Melikian, Flora Dunaian, and Helen Haig.



Dr. Rouben Adalian and Ambassador Armen Baibourtian with the Elders.

Toumajan served as Master of Ceremonies and briefly reflected on the “unsung hero” status of YMCA volunteers Elder and Arroll in an era when the fledgling first Republic of Armenia faced existential threats, including drought, famine, epidemics, and



Tekeyan Cultural Association, Inc.

Dr. Nubar Berberian 2021 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.

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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.
- 8) The deadline of receiving the applications is **September 15, 2021**.
- 9) The administrators and managers of the fund will vote the qualified winners in **October, 2021** based on the merits of each applicant.
- 10) The winner or winners will receive their awards in **November, 2021**
- 11) Winning applicants are not eligible to apply again.
- 12) This announcement is published in Armenian, English, French and Spanish.

Watertown, MA, July 15, 2021

The Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) was represented by Central Board member Lena Sarkissian, Shahan Minasian, and Gohar Stambolyan.

The visit of David Elder and Louise Elder Lund was coordinated by Frida Valijan, a longtime friend of the Elder family.

The ANI exhibit first debuted on the West Coast in 2019 at the West Gallery of the California State University Northridge (CSUN) campus and continued onto the YMCA Glendale. A digital version of the exhibit can be freely downloaded from the ANI website.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Newton South High School Hosts Armenian Awareness Day

By Bella Ishanyan

NEWTON, Mass. — Newton South High School hosted an Armenian Awareness Day on May 12 in order to bring light to the Armenian Genocide and exhibit Armenian culture. The four online programs had over 1,000 viewers.

Newton South hosts awareness days to provide a better understanding of topics often related to human rights. Led by rising sophomore, Charles Kouspakian, the Armenian Awareness Day was among the few student-initiated programs.



Charles Kouspakian

“We have these webinars every Wednesday, and I was really interested and I wanted to pretty much talk about Armenia, since Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day was coming up,” he said.

After a few weeks of planning, Kouspakian, Robert Parlin and Joana Chacon, teachers and faculty chairs on the South Human Rights Council, organized a program with six total speakers: Anais Astarjian, Martina Harutunian, Isabella Ishanyan, Kouspakian, Roxanne Makasdjian and Tsoleen Sarian. Collectively, they spoke about analysis of the genocide, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and shared personal stories and photographs.

Astarjian, co-chair of the Armenian Genocide Commemoration Committee and active participant in many other Armenian organizations, gave an overview of the genocide and analyzed the politics behind it, saying that her goal was to inform students about genocide, a topic not commonly discussed.

“It’s very important for students to learn this early on, and it’s an extremely difficult topic to cover,” she said, “Yet, people whose ancestors have faced genocide typically hear their families’ stories early on. Given the generational trauma that often exists, I would say high school is an optimal time to more formally learn about genocide.”

Sarian said that she decided to make her presentation more lighthearted. As executive director of Project SAVE Archives, she selected photographs of Armenian culture, with the intention of showing a different side of Armenia.

“I wanted it to be positive. I knew that there was going to be discussion of genocide and genocide is a difficult, sad topic. We talk about survival, but it’s also this idea of being victims,” she said, “I wanted my presentation to be about not just survival, but thriving and choosing to keep our Armenian culture.”

Ultimately, Kouspakian said that his main goal of the awareness day was to inform the school about Armenia, but also said that his interest extends to proving that lesser-known countries are still important.

“Apart from Armenians in South as well, other people with backgrounds from not-well-known countries, it helps them also understand that every country matters,” he said, “Even though my country may not be well known, it’s still allowed to have a voice, and people should still know about it.”

Armenian Assembly Hosts Networking Get-Together in NYC

NEW YORK — The Armenian Assembly of America (Assembly) hosted a networking event on Friday, June 25 at City Winery - Rockefeller Center in New York City, which provided the opportunity for some 100 Armenian American professionals to come together in a social gathering and engage in conversation pertaining to key priorities for the betterment of the Armenian people. In addition, they were familiarized with the Assembly’s current advocacy efforts.

“It was great to reconnect with friends and also meet new people in a safe and social setting that allowed us to brainstorm ways to strengthen Armenia and Artsakh,” said attendee Anoush Gulian. “Our community needed an occasion like this to start making plans for the coming months. Thank you to the Assembly for organizing a timely and enjoyable event.”

“We have a strong base of Armenian American activists in the New York metro area and we’re happy to welcome new members who support our mission,” said Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny. “The significant turnout made it clear the community is eager to participate in advocacy work for the benefit of the homeland and the diaspora.”



From left, Vahe Stepanian, Aram Sethian, Mariam Khaloyan, Bryan Ardouny, Taleen Babayan & Van Krikorian

Tekeyan Cultural Association

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Arts & Culture

Rep. Schiff Secures \$950,000 for Armenian American Museum in Upcoming Funding Legislation

GLENDALE — Congressman Adam Schiff announced that \$950,000 was secured in the fiscal year 2022 federal government funding legislation in support of the construction and development of the Armenian American Museum and Cultural Center of California.

“Armenian-Americans are an essential part of the very fabric of our nation — enriching our customs, traditions, and communities,” stated Congressman Adam Schiff. “Their story is an American story, one of hope in the face of hardship, of perseverance, and of new beginnings. The Armenian American Museum and Cultural Center of California will ensure that story gets told for generations to come. It’s an honor to work alongside my Armenian-American constituents for recognition and justice. I am thrilled that investment in this important cultural center will be included in the government funding package, and I will continue to press forward to help ensure its passage.”

The announcement follows the museum’s historic Groundbreaking Ceremony held at the future site of the landmark center in Glendale Central Park.

During the event, Schiff celebrated the Armenian-American community as an important part of the national fabric of the country and discussed how the museum will bring people together to embrace cultural diversity. He announced his efforts to advocate for federal funding in support of the project to rounding cheers throughout the audience.

“We are grateful to Congressman Schiff for his powerful remarks at the Groundbreaking Ceremony and his steadfast support of the Armenian American Museum,” stated Executive Chairman Berdj Karapetian. “The Congressman’s efforts to secure federal funding for the museum will help bring to reality a world class cultural and educational center that will be the pride of our community and our country.”

When passed through Congress, the funding will support the ongoing construction and the development of the museum’s permanent exhibition and programming. The funds would represent the federal government’s first investment in the landmark center.



Rep. Adam Schiff at the groundbreaking ceremony



David Boyajian and his creation

Boyajian Chosen to Display Sculpture on Campus of Pingree School

SOUTH HAMILTON, Mass. — Artist David Boyajian, who creates sculptures inspired by nature for both private and public collections, is among the sculptors chosen to display work at the 12th annual Flying Horse Outdoor Sculpture Exhibit this fall on the 100-acre campus of Pingree School in South Hamilton.

Boyajian, a graduate of Alfred University, also studied at Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, and earned a Master of Fine Arts degree from the Maryland Institute College of Art Rinehart School of Sculpture.

Over the course of his 30-plus-year career, Boyajian has shown his work in numerous solo and group exhibitions, including SculptureNow on The Mount, Edith Wharton’s home in Lenox; Bull City Sculpture Show in Durham, North Carolina; and “Genesis,” an outdoor solo show at the Robert Moses Sculpture Garden at Fordham University. “Genesis,” received praise from both *The New York Times* and *Review Magazine*.

Boyajian’s numerous public commissions include “The Weaving Shuttle” and “The Eye of the Needle” at the Mansfield Town Square in Mansfield, Connecticut; “Lift,” a memorial to a former student at the Canterbury School in New Milford; and “Sanctuary” at the 9/11 Living Memorial at Sherwood Island for the state of Connecticut. His teaching career has spanned more than 20 years at institutions such as Western Connecticut State University, Silvermine School of Art, and Hartford Art School at the University of Hartford.

For 18 years, Boyajian has taught metal, stone, and wood sculpture at David Boyajian Sculpture Studio in New Fairfield, CT.

Boyajian’s father, Col. Myron H. Boyajian, grew up in Jamaica Plain, and his aunt, Marion Boyajian Kennedy, attends the Armenian Memorial Church in Waretown. His paternal grandparents were Perusa Topalian Boyajian who emigrated from Marash, Turkey and Nazareth P. Boyajian, who came from Hadjin, Turkey.

The Flying Horse Outdoor Sculpture Exhibit of more than 50 sculptures opens Saturday, September 4 and runs through Sunday, November 28. It is open free to the public seven days a week during daylight hours. Pingree School is located at 537 Highland Street, South Hamilton, MA. 978-468-4415. Pingree.org/sculpture-show



The sculpture by David Boyajian on the Pingree School campus

A CONVERSATION WITH...

Farid Boudjellal

Author of Armenian Granny

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN / PARIS — Farid Boudjellal, born in 1953, is a French comics book author, artist and scriptwriter. Born to Algerian immigrants, he grew up in Toulon, in the south of France. He studied literature and sociology at the university. In 1978, he published short stories in *Circus* and *Charlie Mensuel*. His first long story, *L'Oud*, was published by Futuropolis.

In Paris, he moved into a studio with José Jover and Roland Monpierre.

In 1986, Boudjellal produced the poster for “Le Gone du Chaâba,” a film adaptation of a work by Azouz Begag.

He writes numerous screenplays and draws numerous albums devoted to the theme of immigration, the housing crisis in France, racism and handicaps. In 1998, the first volume of *Petit Polio* appeared, enabled him to reach a large audience and, in 1999, to win the Ecumenical Prize at the International Festival of Comics in Angoulême, France.

Dear Farid, it is my pleasure to present you to readers worldwide. French comics are famous in the world. Characters like Tintin, Asterix and Titeuf are recognizable worldwide.

Often comics are linked to childhood, even if today it has more or less distanced from it. Those who did not read comics as a child find it very difficult to approach this medium. Reading a comic is not that easy. You have to grasp the page as a whole, read both the text and the image.

Some researchers attribute the origin of comics to cave paintings. Do you agree?

Why not? A comic is not an illustration. You need at least two images to enter it. The comic strip is the space of time between these two images. It can pass a quarter of a second or billions of years. This is the specificity of comics, which makes it a narrative art in the same way as the novel, the cinema or the theater.

Your comic books show that the comic book artists don’t just entertain; you always raise social issues. In this uncertain time what role can comics play?

The first subject of comics, and arguably of all narrative arts, is the comic book itself. You can express all your concerns there. The main thing is to be both readable and innovative.

What is more important thing for a comics’ artist?

Readability, both in terms of drawing and texts.

Many say that the era of printed books is approaching to the end. see INTERVIEW, page 14



ARTS & CULTURE

Farid Boudjellal: Author of *Armenian Granny*

INTERVIEW, from page 13

E-books will prevail, but do you see future for e-comics?

I believe that comics will be modified more by digital technology than writing, which risks nothing. If you write that the sky is blue on a wall, digital book, or paper book, the sky is always blue. For comics it is different because it is about using all the tools that digital, movement and sound offer you. A comic on a digital book is not quite a comic anymore.

It is obvious your character Petit Polio, a little Algerian living in Toulon, is your alter ego. How much of your biography is expressed in it?

We only speak well of what we know well. Little Polio is indeed my alter-ego, but his name is Mahmoud and mine is Farid. Autobiography does not exist; the only reality is the blank page because the past is dead. I think that we say a lot more about ourselves by passing our imagination than fragments of our life.

I came across your family history while learning about the Armenians in Algeria. Thus I learned about your grandmother Marie Bedros Caramanian, the heroine of your book *Mémé d'Arménie* ("Armenian Granny"). My impression is that Armenian grandmothers have strong influence on their grandchildren, Turkish lawyer Fethiye Cetin and French actress Anny Romand dedicated books to their Armenian grannies. Please tell us about your *medz-ma* – from where she was and what was her influence on her grandchild-



-dren?

In fact, as my grandmother lived in Toulon, I got to know her much better than my Algerian family. She was very pious and looked after the Armenian church at Baudin Street. Her small room was adorned with sacred objects that fascinated me. My grandmother never spoke of the Genocide she and her family had suffered. On the other hand, she expressed it involuntarily

because she could not stand the slightest violence, whether oral, physical, televised ... When the Turkish navy landed in Toulon, she did not go outside.

Your book on your grandmother was published in Armenian in Istanbul. How did that happen?

Personally, I have had nothing to do with it. As soon as it appears, a book escapes you completely and belongs to the reader.

It was a publisher who wanted to translate it. I just gave my consent.

It was translated also in Turkish. What was the reaction?

Likewise, I only learned late that there was a Turkish edition. In fact, there are three editions, two Armenian and one Turkish. I am happy that my album lives in these regions. Alas, I have had no feedback from readers or the editor.

In 2017 a brilliant comics book on Armenian subject, *La Structure est pourrie, camarade* (The Structure is Rotten, Comrade) by Viken Berberian and Yann Kebbi was published by Actes Sud BD in French. Do you know this volume and have you ever met Armenian comics artists?

I don't know this album but I think I will read it. And yes, I have already met more than one colleague from Armenia.

Before the sad events of 2020 we had a comics festival in Yerevan – I hope with the normalization of life, so you can visit your grandmother's country again.

I visited Yerevan three times for courses organized by the Association for the Promotion of Comics in Armenia, co-founded by late Mr. Jean Mardikian, the co-founder of the International Festival of Comics in Angoulême and Laurent Mélékian, who is very active in this field. We have had run comic book workshops for Armenians. An album was born from this experience. There is no lack of talents in Armenia. Of course, I am quite ready to come back to Armenia...

Project SAVE Welcomes New Executive Director Arto Vaun

WATERTOWN — Project SAVE Armenian Photograph Archives announced recently that Dr. Arto Vaun will serve as its new executive director. He will be responsible for day-to-day operations, short and



long term strategic planning, and helping to shape the vision for Project SAVE's present and future.

With more than 10 years of local and international experience in the arts and education, Vaun hopes to make an immediate impact. "As a Boston native, I've admired the mission and work of Project SAVE's founder, Ruth Thomasian, for years," he commented. "It's an organization that's highly respected, yet often stays under the radar. I think it's time to change that."

Thomasian started Project SAVE in 1975 to document and preserve the vibrant social and cultural history of Armenians throughout the Americas and elsewhere. The mission is to Salute Armenians' Valiant Existence (SAVE) by listening to people speak through their photographs and to bring the past to life for current and future generations. There are over 60,000 photographs currently housed in the archive.

"I am thrilled to have Arto at our helm. He is a perfect match for Project SAVE," Thomasian said. "Just as Tsoleen took the reins back in 2017, to guide Project SAVE into the digital/social media age, so Arto now will move Project SAVE on to new heights so that the archives will have a durable future. Our boards of directors and advisors welcome him and look forward to working with him."

Before joining Project Save, Vaun was assistant professor and chair of the English and Communications BA program at the American University of Armenia (AUA), where he helped grow and establish the program as one of the most competitive and popular at AUA and in Armenia. He also founded and directed the Center for Creative Writing, championing the concept of creative writing as a fine arts and academic discipline in the region. In fact, it was the first such Anglophone center in the former Soviet Union. Previously, Vaun lived and worked in Scotland, Beirut, and Berlin. As a poet and musician, he has published and performed widely as well.

Vaun is picking up the torch from former Executive Director Tsoleen Sarian, who is moving on to new endeavors. For more than six years, Sarian helped guide Project SAVE and infused it with her energy and talents.

"My focus has been to make Project SAVE Archives more outward facing and increasing demand for our photographs and our stories. We have an active presence on social media and our searchable online collections database features thousands of photographs, making our Archive more open and accessible," Sarian said. "I am proud that Project SAVE promotes Armenian heritage through photographs in a vibrant and exciting way. I welcome Arto's leadership to raise awareness about our work by building collaborations and attracting new funding opportunities."

According to Vaun, there are a number of new initiatives that Project SAVE will announce in the coming year to engage with different segments of the Armenian and non-Armenian communities both locally and beyond.

"I'm excited to build upon all the hard work that Tsoleen, Ruth and the Project

SAVE team has put into this invaluable organization," he said. "Project SAVE's mission and photograph collection is unique and important, especially at this vital moment in regional and global Armenian

history. We are dedicated to staying at the forefront of preserving the past to inform and energize the present and future."

Various collections and further information is online at projectsave.org.

CALENDAR

ON-LINE EVENTS & PROGRAMS

MASSACHUSETTS

- The Armenian Heritage Park is hosting a series of events this summer.
- August 1 at 2pm LABYRINTH WALKING: A WELLNESS PRACTICE RSVP hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org
 - August 11 at 4pm TEA & TRANQUILITY Meet & Greet RSVP hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org
 - August 22 at 7:30pm UNDER THE BLUE MOON Meet & Greet Enjoy Black Sea Salsa Combo RSVP hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org
 - September 9 at 10am CELEBRATING WHAT UNITES US! All About Grains, virtually with Oldways RSVP hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org
 - September 19 at 2pm SUNDAY AFTERNOON AT THE PARK! Meet & Greet Enjoy Hye Guys Ensemble RSVP hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org
 - AUGUST 21-22 — SAVE THE DATE! The Armenian Apostolic Church at Hye Pointe will hold its annual picnic on Saturday and Sunday, 12 to 5 p.m. 1280 Boston Road, Haverhill.

NEW JERSEY

- NOVEMBER 13 — Save the Date: Saturday, 12 Vocations, Fulfilling the Promise of St. Nersess Seminary. Celebrating the 60th Anniversary of St. Nersess Armenian Seminary and the vocations of the first 12 priests who graduated from St. Nersess and St. Vladimir's Seminaries and were ordained. This is the first in a series of events to recognize the alumni of St. Nersess, both ordained and lay, who are in service to the Armenian Church, in any capacity. The celebratory dinner will be held at the Old Tappan Manor in Old Tappan, N.J. For more info, go to www.stnersess.edu.



ARTS & CULTURE

A Harp for Gyumri

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

HALLE, Germany — The cathedral in Halle is huge, but once the doors closed and visitors had taken their seats, it was almost full — at least as full as it could be under pandemic conditions of social distancing.

In mid-afternoon on Sunday, July 18, the church in this Thuringian city hosted the opening concert in a series that will continue during August in several Armenian cities, including Halle's sister city, Gyumri.

The fact that Gyumri and Halle are finalizing the process is itself historic, as this is the first such partnership between cities in the two nations. In Germany, virtually every city has a partner in another country, but until now, none has had a twin city status in Armenia.

Presenting an ambitious and highly differentiated program was Ars Musica, a male chorus that has been engaged in projects for Armenia over many years. (<https://mirrorspectator.com/2021/06/17/ars-musica-to-perform-in-armenia/>) Most of the chorus members started out in a boys choir in the city of Suhl, a choir that presented a benefit concert in 1988 following the earthquake. In 2018, the adult chorus raised funds at a concert which financed the renovation of the auditorium at the H. Tumanyan middle school in Lichk.

Now Ars Musica has launched a new Armenian initiative. Postponed from 2020 due to the Covid crisis, the project involves a series of benefit concerts in historic lo-



A Venera Grand Concert Harp

cations: the monasteries in Tatev, Geghard and Sevanavank, the House of Hope and Komitas Museum in Yerevan, Echmiadzin and Gavar. In Lichk they will perform in the new auditorium and in Gyumri at the Black Fortress.

Armenian Ambassador to Germany Ashot Smbatyan said, in greetings published in the concert tour program,



Ars Musica performing in Halle

that he was especially glad that the Halle concert would be replicated in Gyumri, as it will be “an important cornerstone for the expansion of the recently established city partnership between Halle and Gyumri.” And the proceeds from the concert will contribute to musical education in the city, known as the cultural capital of Armenia. The conservatory in Gyumri, a branch of the Komitas Conservatory of Yerevan State University, would like to offer classical harp instruction, but lacks the instrument. Together with Ars Musica, the Mirak-Weissbach Foundation and the Halle Rotary Club have donated funds to purchase a Venera Grand Concert Harp. It should be officially presented at the concert on August 22.

In Halle, the chorus performed a generous program with Armenian pieces (sung in the original), as well as works from the classical European repertoire, including by modern and contemporary composers. They began with *Metzatsustse andzn im ezTer* by Komitas Vardapet, which they sang from the back of the church. Following greetings delivered by Smbatyan, an official from the state government and Dr. Judith Marquardt, the person dealing with the partnership procedures, the chorus reassembled in front of the main altar and performed a series of very different compositions, displaying extraordinary virtuosity among a broad spectrum of genres. First came a Russian liturgical piece by Piotr Janczak *Kriestu Tvoyemu* (1972), containing various musical styles, from a chant-like recitative (*Sprechgesang*) to the highly dramatic and harmonious/lyrical. Leonard Cohen's (1934-2016) *Hallelujah* followed in English, conveying an aura of chiming bells from the bass voices. *Libertatum* by Jim Papoulis added a mixture of jazz-like rhythms and clapping.

In Halle, Georg Friedrich Händel (1685-1759), one of its most famous sons, could not be absent. The cathedral cantor Gerhard Nötzel played his *Suite No. 7 in G minor* on the organ, introducing yet another musical voice and mood into the gathering.

The second part of the program included works by Ludwig van Beethoven, Felix Mendelssohn-Bartoldy and Franz Schubert, as well as famous German favorites, like *Heidenröslein* by Heinrich Werner (1800-1833) and Schubert's *Der Lindenbaum*. It concluded with the famous *Sanctus* (*Heilig, Heilig, Heilig*) also by Schubert, which is particularly effective when sung by such an excellent men's choir as Ars Musica.

Halle is a most appropriate setting for this chorus and its solidarity project. Here, in the late 17th century, August Hermann Francke (1663-1727), a Lutheran theologian and clergyman, educator and philanthropist, launched a ground-breaking project to care for homeless children. He established an orphanage which began with 100 children, then developed over the years to offer protection and the best available education to more than 2,000 at the time of his death. Francke focused on religious instruction but



Ambassador Ashot Smbatyan at the cathedral

included sciences and vocational training. His institution expanded to include higher education and teacher training seminars, gardens and a workshop, as well as a pharmacy, and later hospital. It remains active today as the Franckesche Stiftungen.

The spirit of Halle lives on in the initiative of Ars Musica and its partners. Smbatyan said he was “thoroughly convinced that compassion, neighborly love, knows no borders. I want to stress, with deep satisfaction, that these charitable projects are being carried out through cultural cooperation. Culture knows no borders either, but rather opens new doors, builds new bridges. Such a bridge is this initiative by Ars Musica.”



ARTS & CULTURE

Armenian Brand OCHRE Launches Collection Of Artist-Designed Organic Wool Goods

YEREVAN — The Armenian brand Ochre launched a collection of artist-designed artisan-made hand-woven natural wool blankets. The products' designs are created by the contemporary Armenian artists and the production is carried out by the artisans at Amasia Wool Factory (Shirak region, Armenia).

The products represent the result of the exploration of local craftsmanship traditions. The artists Aleksey Manukyan (Gyumri, Armenia), Gohar Martirosyan (Armenia, France) and Sereg Navasardyan (Yerevan, Armenia) explored the possibilities of the wool and its texture and offered visual essays and sketches for its surface. Together with textile experts and artisans from Goris and Amasia, they transferred their artistic ideas to the surface of the blankets. As a result, hand-woven wool blankets were created using 100 percent Amasia Wools weft and 100 percent cotton warp.

The blankets can be used both for decoration and as bedspreads. The wool used in production is undyed wool of natural tints (from beige to dark brown) with addition of wool dyed with natural pigments. Wool fibers are incredibly long-lasting, they are distinguished by high elasticity, low crease and they hold their shape perfectly, thus products made from them are not only beautiful, but also practical.



An OCHRE blanket

The wool used in production is pure Armenian wool sourced from shepherds in Shirak, where the village residents have been breeding sheep for centuries. The local sheep wool is long and thick; it is processed at the Amasia Wool factory, where it is washed with eco-friendly soaps, treated with modern carding technologies. The key value of OCHRE is a careful attitude towards nature and a

strong sense of responsibility towards the well-being of the people involved in the production.

The products designed by OCHRE combine functionality, aesthetics, respect for the environment and local craftsmanship traditions. OCHRE creates objects of everyday use that serve as a source of comfort and also express the unique vision of the artists and bring joy and happiness, very similar to that of owning a work of art.

Ochre was established in 2020 as an arts-based social enterprise with the aim of merging creative ideas and artisanal resources in order to craft artist-designed, artisan-made products for everyday use. It was founded to create new, commercially-oriented products together with artists and artisans with the ultimate aim of using the profits generated to support independent artistic production and social goals. The company strives to support all stakeholders from artisans and residents of the regions where the production is located, to the end users and artists involved in the project.

OCHRE was established in 2020 as an arts-based social enterprise with the aim of merging creative ideas and artisanal resources in order to craft artist-designed, artisan-made products for everyday use.

It was born out of a reflection on the urban and artistic landscape of Gyumri, which was always famous for its arts and crafts. Inspired by the complex context of Gyumri, we founded OCHRE to design new, commercially-oriented products with the ultimate aim of using the profits generated to support independent artistic production and social goals.

OCHRE works with new and historic manufacturers in Armenia to craft locally rooted products. We began our journey from a partnership with Amasia Wool Factory in the Shirak region of Armenia, following a long tradition of sheep breeding and wool crafts. The wool used in production is pure Armenian wool sourced from shepherds in Shirak, where the village residents have been breeding sheep for centuries.

The enterprise was co-founded by Anush Zeinalian, Alina Saraikina, and Natalia Gerasina.

For information, visit ochre.am.



Queernissage Open Air Pop-Up Market by LGBTQ+ Armenians And Allies to Spotlight Creativity and Craftwork

LOS ANGELES — GALAS LGBTQ+ Armenian Society (GALAS) will host its first ever Queernissage, an open air pop-up market by LGBTQ+ Armenians and allies. The market will take place at the Studio City Pop-Up: 4354 Tujunga Avenue, Studio City, on Saturday, July 24, 2021 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Queernissage is an homage to "Vernissage," the open air market in Armenia that has been a gathering place for artists and merchants for decades. Through Queernissage, GALAS aims to create a space for their community members to express and share their creativity

with each other and with the public. With an eclectic array of vendors, attendees can expect to find artwork, freshly made baked goods, interactive booths, jewelry, and much more.

Queernissage is only one of the many programs GALAS has planned for this year. In its 23rd year, in addition to social events, GALAS is committed to expanding and further developing robust outreach and community programming to bring visibility to LGBTQ+ Armenian voices and create resources and safe spaces for LGBTQ+ Armenians, their families and allies. Some of GALAS' programs include

therapeutic support groups, Soorj Sessions for families, friends, and allies of LGBTQ+ Armenians, as well as a scholarship fund for college students of Armenian descent who have demonstrated LGBTQ activism.

GALAS encourages all community members to attend Queernissage to support and enjoy the creative work of LGBTQ+ Armenians and allies. For additional information on Queernissage, taking place on Saturday, July 24, 2021, please e-mail galasboard@gmail.com or visit GALAS' Facebook page at [@GALASLosAngeles](https://www.facebook.com/GALASLosAngeles) or GALAS' Instagram page at [@galas_la](https://www.instagram.com/galas_la).



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COMMENTARY

Editorial

Is Anyone Listening?



By Edmond Y.
Azadian

The drums of war are beating louder and louder for anyone willing to listen. The 44-day war between Armenia and Azerbaijan did not end on November 9, 2020. Hostilities were only stopped by a declaration which can amount to a precarious ceasefire at best. Hostilities may resume at any time, under any pretext.

Whatever Armenia failed to achieve in the 1994 ceasefire, Azerbaijan is now trying to achieve. The ceasefire at the end of the first war for Karabakh (Artsakh), which was brokered by Moscow at that time, proved to be inconsequential. Armenia's inexperienced rulers at that time believed that the ceasefire, which Azerbaijan had signed under duress, was enough to guarantee the future of Nagorno Karabakh, particularly with the argument that the Armenian control of seven regions adjacent to Karabakh in Azerbaijan proper presented a strategic buffer which would prepare Armenia and Karabakh for any eventuality.

No one at that time tried to push the ante further to force the Baku government to sign a definitive agreement recognizing Karabakh's independence for perpetuity, when that country was on its knees.

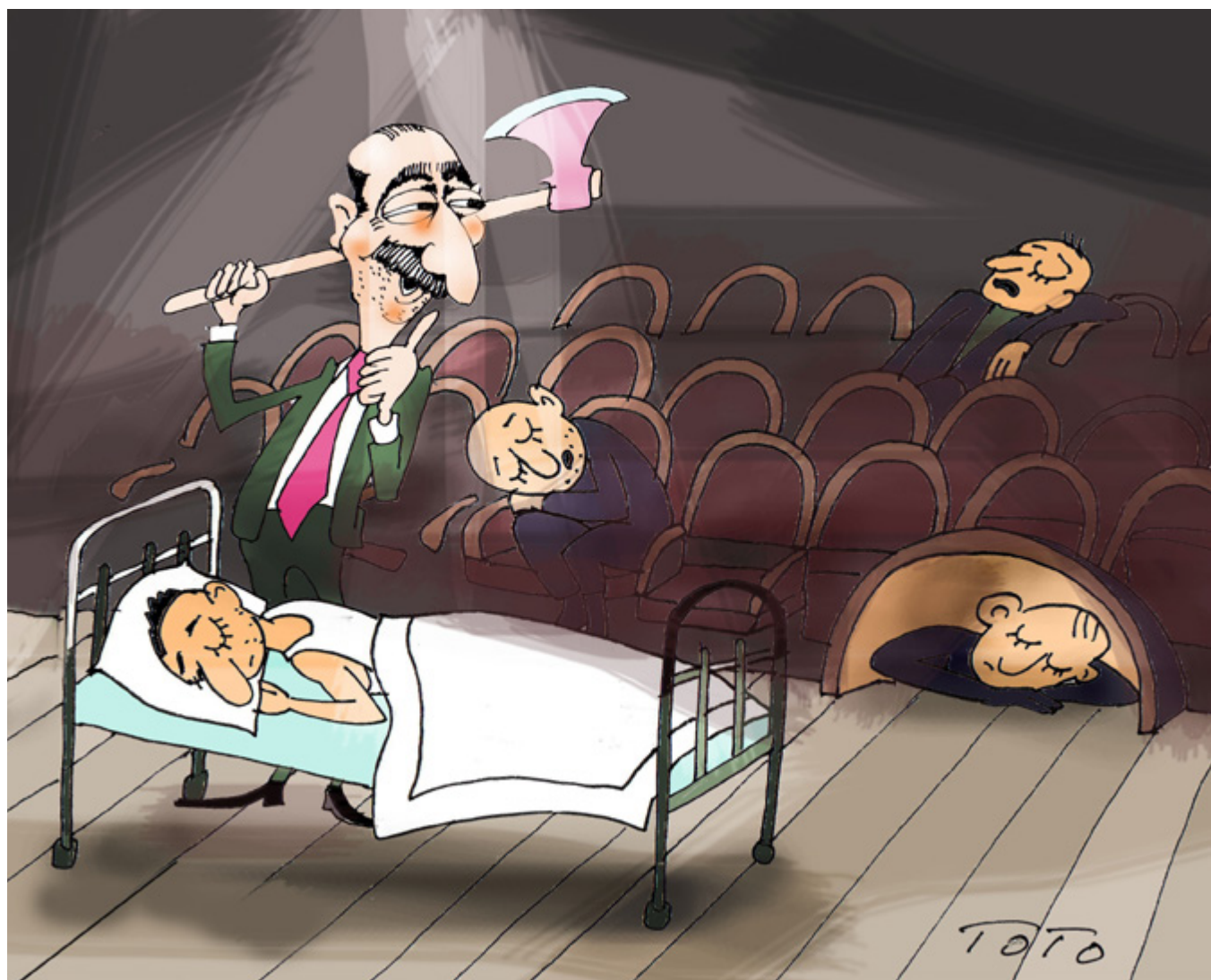
Not only is he asking for Armenia to forget Karabakh, but he is warning that he will take over the sovereign territory of Armenia itself and still there is no protest from the international community, nor from Armenia's strategic partner, Russia.

Just recently, President Aliyev visited President Vladimir Putin in Moscow; the only talk emanating from the Russian capital was about strengthening the strategic ties between Russia and Azerbaijan, after some lip service to the implementation of the November 9 tripartite declaration.

While expressing satisfaction that the terms of that declaration are being implemented, Moscow conveniently is overlooking the release of Armenian prisoners of war in Azerbaijan, even though the November 9 declaration seeks the return of all prisoners.

Moscow, despite its treaty obligations to Armenia, has assumed the role of intermediary between its ally and enemy. Further concessions are demanded from Armenia, in terms of maps of minefields, rather than offers of help.

Adding muscle to its rhetoric, Azerbaijan has advanced its armed forces into Armenian territory, triggering another farcical situation, this time with the leadership of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). Indeed, Armenia appealed to the CSTO to live up to its treaty obligations by



Because of that failure, defeat returned to Armenia 25 years later with a vengeance.

In that quarter century, Azerbaijani dictator Ilham Aliyev seems to have learned the lessons of history imposed on his father, Heydar, with a little help from his big brother, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Now that Armenia is down, with its army shattered by the coordinated attacks by Azerbaijani, Turkish and freelance Jihadist armies, Aliyev is pushing to extract maximum concessions from Yerevan. He already has warned Armenia not to rearm or seek revenge.

Azerbaijan is building up pressure on Armenia gradually, to the point of rekindling a war once again. Before the latest war, he had promised "the highest level of autonomy" for Karabakh in return for the occupied territories. Today, a victorious Aliyev claims that there is no issue to discuss regarding Karabakh, no case for its status, and that even a geographic area named Nagorno Karabakh does not exist, instead renaming part of it as eastern Zangezur as part of the recent Shushi declaration made jointly with Turkey.

forcing out the 1,000 or so Azerbaijani soldiers crossing into Armenia. The reply was that the aggression amounted to nothing but a border incident since "there are no casualties."

In fact, there were casualties; Armenian soldiers were killed and others were captured from the very soil of Armenia, which should trigger Section 4 of the CSTO agreement.

Contrary to Aliyev's statement, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group co-chairs insist there is still unfinished business in Karabakh to determine the status issue.

On April 13, the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs called on the parties to resume their high-level dialog to achieve a final, comprehensive lasting settlement of the Karabakh conflict under the auspices of the co-chairs. However, no action has been taken as of yet.

On the other hand, Europe has been taking subtle steps to return to the region. Europe's approach is through economic help and development, so as not to alert or upset Moscow. But steps are being taken towards sustainable economic growth see EDITORIAL, page 19



COMMENTARY

A Story about Escaping an Early 20th Century Execution

By Angelina Der Arakelian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

The early 20th century had lots of significant events happening simultaneously. It is no surprise that when thinking of the era of the First World War and the gradual introduction of electricity, the birth of modern civilization can be traced all the way back to its roots there. Though there was an impressive array of milestones achieved, this doesn't mean that there was an adequate means of reporting every type of situation ordinary men crossed paths with during their lifetimes. Among the lessons the two consecutive world wars can teach us is the journey one must take to uncover bits and pieces of undiscovered treasures, stories which are buried in silence. These stories include those of people like my great-grandfather, who managed to save his life, regardless of having been in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Chance Encounter

It's four o'clock in the afternoon. My hand skims over a page of my notebook as I intently listen to the tape recorder blurring out my great-grandfather's rusty voice. He is speaking a language I can't comprehend — Turkish — as my father, who sits opposite me, partakes in translating what appears to be an interview he conducted with his grandfather about four decades ago. I am holding a pencil, vigorously writing down occurrences highlighted by my father's approximate translation of the words being spoken. The words teleport me to a time and place my mind could only fathom dreaming of.

The Ottoman Empire, 1915

The occupied streets unfold before me as I navigate my way through the shattered pieces of marble and brick that kiss the ground. There is a general distaste arising from the faces observed around the neighborhood. They are screaming at me, the invisible me: "Leave... leave..."

No one has anything left here anymore.

I track a youthful representation of Yeghia Der Arakelian, my great-grandfather, which I have come to identify from his ancient photos, and begin to follow his fast-paced figure. He is headed to work in Adana (a city in Cilicia). The walk feels like it is dragging almost an hour before he approaches his stopping point, a maintenance shop that specializes in making and applying upholstery into carriages. I sit on a distant chair, observing his tending to a carriage that has been parked by the shop's front porch. He completes his task of refurbishing its upholstery as the neighing of horses is heard approaching our vicinity, the frantic tapping of their shoes louder by the second.

The customer has arrived. He attaches a horse to the carriage that has just completed its renovation and proceeds to salute my great-grandfather in satisfaction.

Two days later, I am sitting at the same chair in the same dusty walled room. My great-grandfather is consumed in replacing the upholstery of a similar carriage before he expects a visitor to knock on his front door. It is the same man who had come to fetch the carriage a few days ago. Only this time he has no carriage to fetch. It is my great-grandfather he is looking for. He lets him know that the owner of the carriage has been incredibly impressed by his work and would like to see him to personally thank him at his house. My great-grandfather is flattered; he blushes before complying with what appears to be a request to which he has little choice.

He makes it safely into the house of the mysterious owner. The only thing noticeable about him so far is his wealth, indicated by his lavish exhibition of furniture and paintings costing a fortune. He has his assistant, the man who was responsible to pick up his carriage, lead my great-grandfather around the mansion until they enter an office. A few minutes later, he is at the disposal of my honored great-grandfather. He conducts some

small talk with him, praises him for a job well done, and thanks him for having saved him the trouble of purchasing a new carriage.

My great-grandfather is able to leave.

The office's doors shut behind him as he begins to un- surely navigate the way to exit the mansion. The owner's assistant figured he should have learned the way by now. Besides, he could use an extra word with the owner in private. Upon involuntarily committing a detour around the house, my great-grandfather finds himself back at the office. He is eager to start the path towards the outside again, but the loud utterances of a conversation between the two men within the room grabs his attention. He cannot help but listen. The owner of the carriage is speaking, a man whose identity would soon reveal itself when sparing my great-grandfather's life.

"Who would've thought that an Armenian could be so hardworking, so efficiently productive and so intelligent as to perform such beautiful work?" These words come out of the owner's mouth flowingly as my great-grandfather decides to abandon the premises full of confusion.

The Execution

The clock strikes past six o'clock in the afternoon. My great-grandfather is just about done with his job for the day as he decides to head out of the shop. The silence



Yeghia Der Arakelian

that once enveloped our area is now replaced with the shudders and yelps of distant inhabitants. They don't remain distant. Their heart-wrenching screams are heard coming closer and closer. They are soon accompanied by the sound of the rush of horses speeding their way across the square, which stop by the shop.

A brief entrance of three government soldiers and their conversation with my great-grandfather lasts no more than two minutes before they ask him to follow them outside. They claim there is an important arrangement to be made that would require his presence at a specific place. The four exit the space towards the moonlit landscape of demolished infrastructure as I am moved by the sight of the soldiers leading my great-grandfather onto the carriage. I follow them along as they embark on a journey towards the promised place of arranging the matter. After what felt like an eternity on the road, the carriage pulls off at the heart of a vacant plot of land near Tarsus. The soldiers step out of the carriage, ordering my great-grandfather to jump off the carriage.

Their tone has changed, and their weapons have made their appearance. My great-grandfather complies, being forced to stand alongside a queue of victims who had already been placed in the trap beforehand. Some of their faces possess a look of disappointment whilst others are filled with looks of contentment, eager to get it over with. All of the men present are ordered to place their hands behind their heads as a line of soldiers stand meters apart from them. Their guns arch upwards as they stare at the collection of bodies prepared to surrender their lives at their command.

"And, fire..." one of the guards proclaims. But the fire does not ignite yet.

Instead, it is brought to a halt by the incoming rush of a carriage. It is traveling at the speed of light. Before the soldiers are able to formulate an expression, it has reached our proximity and parked at the corner of the lined-up executioners. A hyper soldier steps out of the carriage, holding a piece of paper in his hand as he confusedly discovers the words written on it. His hand is raised to signal the will to intervene in the occasion.

"Don't shoot! Don't shoot! Hold on a second there," his lips mutter. "If you hear your name, please step backwards."

He proceeds to initiate a reading of names, one of which happens to be my great-grandfather's, "Der Arakelian..."

In response, my great-grandfather shakily withdraws his hands from the back of his head and steps backwards. The speaker approaches him and kindly asks him to join him in entering the carriage. He does as he is told, and as the carriage sets off, shots are heard being fired at the rest of the ill-fated men. From the pool of blood sinking into the golden sand, only two souls are fortunate enough to escape that evening. One belonging to my great-grandfather, and the other to an acquaintance of his who has been lucky in hiding under the name of a dead man.

The other man was to visit my great-grandfather at his workplace in the coming days, where he told him about how he survived, having had to pretend that he was shot by the firing squad. Soon enough, the small-scale murders of minorities in the Ottoman suburbs and towns turned into widespread genocides, among them being the Armenian Genocide. My great-grandfather came to realize that the sparer of his life was the same man who had owned the carriage and profoundly thanked him for his magnificent job in his own house. The man also went by the title of Marshal of the Ottoman Army and soon-to-be president of Turkey: Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. In other words, the same person who would soon be connected with the massacres of Armenians during the establishment of Turkey following the First World War had chosen to avoid having my great-grandfather killed, the only viable explanation being the incredibly positive impression that he had of him concerning the treatment of his carriage's upholstery.

Meeting Fate in the Eye

I am back in the 21st century, marveling at the tape recorder that has just finished broadcasting my great-grandfather's voice.

I guess the saying that nothing happens by coincidence hits the nail on the head when thinking of incidents with positive results such as this one. After escaping his ordeal, my great-grandfather found refuge in the Mediterranean island of Cyprus, where he would come to be involved in the creation of the nation's first taxi service.

I also often think that had it not been for his survival, I wouldn't have been born in a relatively safe, warless environment, writing about his story. Most of my privilege has been thanks to this sequence of events, which, if they never happened, would have probably prevented my existence along with that of millions of others, those who were lucky enough to be descendants of survivors. Others, however, were not so lucky. And I often think about how different the world would be had it included descendants of all the victims, the lives that were silently terminated.

That is the only certain conclusion to be made in a world that is based on inexplicable occurrences.



COMMENTARY

MY TURN



by Harut Sassounian

Greece Must Recognize Artsakh to Atone For Its Envoy's PR Tour of Shushi

A scandalous propaganda tour was organized on July 9-10, 2021 by Azerbaijan's despotic government to occupied Shushi and Hadrut to display "proudly" to foreign ambassadors its barbaric attack on the civilian population of Artsakh and partial destruction of one of its most sacred Armenian cathedrals.

Before I present the list of ambassadors of countries that exposed their hostility to Armenia by participating in this tour, it is important to note that the ambassadors of France, Russia, and the United States, who are members of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Minsk Group of mediators of the Artsakh conflict, refused to take part in this charade to the chagrin of the Azeri government. The Minsk Group thus indicated that it had no interest in Azerbaijan's pompous show of its occupation of parts of Artsakh. Contrary to the repeated statements of Pres. Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan, the Minsk Group still considers the status of Artsakh not resolved. The absence of these three major countries from this propaganda tour is a slap in the face of the Azeri government.

The 46 countries that shamelessly participated in this scandalous tour of the city of Shushi are: Afghanistan, Algeria, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, China, Colombia, Croatia, Estonia, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Libya, Lithuania, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Palestine, Poland, Qatar, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Slovakia, South Korea, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Turkey, UAE, Ukraine and Venezuela. There are 63 foreign embassies in Azerbaijan, which means that 17 ambassadors refused to participate in the propaganda tour, including Argentina, Cuba, Egypt, Germany, Great Britain, and India, in addition to France, Russia and the United States.

The countries that took part in the Azeri tour should be severely criticized and condemned by all Armenians. Furthermore, the Armenian communities who live in these countries should express their strong disapproval. Demonstrations must be organized in front of the embassies of those countries in Yerevan and protest letters sent to their respective governments.

Of course, the most shameful participant in this tour is the ambassador of Greece, a country that is supposed to be a friend of Armenia. In addition to betraying Armenia, Greece violated its own interests and principles by taking part in this scandalous tour. The Greek ambassador must have forgotten that during the height of the Artsakh war last year, the Foreign Minister of Greece visited Yerevan to show his country's solidarity with Armenia. He also forgot the insulting and undiplomatic words Pres. Aliyev used to address him during the presentation of his credentials in Baku.

I am pleased that the Greek media and Armenian community of Greece responded harshly to the country's ambassador's disastrous visit to Shushi and called on the Greek Foreign Minister to appear in Parliament to provide an explanation. It is not known if the Greek ambassador in Baku obtained the approval of his government prior to his tour of Shushi. If he did, that makes it

an even bigger scandal. However, if the Greek Ambassador had not secured his country's approval prior to his visit to Shushi, which is unlikely, then he should be immediately fired!

Rather than showing gratitude to Greece, Azerbaijan disrespected its submissive action by sending its first parliamentary delegation to the Turkish-occupied so-called Republic of Northern Cyprus, recognized only by Turkey. There are reports that Azerbaijan may soon recognize the statehood of Northern Cyprus. If that happens, Greece should immediately dispatch its ambassador in Yerevan to Stepanakert, the capital of Artsakh, and announce its recognition of the Republic of Artsakh. This would be the only way that Greece can atone for its envoy's indiscretion and deliver a proper response to Azerbaijan's recognition of Northern Cyprus.

In addition to the Armenian National Committee of Greece's complaint, the ANC's of Belgium and the Netherlands filed similar complaints with their respective governments. Protests should also be made to the other participating countries, particularly the governments of Austria, Brazil, Bulgaria, Estonia, Georgia, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Latvia, Lithuania, Mexico, Poland, Qatar, Romania, Serbia, Sweden, Switzerland, UAE, Ukraine and Venezuela.

I am pleased that the Foreign Ministries of Armenia and Artsakh issued statements condemning the visit of the foreign ambassadors in Baku to Shushi: "The Republic of Armenia considers utterly unacceptable the visit of diplomatic representatives accredited in Azerbaijan to the occupied territories of Artsakh, including Hadrut and the historical center of Artsakh -- Shushi, regions which were ethnically cleansed and their population was the subject of war crimes and other mass atrocities committed by Azerbaijani armed forces during the recent aggression." It was emphasized that by arranging such events "the Azerbaijani authorities are trying to legitimize the aggression against the people of Artsakh and to strengthen their own claims of having resolved the conflict by force," stated the Armenian Foreign Ministry which also handed these ambassadors a "note verbale" or a note of protest addressed to their governments.

Rather than visiting the occupied territories of Artsakh, the foreign ambassadors in Baku should have issued a joint statement condemning Azerbaijan for importing Syrian terrorists to fight in the Artsakh war, committing war crimes, ethnic cleansing, destruction of Armenian religious and historical monuments, and continuing to hold captive Armenian prisoners of war 10 months after the end of the conflict in violation of international law and the agreement signed by the heads of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Russia on Nov. 9, 2020.

At every opportunity, citizens of Armenia should remind the foreign ambassadors accredited to Yerevan the unacceptable participation of their colleagues in Azerbaijan in the Shushi tour. Similarly, Armenians living in the offending ambassadors' countries should express their displeasure to their governments. By continuing to complain about this visit, Armenians will ensure that these countries and their ambassadors in Azerbaijan will think twice before they agree to participate in other propaganda activities on behalf of Azerbaijan.

The only proper response to Azerbaijan's PR actions is for the Armenian government to organize a tour of Stepanakert, Artsakh, for the foreign ambassadors accredited to Yerevan. Will the Armenian government dare to make such a move and will it succeed in carrying it out? However, before embarking on such an initiative, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan must fill the post of foreign minister which has been vacant for two months.

Is Anyone Listening?

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which may lead to future political cooperation.

First we saw a visit by a delegation led by the European Union (EU) Commissioner for Neighborhood Enlargement Oliver Varhelyi, who broke the news that the EU had decided to contribute 2.6 billion euros for development programs in Armenia, particularly in the region of Syunik, which is vulnerable economically and politically. The EU is providing more than 3 billion euros to Georgia and 900 million to Azerbaijan. We don't know if these figures calibrate the EU's level of friendship to these three countries.

Next to visit the region was European Council President Charles Michel to further implement those grants.

It is hard to imagine any private investment at this point in war-torn Armenia, where stability is precarious at best. These investments are welcome and reassuring, along with the commitments of Armenian benefactors from the diaspora.

The next major event to happen is President Emmanuel Macron's visit to Armenia, which may have political im-

plications.

It is interesting that during the first two visits from the EU, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan expressed his profuse gratitude while touching on some very topical issues, like the return of prisoners, Azerbaijan's bellicose statements and a call for the resumption of negotiations, under the auspices of the OSCE.

However, both European officials stuck to their prepared texts and were non-responsive to Pashinyan's pleas. That attitude is encouraging President Aliyev to make threatening remarks to Armenia, with the confidence that the international community will not react when in fact there is an urgent need to do so.

Nikol Pashinyan has been reassuring the public that there is no Zangezur Corridor. The implementation of the November 9 declaration is being carried out by the deputy prime ministers of the three signatory countries and the Armenian authorities categorically deny that the issue of the corridor has come up on their agenda and furthermore say it never will. However, Aliyev insists that Azerbaijan will forcefully take that corridor if Arme-

nia refuses to do so voluntarily.

Azerbaijan has also been trying to internationalize the corridor issue, which basically is a component of Turkey's pan-Turanist agenda. But Azerbaijan, at a recent conference in Tashkent, had touted the idea that the Zangezur Corridor is part of China's Road and Belt Project. On the other hand, the idea was also discussed when Azerbaijan invited foreign ambassadors to Shushi last week.

Until recently, President Erdogan's rhetoric was taken as bluster by the international community. No more. In recent years, he has expanded his plans and he has taught the same to Aliyev. We no longer can afford to take their threats as a bluff.

Recently, President Aliyev's threats have become more and more ominous. He has been claiming the entire territory of Armenia.

On July 14, he issued the following threats: "We will return there and we are returning there. Nobody can stop us. We will definitely return because there is no other way. After the opening of all transport links, we will, of course return there and the Azerbaijani population will return to the lands of their ancestors. A tripartite agreement of November 10 says that all refugees must return to their homeland.

Our native land is Zangezur. Our native land is Goycha (Sevan) and Irevan (Yerevan)."

In his turn, Azerbaijani Defense Minister Col. Gen. Zakir Hasanov amplified Aliyev's threat by stating: "We are the winning country. We have destroyed Armenia."

He further developed this theme by adding: "President Ilham Aliyev, the Victorious Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, recently threatened that 'the war is over but despite this, we are ready and must be ready for war at any moment.'"

In line with its threats, Azerbaijani forces have been escalating serious military actions; after crossing into Armenian territories in Syunik and Gegharkyunik, they recently moved closer to Yerashk, causing casualties within view of Yerevan. These actions warrant immediate responses from the CSTO and the UN Security Council.

These are not empty threats. They are real. In fact, Aliyev and Hasanov are declaring war; not a virtual war, but an actual one. Aliyev had been making similar threats for the few years before September 27, 2019. Armenia ignored it at its peril.

Is anyone listening?



Armenian Democratic Liberal Party Eastern District Committee Praises Amb. Nersesyan's Tenure In US

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skillfully in diplomatic circles, as well as the Armenian community, serving as an effective liaison between the community and the war-torn Republic of Armenia. The community in this country owes you a great debt for your permanent presence, for communicating the community's sentiments to the authorities in Armenia, and your effective actions in directing community's support to Armenia.

It is no less an historical event that during your diplomatic endeavors, a significant event came true as the legislative bodies of the US government and President Joe Biden, each in turn, recognized finally the historical fact of the Armenian Genocide.

The Armenian community in the United States has benefitted from the accomplishments of a skillful diplomat in your person. We hope that your dynamic service will continue for many years in the name of our beleaguered homeland, wherever you may be stationed next.

The Armenian Democratic Liberal Party and its Eastern USA and Canada District Committee, which has dedicated its broad network of news media to the service of Armenia and the Republic of Artsakh, wishes you well in your future endeavors.

Kevork Marashlian
Chairman



2021 Aurora Prize Ceremony To Take Place in Venice

YEREVAN — The Aurora Humanitarian Initiative has announced that the 2021 Aurora Prize events will take place in Venice, Italy, on October 8-10, 2021. In addition to the ceremony, during which the 2021 Aurora Prize Laureate will be named and the Aurora Dialogues, there will be ample opportunities for the guests and participants, including members of the Aurora Prize Selection Committee, Aurora Humanitarians, and other representatives of Aurora's community, to explore the rich Armenian legacy of this location.

The 2021 Aurora events in Venice will mark the first time the Aurora Prize Ceremony takes place in Europe and will highlight the extensive connection between this universally important cultural site and the spirit of Aurora, with its deeply embedded respect for the human life shared by every Armenian and every member of Aurora global movement alike. It will also be the first offline Aurora Prize Ceremony since the breakout of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

On October 19, 2020, the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative marked its 5th anniversary

at a virtual fundraising event in New York City, dedicated to Aurora's core philosophy of Gratitude in Action. Broadcast live from The New York Public Library, the event featured Aurora Co-Founder and member of the Aurora Prize Selection Committee Vartan Gregorian, who sadly passed away in April 2021.

"The 2021 Aurora Prize main events in Venice are intended to give a chance for our guests to come together for the first time since we were forced to bring all our events online. The last year and a half has been hard on everyone, and we've suffered many a painful loss. That is why we are very excited about the opportunity to express gratitude to our wonderful community, to bring global humanitarians to Venice and to introduce them to the Armenian legacy of this location and to its rich and fascinating history," said Noubar Afeyan, Co-Founder of the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative.

The first Armenian communities were established in the region centuries ago, and the history of their successful development and integration echoes the complex and compound identity defining the modern Armenian people and their global impact. No matter where they were born, from Yerevan to Los Angeles, from Beirut to Moscow, all Armenians possess an acute understanding of the importance of kindness, humanity, and gratitude, strongly reflected in Aurora's vision.

"The Aurora Humanitarian Initiative is transforming the Armenian experience into a global movement based on the philosophy of Gratitude in Action, and we are very happy to have the 2021 Aurora Prize Ceremony in Venice, one of the most important Armenian heritage sites, and to highlight our presence in Europe after the success of last year's US event. Aurora continues to successfully enhance the humanitarian angle, and we can't wait to share this special moment of celebrating modern-day heroes and the work they do with members of Aurora's community," said Ruben Vardanyan, Co-Founder of the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative.

In the meantime, nominations are still open for the 2022 Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity. Until October 31, 2021, any person can submit a nomination for candidates they believe have overcome great personal challenges to help others.

The Aurora Humanitarian Initiative is a foundation that seeks to address on-the-ground humanitarian challenges around the world with the focus on helping the most destitute. Its mission is rooted in the Armenian history as the Initiative was founded on behalf of the survivors of the Armenian Genocide and in gratitude to their saviors and strives to transform this experience into a global movement.

All Aurora's activities are based on the universal concept of Gratitude in Action. It implies that countless people around the world who have received aid in time of crisis can best express their gratitude by offering similar assistance to someone else. By involving Aurora supporters around the world, this will become a global endeavor that will snowball to expand the circle of saviors and most importantly – the number of those saved.

Addressing urgent humanitarian challenges, the Initiative provides a second chance to those who need it the most. True to its vision – "We believe that even in the darkest times, a brighter future is in the hands of those who are committed to giving others help and hope" – Aurora welcomes all who embrace this philosophy.



The Tekeyan Cultural Association Is Rolling Up Its Sleeves Again

Before the 44-day war, we supported the development of the strategic Berdzor corridor and made large investments in the region. Berdzor and its neighboring regions (Kashatagh) have now fallen into enemy hands. All of a sudden, its residents, students and teachers were forced to become refugees and are now helplessly scattered all around Artsakh and Armenia. They have lost everything and their living conditions are less than desirable.

The good news is that once more Tekeyan is engaged to make their lives better, so that they remain in Armenia and become part of the nation-building process.

This time though the help will be achieved through investments and not through donations. The creation of a sustainable economy is the aim of this appeal.

Through small contributions / mass funding we will create income-generating opportunities for the displaced families. Tekeyan of Armenia in association with a local reputable Syunik NGO will make investments in agriculture to create income for their beneficiaries. The recipient gets assistance conditional that within 2 years they give back on an annual basis the equivalent of 10% of their produced goods to other needy families.



THIS IS A MODEL OF SUSTAINABLE ASSISTANCE, YEAR AFTER YEAR

Participations are tax deductible. Checks to be made to

Tekeyan Cultural Association, memo Berdzor refugee assistance				
\$100	\$250	\$500	\$1000	other \$ _____
Send donation to		Tekeyan Cultural Association, 755 Mount Auburn Street, Watertown, MA 02472 USA		
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