

# bardez partez

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THE BULLETIN OF  
THE ARMENIAN  
INSTITUTE  
ՀԱՅ ՀԻՄՆԱԿ  
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Dear reader, Միտերի ընթերցող,

Welcome to our Bardez-Partez / Պարսիզ!

News and Views from the Armenian Institute



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The Armenian Institute is moving to a wonderful new home with 800 sq ft of bright space, close to public transport in the Farringdon area (EC1) and space to accommodate our growing library, language classes and cultural activities.

We are very grateful to the donors who are making this possible through support in kind and funding for the move and the new expenses it entails. Our heartfelt thanks also to St Sarkis Church Trust for all our years at Gulbenkian Hall. For more information on the space and ways in which you can help, please see the enclosed leaflet and our website: [www.armenianinstitute.org.uk](http://www.armenianinstitute.org.uk).

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Welcome to the latest edition of Bardez and what a treat we have inside! 2018 was an incredible year for Armenia, Armenians and the Armenian Institute (AI). The Velvet Revolution hopefully marks a new chapter for our young country (in constitution alone, as Yerevan celebrated its 2800th birthday!), and brings the diaspora ever closer together. See pages 6 and 7 for a snapshot of the feeling on the ground! While there has also been great support from the international community, with Armenia being named the Economist's country of the year, as well as being visited by dignitaries such as Angela Merkel and Justin Trudeau.

AI held a range of events in 2018, from celebrating Hrant Dink at FreeWord, enjoying the dialogue between close friends Antonia Arslan and Siobhan Nash-Marshall, and traversing the landscape of Armenia through the tales of one young man's trek across the Republic – partly on the new Transcaucasian Trail. We welcomed the wonderful Taner Akçam and his latest scholarly book *Killing Orders*, supported the launch of our committee member Susan Pattie's new book on the Armenian Legionnaires, and watched the beautifully crafted short film by Victoria Butler-Sloss dramatising an excerpt of her latest book, *The Seamstress of Ourfa*.

Arda Eghiayan, editor

**Dear Reader,**

I cannot quite believe how quickly I'm writing the fourth introduction to the AI's esteemed Bardez. When I was first asked to help with the editing of the magazine, I had just joined the committee and to my shame had not been the most active attendee of the various events the AI had laid on; four years later, it is not just that AI has broadened my knowledge and understanding of Armenian culture and history – past and ongoing - but I am just more aware of the spread of that experience throughout my day-to-day. Whether it is walking into my local Daunt's bookshop, and seeing works by Thomas de Waal or Avedis Hadjian displayed on the shelves enticing notes from my wallet, or attending a presentation of the photographer Ursula Schulz-Dornburg at the Goethe Institute, and seeing the beautiful shots of Armenia's suburban bus stops, or seeing the Armenian book collection bequeathed by Manoog Parikian displayed at Eton College, or the excellent Armenia! exhibition at the Met Museum in New York (see our review pages 12-13).

The Institute's 2019 programme has already seen an excellent lecture by trustee Rebecca Jinks about new lines of scholarship in (Armenian) Genocide studies. We were very fortunate to have a class of sixth

formers from Lancing College, Christopher Walker's alma mater, as well as some of the late historian's friends and family, join us for the evening and a moving Q&A. The evening was hosted with the Kings College London Armenian Society (below), and we look forward with working with them in the future.

We would like to thank our generous benefactors Richard Anooshian, Diana & Panos Katsouris, Robert Houry & Agop Tanielian, Alice & Raffi Tanielian, Nyree Tanielian & Robert Osterbauer, and Violet & Razmik Tatevossian. We also would like to thank Garo Medazoumian FCA, who again has given his professional time freely to examine the annual accounts of the Armenian Institute and provide the Independent Examiner's Report to the Charity Commission! And, thank you also to our two interns, Nariné Der Hakobian and Owen Pashigian.

Finally, the AI has brought me into contact with many wonderful people, some of whom I am honoured to call my friends. We could not do all this work without the support from you, our Friends, nor would we want to. If the AI motto is about making Armenian History and Culture a living experience, I would add that is it also about making that living experience a shared one.

**Arda Eghiayan**



If you would like to contribute in the next issue or send a letter to the Editor, please contact the Publishing Committee on [info@armenianinstitute.org.uk](mailto:info@armenianinstitute.org.uk).

**Dear Editor,** I read your article on Anastas Mikoyan in the latest issue with interest.

Thought you might want to hear the following incident, which occurred when Mikoyan toured the Ford Factory, in Dearborn, USA while he was on his three-month sojourn in the States in 1935.

Anastas Mikoyan was invited to do a tour of the Ford Factory in Dearborn, USA by the founder Henry Ford. Ford wanted to impress upon the Armenian how efficient and good value their cars were, so that when Mikoyan returned to the USSR, he might be able to sell his cars to the Soviet Union. After an impressive tour and good hospitality, Ford offered Mikoyan a free car as

a gift.

Mikoyan replied that as an official representative of the USSR, he could not accept any free gifts as it would smack of bribery. So Ford said ok, I will sell you one of our deluxe models for 50 cents. Mikoyan thought about it for a second and agreed. He put his hand in his pocket and gave Ford a dollar bill. Ford after rummaging around in his pocket for change, said unfortunately he didn't have any.

Mikoyan replied, "that's ok I'll take two!!"

Always enjoy reading your bulletin.

Kind regards. **Malcolm Arconian**



**Parallel lives by Belinda Keheyán (with Bill Hartley)**

In October, Armenia and France vied with each other over how best to commemorate the passing of ‘their’ national

treasure, Charles Aznavour. Meanwhile, the death over the summer of another notable French Armenian – Arsène Tchakarian – had gone largely unnoticed. Besides the fact that the two died within a few months of each other, Aznavour the chanteur and Tchakarian the freedom fighter led parallel lives, marked by many striking similarities.

Aznavour garnered worldwide fame as a singer and songwriter – he was named as the ‘Entertainer of the Century’ by readers of Time magazine – and was known for his irreverence and colourful private life. On the other hand, Tchakarian was a committed Communist, who became a member of the French Resistance, within a unit lead by a fellow Armenian and comprised mostly of immigrants.

Both were born of Armenian parents in the aftermath of the genocide and considered themselves as having been ‘adopted’ by France. While Aznavour was born Shahnourh Varenagh Aznavourian, he was dubbed Charles by a nurse who couldn’t pronounce his name, Tchakarian took the moniker Charles as his *nom de guerre*.

Both men were made members of the France’s Légion d’honneur and lived into old age: Aznavour to 94 and Tchakarian to a mighty 101. Aznavour was in over 70 movies, most notably in *Tirez sur le pianist*, while Tchakarian was the subject of the film *l’Affiche Rouge*, which told of the story of their wartime exploits. The

two men were involved in Armenian causes, to varying degrees – Aznavour in fundraising following the 1988 earthquake and Tchakarian lobbying for Genocide recognition. Commenting on the

passing of both men, French president Emmanuel Macron said Tchakarian was ‘a hero of the Resistance and tireless witness whose voice resonated strongly to the very end’. He described Aznavour – ‘one of the most important “faces of France”’.

Aznavour’s death was marked by the Eiffel Tower being lit up in gold on the day of his passing and followed by a full state funeral. Meanwhile in Armenia, the day of his funeral was an official Day of Mourning.

One question nags: did these two parallel lives ever cross?

What we know for sure is that the restaurant ran by Aznavour’s parents, *Le Caucase*, was a magnate for Paris’ Armenian diaspora and a safe house for hiding Jewish people during the Second World War (in fact Aznavour and his sister were honoured by Israel for ‘risking their own lives’ in the course of harbouring Jewish people). In other words, *Le Caucase* was exactly the sort of place that Tchakarian used in the course of his missions for the Resistance. It seems highly unlikely that the paths of these two giants of twentieth century ‘Armenia’ did not cross, but I for one couldn’t locate an article that put the two together. Dear reader, if you are able to shed any light on this, please, please write to Bardez and tell us.

Arsène Tchakarian: Dec 21, 1916 – Aug 4, 2018  
Charles Aznavour: May 22, 1924 – Oct 1, 2018



**Armenian Diaspora Survey Pilot Project Hosted by Armenian Institute by Susan Pattie**

Since January 2018, the Armenian Institute (AI) has been the host of a ground-breaking study: the Armenian Diaspora Survey (ADS) Pilot Project, initiated and funded by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, and which I have had the privilege of directing.

The purpose of the ADS is to gather clear and tangible information about the contemporary diaspora, asking Armenians about their thoughts on identity and related issues of belonging, as Armenians and as citizens of different states. This is the first time that such a study has been done on this scale with extensive team-work and expertise behind it. The data and its analysis can be used by scholars for better understanding and as a foundation for further research. It can also be used by leaders of the diaspora and of Armenia for practical information about how to effectively serve Armenian communities.

An early part of the project which will have a great impact, was research carried out by Leon Aslanov in the creation of a bibliography of over 350 academic works already written about the diaspora in English, Armenian, French, Russian, and Turkish. We are constantly adding to this valuable resource, and expanding it to include journalistic articles, films and documentaries about diaspora communities.

AI has been the administrative home of the Pilot Project, serving as a meeting point and work station for the London-based team which also included Aslanov, Dr. Gagik Stepan-Sarkissian, as administrator, and tech support from Anieka Sayadian.

*Continued overleaf...*



**Some sample questions—how would you answer?**  
 Q. 97. If you were able to distribute money to support projects for Armenians anywhere in the world, what would you choose? Name 3.  
 Q.99 Name one Armenian achievement, in any sphere of life, from the political to the cultural, that makes you proud. Explain why.

In May/June 2018, the Pilot Project, sent research teams into four different cities around the diaspora: Boston, Cairo, Marseille and Pasadena. Using questionnaires and

Unsurprisingly, Armenian language, history and religion were important to themselves and to the Armenian identity generally – but variations appeared between the cities and further questions revealed



Massis Bakery in Watertown, Boston. Photo Chloe Barran

interviews, the researchers spoke to local diaspora Armenians about their concerns, hopes and attitudes. The particular cities were chosen to provide variety for this initial phase, each important in its own history and situation but of a smaller size, and thus more practical for our first teams to approach. Now, with substantial results from over 800 questionnaires and 200 interviews, there is much to consider. Given the many million Armenians in the diaspora, this is a small percentage of those whom we hope will take part over time but the Pilot has helped us to formulate and reformulate questions. Information is available on the ADS website but below are a few of the interesting findings that have emerged as we begin the process of analysis.

broad variations in practice. On this question and others “close family ties”, “family heritage” and other home-based answers scored equally high. Although our set of respondents in the four cities seem to be more active than perhaps a broader population of Armenians, 73% claimed no active affiliation with any Armenian political party. Christianity was believed to be an important part of Armenian identity, including Apostolic, Evangelical and Catholic respondents across the four communities. 14-16% attended church weekly or monthly while 70% felt it is important to be married in an Armenian church. Some 43% of respondents felt that women should be ordained in Armenian churches while 30% had no opinion.



Marseille, Photo Mayda Chavak

Overwhelmingly, Armenians in each community told us what our purpose was – to listen to them, to give them an opportunity to talk about their past and future as individuals and as Armenians. Our final question tried to probe where this project could go: Q100: What question is missing from this questionnaire.? How would you answer it?

Q.10 (US) Is the continuation of the Armenian Diaspora important to you? This was answered with a resounding “yes”. The diaspora appears to be a meaningful space with its continuation being marked as “fairly” to “very” important by 94% of respondents, making this the most “unanimous” of answers across the communities.

Many ways of being Armenian were reflected in the responses and for those who took part, expressing this diversity within a common bond was most important.

In line with this, in another question, 84% of respondents felt it was important to help the diaspora communities of the Middle East. These are both significant as so often the focus of funding, of study, of general attention seems to be either the Genocide or the Republic of Armenia.

Dr. Hratch Tchilingirian takes over as director as the ADS moves to a more permanent footing, with the AI remaining as its administrative base. Please visit the website to see more information about the ADS, cities visited, some results, and our blogs: [www.armeniandiasporasurvey.com](http://www.armeniandiasporasurvey.com).

In Q.79 respondents were asked: How important is the Republic of Armenia to you? Again, a very positive response followed with “fairly” to “very” important checked by 90% of respondents. A further question found that 75% have visited at least once and 93% intend to visit (again for some).



Cairo team. Photo Chaghik Filian

Q.12 In which ways do you define your Armenian identity? Respondents were asked to choose 3 from a list of 12.

**Father and Son, Make Music History with Magic Baton by Nouritza Matossian**



Rolf and Vahakn Gehlhaar Matossian have been working for the last eight years with their company Human Instruments in order to create instruments for disabled musicians and adapt technology that will enable them to play like any other musician. "We want a level playing field for everyone" Vahakn told me, and last month they did just that.

International conductor Charles Hazlewood was keen to rehearse and conduct the *Haptic Baton* with a mixed orchestra of sighted and visually impaired musicians in classical and new music. It would be a first. Nowhere else in the world have as many blind players sat as equals in an orchestra. Each time he would give a beat or move his baton slowly or briskly he would trigger a signal to the musicians in the form of a physical sensation. They would respond and play in time with the rest of the sighted orchestra. How was it possible?

Rolf Gehlhaar has been called the father of Interactive Music. Composing a large body of instrumental and vocal works for conventional instruments and working in electronic music studios, in the last three decades he has created sound installations. People can make music without touching anything, just by moving about in a specially defined space. The most famous was the Sound Space in the 1985 exhibition *Les Immatériaux* at the Centre Pompidou, Paris. It struck Rolf forcibly while dancing in the space that this was a gift to a blind person to move safely by their hearing alone. After that he devoted himself to creating digital instruments for professional players who had become disabled.

Vahakn ran his design career and received multiple

awards in parallel with his musicianship.

The Paraorchestra was co-founded in 2011 by Rolf and Hazlewood; an ensemble of disabled musicians who made such gorgeous music that they were invited to play at the closing ceremony of the London Olympic Games. Clarence Adoo a famous trumpet player, paralysed after a car accident, played in his wheelchair on a no-hands laptop instrument designed for his specific needs by Rolf for that very concert.

Father and son prototyped other instruments, tested and built *Hi Note* and *Touch Chord*. The *Haptic Baton* came on a brain wave to Rolf, and Vahakn developed and refined it through many months and persistent trials.



On November 8th 2018 at a private concert in Bristol we witnessed its resounding success as every downbeat of the *Haptic Baton* in Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony* was played in perfect unison. Maestro Hazlewood and the blind musicians led by South Korean virtuoso percussionist Kyongho Jeon were elated and gave moving testimonials. "For the first time this has made visually impaired players proactive instead of reactive!" Hazlewood declared.



The aim is to make the magic baton available worldwide to orchestras and conductors so that the large numbers of excellent visually impaired musicians who are now condemned to playing solo or with small ensembles can join the great orchestras of the world and take their place even as leaders and soloists.

See the BBC report for more information <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/w3csww8h>

**Writing the Seamstress of Ourfa by Victoria Butler-Sloss**



*The Seamstress of Ourfa* is the first book in a trilogy about my family. It begins in 1895, Ourfa, a thriving, cosmopolitan city in the Ottoman Empire, filled with Turks, Armenians, Assyrians, Greeks, Maronites and Jews. A city where the fez mixed easily with straw boaters, the veil with abundant, loose hair. Khatoun Khouri (right, with her sewing machine in 1970), a girl of thirteen, meets her husband, Iskender Agha Boghos. Twice her age; a poet, philosopher and a dreamer, he adores her but cannot express it in words. Around them, the Ottoman Empire is crumbling, the world heading towards war and the Armenian minority subjected to increasing repression at the hands of Sultan Abdul

Hamid, culminating in the genocide of 1915. As Iskender retreats into his books and alcohol, losing land, money and business, Khatoun holds their family together by sewing for the wives of the men who persecute them; her creations inciting, lust, love and fertility. The family joins the resistance and evades the death marches to the Syrian Desert only to lose everything when exiled by Mustafa Kemal and the birth of his new Turkish Republic. What follows is a tale of love, loss and redemption in the diaspora told by four generations of women, each becoming the guardian angel of the next. Through stories that unfold in magical



reality, letters, memories, and poetry, *Seamstress* tells of the universal desire to belong.

The two questions people ask me all the time are, “What made you write this book?” and “How long did it take you?” To me that’s like asking how long a piece of string is. The answer to both questions is “I was always writing it. It’s been in my head ever since I was born.”

I grew up, as many people of my generation, hearing family stories. They began as soon as I was old enough to balance on a knee and continue today. In my family, days are spent sitting and talking. We talk over food, over chores, while sitting with our dusty feet up in the heat of the afternoon. Sometimes there are long silences that tell a story too.

My grandmother was the main teller of the dark tales. Her husband’s infidelities had left her committed to God and once she learned to read she spent her time reading the Bible and comparing the gospels to the tragedies that were unfolding on the news each night. I grew up believing Armageddon was coming.



*Agha Boghos family: left to right; Alice, Umme Ferida, a cousin Fehime, Iskender, Solomon, Khatoun and Voghbed*



watching 1.5 million people file past their door and die. They stayed there until they were finally kicked out in 1922 when they moved to Cyprus, living alongside the people that persecuted them and, later, helped them to safety. When my husband and I moved to America in 1999, he had the work visa and I didn't. I decided to work on the book – going over the stories I'd translated and turning them into chapters.

I wrote everything down, starting with

the year 1895 and kept going up to the year 2000, following my great grandmother's stories with my grandmothers, mother and aunt's and mine. The earliest chapters, the one's in *Seamstress*, were the most difficult because I only had stories and scraps of stories and I had so much homework to do. Every time someone walked into a room I had to research if they would light a lamp, strike a match or flick a switch. Most of the people I would try and corroborate dates and events with were already dead or very old. There was little information on the internet. That's all changed now; everything is easily found on the web. Much faster.

But then again, I loved research. Finding photos, discovering nuggets that confirm facts in a dusty book in a library or bookshop. You can go down a wormhole on any subject; food, medicine, sewing, drugs, sex, war. Love. Family. *Seamstress*. A tale of love, loss and redemption; of friendship between enemies and a family of extraordinary women who survive against all odds, living alongside their oppressors. My family.

First of all, the truth of the story. For each person it is different. Every one has a different perspective - usually starring themselves. The storyteller becomes the central player in the tale. Secondly, the way stories were told. The older the stories, the more magical the telling. People died of broken hearts, "I heard it shatter, like glass," and, "He vanished over the rooftops," or someone inadvertently cursed someone who suddenly died.

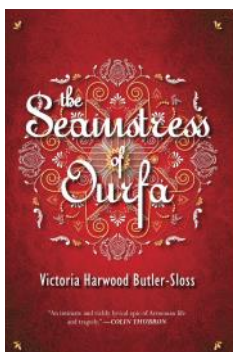
I wanted to explore storytelling and how it is many layered, part fiction, part fact, part memory, a bit of ego. I was also struck by the fact that my family continued to live in the Empire for a long time, despite

the year 1895 and kept going up to the year 2000, following my great grandmother's stories with my grandmothers, mother and aunt's and mine. The earliest chapters, the one's in *Seamstress*, were the most difficult because I only had stories and scraps of stories and I had so much homework to do. Every time someone walked into a room I had to research if they would light a lamp, strike a match or flick a switch. Most of the people I would try and corroborate dates and events with were already dead or very old. There was little information on the internet. That's all changed now; everything is easily found on the web. Much faster.

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Photos courtesy of Victoria Butler-Sloss



The *Seamstress of Ourfa* richly recreates the culture of the Armenian community in Ourfa at the tail end of the Ottoman Empire. The eponymous seamstress, Khatoun, creates beautiful dresses that leave her customers husbands dizzy with desire, while her sister-in-law Ferida cooks sumptuous feasts to sustain a growing and lovingly described group of relatives and the waifs and strays they adopt. The book is available from the Armenian Institute.

**The Armenian Revolution: A change came by Tatiana der Avedissian**

2018 will go down in Armenian history as the year the young fought and took back control of their country. A small grassroots movement from the opposition turned into one of the largest protests witnessed in Armenia, and for once political support was pouring in from the diaspora, mainly the younger generation, the expats and the disenfranchised encouraged by what they saw on the news and on their screens. Many would argue the writing was on the wall but no one believed we would reach this monumental milestone so quickly and with such little struggle.

Seven months later Armenia has transitioned into a new government with a mandate to reform and revitalise its economy.

In 2017 I visited Armenia for the first time and fell instantly in love with my 'motherland' so I went back two months later to attend the diaspora conference organised and hosted by the Armenian government. It was a fantastic gathering of Armenians, however the conference itself lacked any clear vision on how to secure the future of Armenia and its people. Many of us were invited to participate in 'meaningful discussions' and 'listen to the experts' talk about the future prosperity of this beautiful country and yet, there didn't

few years who felt the same way as me so, when I started doing some research for this article I decided the best people to ask how they felt about the revolution were the very people who drove

it through their enthusiasm and unrelenting resolve to change the direction their country was heading towards and take back control of their future.

One young Armenian living in London who participated in the demonstration here and watched the action from afar comments "I was so very proud of the unity our people showcased, and the clever - genuinely clever and quirky - ways people began protesting. It sort of 'proved our Armenian-ness' and character as a people if that even makes any sense. Kids blocking zebra crossings with their toy trucks, babies with 'milk-eating strike' written on their backs (կաթադուլ), regular workers like barbers, business owners, salespeople providing their services out on the street, people dancing, singing, playing drums. Ah, it was beautiful to



*Photo credits p8 Raffi Ouzounian*

seem to be a real drive to create impactful change. It was all fluff, a word which has almost become part of my daily vocabulary of late; we are surrounded by it, meaningful/meaningless calls for action with no clear strategy. One of the main topics of discussion that week was how to stop the outflow of Armenians, but no one was willing to address the big elephants in the room when discussing this critical topic; corruption, nepotism and lack of economic opportunity. The apparent solution to this and many other challenges seemed to be placed on the shoulders of the diaspora; we should invest in Armenia in order for it to prosper and not expect anything in return. While I may love my culture and its people, that is pure folly and not how the real world works. I have heard of many burnt fingers in the last 20 years spurred from such noble acts. I left Armenia that September with a realisation that things would never get better and no amount of money would affect change without radical reform.

I have spoken to many young Armenians over the last

watch."

As if singing from the same hymn sheet they have all used the same words to describe how they felt about the revolution and its impact; hopefulness, empowerment, positivity and interestingly weariness.

The protests may have started from the opposition but the real heroes are the youth of Armenia who were driven by an innate desire for change. They now talk about returning, investing, working in Armenia; a notion not often heard when speaking to them before. Meanwhile the diaspora, young and old stood behind the protestors, those with no stakes in the current government at least, because they too understood the urgent need for reform. Gone are the days when we would be compelled to give money to our 'motherland' to secure its future because it became abundantly clear that money was not the issue. Like any problem, throwing money at it doesn't solve the core issues of cyclic poverty, hunger and desperation.



Nevertheless, the high of the revolution is wearing off and people are settling back into reality, realising that one resignation and a new government alone will not change the fate of this land and its people.

Yes, many feel corruption is on its way out, but is it really? Some are already feeling the change in their day to day lives. Valentina Hovhannisyan says her “family massively feels the change,” she goes on to say, “It’s a hard process that has already begun and I think will continue. I think even people who used to take bribes have changed.” Others however feel we have not gone far enough. Do we have the right talent leading our country? Some are concerned by the amount of young people taking up posts with little experience on how to run government. Are the elders so inherently corrupt that we cannot rely on them?

The real test will be the economy, but reimagining institutions and changing norms take time. One big event can change the course of history but more, a lot more, needs to be done, if we want to secure Armenia’s future. Hayk Bagradjans feels, “The revolution is not over yet—the hardest part has just started; thoroughly reforming institutions and changing people’s mentalities is needed.” He thinks, “Complacency is probably the greatest risk to the revolution, hence, we need to keep fighting for the aims of the revolution and not forget about the historical watershed moment we have been offered by history.”

Our biggest challenges can not only be found internally but externally too, with the influence of foreign powers, border security and regional instability. Lilit Gevorgyan, a senior economist at IHS Markit still has concerns. She thinks the old guard have retreated but have not been defeated, “As predicted right after the revolution, new parties have emerged that are covertly linked to the old regime, and the Russian capital. Their message is one of aggressive conservatism and pseudo-patriotism; their ultimate objective is to hijack constructive criticism with mud-slinging and continuous negative PR campaigns to discredit the revolution and bring the old guard back.” So like Hayk, for Lilit this is just the beginning.

As one young student further noted, “There’s a belief that locking up a few oligarchs or going after two-three key figures for PR

and populism is the solution instead of working to solve the real issues...The view from many of those around me seems to be that Pashinyan et al are just playing politics now. The system needs to be overhauled from the roots, which I hope will come to fruition this year.” What does ‘New Armenia’ mean to these young professionals and students? For Andre Simonian, an Armenian rock musician, it means, “Hope, and hope was in a deep coma in Armenia for the past 20 years.” When the demonstrations first erupted, I was very weary because I was worried about the instability it would cause for our borders. But as the movement grew, I reminded myself that we cannot keep the status quo for fear of a worse outcome; that’s how autocratic states are created, they rely on the fear factor, the unknown! More importantly the young were not interested in party politics they just wanted change from the dysfunctional system they had to work with. In Pashinyan they found a man brave enough to stand up to the previous government so they stuck with him whether they liked his politics or not.

So what is the immediate impact of the revolution and what is its legacy? American-Armenian Ani Garibyan says, “That the people have power; that is its biggest legacy.”

After interviewing many of these young Armenians I realised that none of them are under any illusion, they know there is a long road ahead before we can feel and see the benefits of the revolution but these small wins encourage them and me to keep the momentum going. I cannot wait to go back and visit this ‘New Armenia.’



Photo credits p9 Raffi Youredjian

**ARMENIA: Creating Home by Susan Pattie**

At the Smithsonian Institution Folklife Festival, Washington, DC, June 7 – July 8, 2018.

I grew up in and around Washington, DC and the Smithsonian museums along the National Mall were a constant source of inspiration and adventure. Art, history, science – everything was there, all free entry and family-oriented. In 1967, a new outdoor educational project began; the Folklife Festival was an annual international exposition of living cultural heritage, highlighting the different ways of living and the diverse pathways of heritage in the United States. Since then the Festival has grown to include cultures from around the world and this year the focus was on Armenia and Catalonia.

With banners welcoming the crowds, the Armenian section had several stages, one at each end, two more in the middle and a shadow puppet theatre in a small tent. In between these were many booths with artists and cooks demonstrating their crafts. Workshops throughout each day provided the visitors with introductions to calligraphy, cooking, woodcarving, weaving and much more. The stages presented a variety of music from jazz to young kanun players from Armenia as well as Armenian American musicians such as Zulal, Ara Dinkjian and Onnik Dinkjian.

The stages also hosted informative talks, wide-ranging discussions and demonstrations of cooking, customs, and traditions. Interpreters facilitated the communication and for the third year, discussions included a focus on migration. The 2018 version was entitled *On the Move: Migration and Creativity*, co-presented by the American Anthropological Association. A discussion about “Armenians in America: A 400 Year Heritage” took place on the Hyurasenyak stage. “Sounding Memory: Music and Migration” brought together musicians from Armenia and Catalonia to exchange ideas about their transnational experiences and and a session on “Giving Voice: Language and Cultural Survival” included presentations about Mayan and Armenian languages and cultures.

On the first day visiting the Festival, I spotted an old friend, Dr. Levon Abrahamian, an anthropologist at Yerevan State University, rushing from one end of the

exhibition space to the other. As one of the several curators, Levon was busy arranging the wedding about to take place. A pair of real newly-weds, also members of a dance troupe brought from Armenia, played bride and groom as they, their fictitious

families (other dancers and craftspeople), musicians and many tourists made their way across the space. In the outdoor auditorium, Levon and others explained a number of wedding customs, some re-enacted for us. And of course we were all invited to dance in celebration of this “new” family.

The Smithsonian had sent a team to Armenia to work with Dr. Abrahamian and others finding makers of crafts, dancers, musicians, puppeteers and cooks to demonstrate their skills and show the thousands of visitors what they would find should they visit Armenia – or indeed, if they visit an Armenian home in the diaspora. Feasting was a major theme and the curators and speakers (and now the Smithsonian website) gave very interesting summaries of ways in which feasting in the diaspora and in Armenia differ while sharing many things. Antranig Kilislian, a professional chef, born in Syria but living now in Armenia as a refugee, spoke and demonstrated how to make lahmajun, showing how newcomers are changing the foodways of Armenia. Later that day, information about traditions of foraging and the use of herbs was shared by others on the team. A tonir was built in the middle of the open space, providing fresh lavash to the visitors. Pity the poor cooks, making these in 34 degree weather with high humidity – typical Washington summer!

Major concerts on a shared stage in the middle of the Mall brought internationally known musicians from Armenia and Catalonia as well as both diasporas. Most touching was the dancing together as troupes from Armenia and all over America met and shared their steps. Of course visitors also joined – after fortifying themselves with – what else – Armenian food and wine at the nearby concessions.

The Folklife Festival is a celebration of diversity and connection, of heritage, of creativity and transformation. It calls itself a “celebration of cultures across the globe” and in 2018 was a vivid, beautiful showcase for Armenia and Armenians.

Please see these websites to learn more:

<https://festival.si.edu/2018/armenia/>

<https://festival.si.edu/blog/2018-folklife-festival/smithsonian>





### Armenians in India by Richard Gregory

In late 2015, I was clearing out my parent's house when, hidden under the stairs, I discovered Victorian photo albums. There were hundreds of pictures of my father's ancestors in London and India, including children in mysterious national costumes. Curiosity took hold and I researched a rich vein of Armenian heritage, from the founding of Calcutta to trading throughout the Far East. Here is a tiny sample:

From 1603 a war was raging between Safavid Persia ruled by Shah Abbas I and the Ottoman Empire ruled by Sultan Ahmed I. In 1604, over

150,000 Armenians were forced from Julfa, the town was razed and the population resettled in New Julfa, a suburb of Isfahan with the Armenian Vank Cathedral. Shah Abbas calculated that Armenians would benefit the Persian economy.

Job Charnock of the East India Company recognised the success of these Persian Armenian traders and invited them to Calcutta, at the time of founding in 1689, to encourage the development of trading routes. The Armenian church of St Nazareth, Calcutta, was built in 1724. By the late 19th century there were 1,300 Armenians living in Calcutta, Dhaka and Rangoon. When an opportunity arose, they showed themselves to be more than merchants.

An Armenian, Israel Sarhad, was instrumental in securing the "Grand Farman" for the East India Company from the Mogul Emperor Farrokhsiyar in 1715. Petrus Arathoon, known as the "Armenian Petrus," was an envoy between the British and Mir Jaffir during the overthrow of Siraj-ud-dowlah and the replacement of Mir Jaffir by Mir Kasim as the Nawab of Bengal, Behar and Orissa in October 1760. Khojah Gregory, son of Khalanthar Arratoon of Julfa and younger brother of Petrus Arathoon, was a cloth-merchant at Hooghly in West Bengal. He became Mir Kasim's confidant. The new Nawab appointed Khojah Gregory as the Commander-in-Chief of the Bengal Army.

My great, great grandfather, Marcar Gregory (aka Margar Grigorian), pictured top, was born in July, 1824 in Shiraz, Persia. By the age of 22 he had joined the Calcutta community and was a dealer in Garnet, and Shell-Lac dye—a tree gum, produced as a result of beetle attack—which was moulded into buttons and jewellery and also used as a protective lacquer. In 1850, he inherited the schooner *Elizabeth* from his wife, Elizabeth Manook, and traded throughout the Far East. Through the trust provided by bonds from extended family members,

Armenians spread from Calcutta into Rangoon, Hong Kong, Singapore, Shanghai, Manila, Okinawa and other ports.

Marcar's offspring married into the Apar, Anthony, Joaquim and Emin families.

My great grandfather, Gregory Marcar Gregory, was born in 1851 and educated at Harrow School and Trinity College, Cambridge. He joined the Indian Civil Service and became an opium agent, eventually managing an indigo and opium factory in Ghazipur. He married Edith Sheridan in 1885. He retired to Gunterstone Road, London in 1904 and became President of the Armenian United Association of London (AUAL) in 1913. Keen to promote understanding of the Armenian people, he translated Ormanian's *Church of Armenia* and Archag Tchobanian's *The People of Armenia* into English. The Foreign Office appointed him Liaison Officer for Armenians in the UK from 1914. Throughout the 1914-1918 war he lobbied on behalf of Armenian refugees. Early in 1915 the AUAL hosted an "At Home". The evening ended with the presentation of a large silver cup from the Armenians of London and Manchester to the Association's President, Lt Col Gregory, "as a slight token of their esteem and respect". As the situation in Turkey deteriorated, the AUAL inaugurated The Armenian Refugees' Relief Fund which raised substantial sums. By March 1915, £7,750 8s 10d had been collected. When he retired in July 1917, as President of the AUAL, Gregory was 66 years old. However, he remained active. On 8th June 1918, he addressed the AUAL, with English guests, in London: "To us Armenians the Armenian Question is the very life-blood in our veins... Our Association is essentially of a pacific character, and our politics are neutral... We do not desire autonomy or the setting up of an independent kingdom... What we ask of the powerful nations of Europe is security of life...the elements of justice for all... Our countrymen have struggled against heavy odds for centuries, their country has been torn from them, their women and children are being subjected to the grossest indignities, they have been decimated in number and are, at this moment, struggling under the heel of a fanatical overlord, and at the point of death."

One son, John, was in the Royal Flying Corps and shot down and killed in 1918. His other son, my grandfather, Marcar Sheridan Gregory, became an Executive Engineer of Indian State Railways and was a soldier in both World Wars.

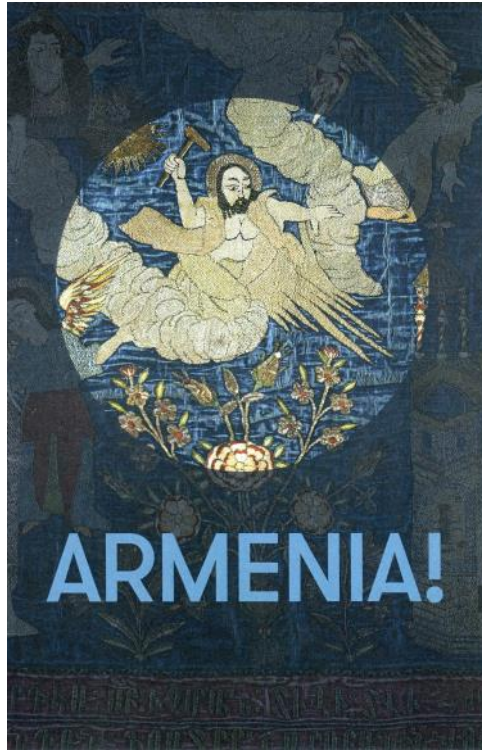


Ghazipur picnic 1885

**ARMENIA! Metropolitan Museum of New York**  
**By Nouritza Matossian**

I look across the avenue to the Metropolitan Museum's facade of pillars and half of them are hidden by a vast circle with a deep blue background, an image of Christ suspended above clouds and the word ARMENIA! with an exclamation mark embracing the world. This first exhibition of Armenian Arts in the US brought me flying across the Atlantic for the opening with great hopes and at last I join an excited group of Armenians waiting for the doors to open.

The mission and message of Helen C. Evans, curator of Byzantine art and specialist of Armenian mediaeval manuscripts, is made manifest in that poster. She feels that Armenian art has been ignored for too long and she has worked and waited a lifetime to create an exhibition at the MET with only the very best art objects; from the earliest stone sculptures to the rise of *Cruciform Khachkar, 1448, Lake Sevan, History Museum of Armenia, Yerevan*



Christianity and beyond.

On a tour Helen Evans explained her realisation that Armenia was one of the most far-reaching cultures for two reasons. Firstly, the early conversion of the nation to Christianity which led to literacy, translations and an intellectual wave jumping ahead of its neighbouring countries. The second, was the success and efficiency of Armenian traders who travelled the globe and established practices for commerce and trading, thereby developing a network of trade routes. Armenian control of these trade routes, which incidentally were used by Marco Polo, gave them a pre-eminence and status which continued until the Ottoman ravages of Europe.

Far from being considered an isolated country in the east and cut

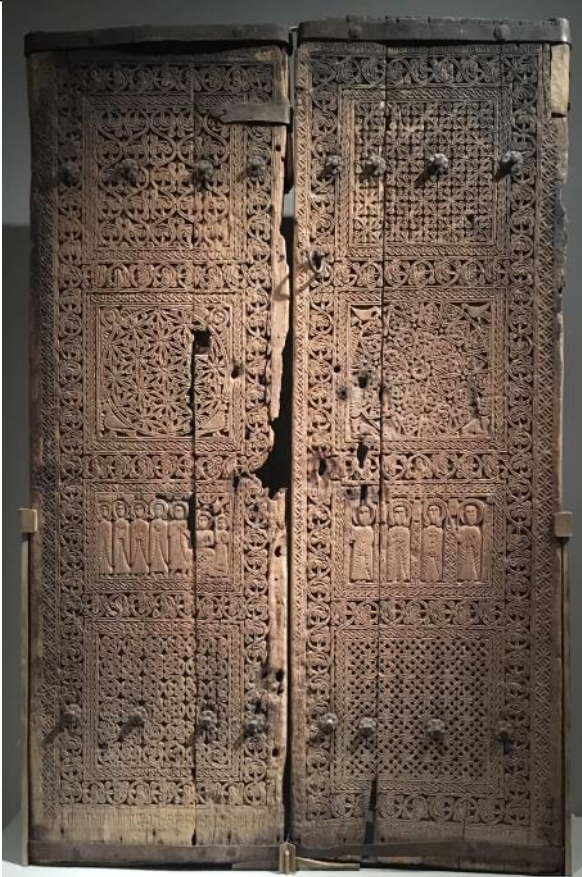
off from Europe, the exhibition shows that Armenia was a world power with powerful stone carvings, strong metalwork, refined textiles, embroidery, maps and illuminated manuscripts, early printed books and illustrations highlighting the interconnectedness of the Armenians with the courts of Europe, Russia, Persia, India and the Far East. One hundred and forty sumptuous artefacts, some never seen before, were permitted to travel for the first time from Armenia, the Holy See of Antelias and San Lazzaro in Venice for this exhibition, including 4th and 5th century massive stone khachkars and steles, and the flowering of mediaeval arts in silver-work, gold jewellery, and elaborate textiles. The quality and range of the objects on show are so compelling that I will return to the show three more times.

Liturgical objects and vestments of the highest order underline the religious pre-eminence of the styles of silver work and gold, repoussé, filigree, cloisonné set with gemstones on Bible covers, sacred vessels and even the Arm Reliquary of Saint Sahak Partev from Vaspurakan. This, like many other treasures, unfold tragic tales as to how they were saved by Armenians fleeing from genocide and brought to safety to the Holy See of Etchmiadzin.

The long lost parchment map *Tabula Chorographica Armenica*, measuring 3.52m x 1.2m, dating from 1691 and richly illustrated in colour, was discovered languishing in Bologna University Library.

The excited first night crowd is too noisy, so I hurry to the end of the show to see it in reverse.





*The figures on the left-hand side of the door, depict the Baptism of Christ, with Christ half immersed in water and flanked by two figures, presumably Archangel Gabriel and Saint John the Baptist. Behind Christ is the Hand of God.*

My favourite object at the ARMENIA! Exhibition was an exquisitely carved pair of doors dating from 1212 from the now destroyed St Garabed monastery on the Plain of Moush referred to commonly at 'Msho Sultan Sourp Garabed'. The Monastery was the holiest shrine in Ottoman Armenia. Tradition has it, it was built on the most sacred pre-Christian site of Ashdishad, destroyed when Christianity was imposed on Armenia during the fourth century. The doors were thought to have been destroyed during the Armenian Genocide but were saved and kept in a barn by Kurdish villagers for seven decades, until they were taken out of Turkey in the late 20th century. It's a miracle they survived and made an appearance at the exhibition.

*Vazken Davidian*



Beautiful sharagans are heard only in this gallery with the illuminated Bibles and artefacts of faith. I almost bump into security guards surrounding Nikol Pashinyan gazing at an open Roslin Gospel in a display case. He is soon followed by His Holiness Karekin II who has lent several important items.

The exhibition is crucially important in opening up to North America the hidden, and often tragic, history of Armenians.

"I think for many Armenians, it is viewed as a tragic history" said Helen Evans in The Art Newspaper podcast. "I think the exhibition shows that although Armenians have frequently been—as other cultures have—attacked by outside forces, they've also always revived, and as the works in the show indicate, remained a coherent people with an incredible tradition of art. So, I perhaps see it as tragic with great rays of sunshine."

My long-held conviction that displaying and giving information about our arts is the best form of communication led me to examine the US reviews. The Wall Street Journal review wrote:

"...though Armenia's history is ornate and knotty and scarred by exile, disruptions and 20th century mass killings, and though its lands were battered by Islamic conquest . . . we sense an astonishing consistency, a set

of traditions and beliefs maintained of centuries." I would add that the influences of neighbouring countries have been suffused and integrated into the decorative arts and styles of these different art forms yet the rugged originality and striking distinguishing marks of Armenian identity shines through all of them. Through history and until the present-day, Armenian artists, who have suffered appalling setbacks and traumas, have fought back with their best weapon - by making art of a deeper, wider and more profound humanity than their persecutors could ever begin to imagine.

*Armenia! was at the Metropolitan Museum, New York City, September 22, 2018 – January 13, 2019*

*Reliquary Cross with Relics of Saint John the Baptist. 14th century and 1670, made in Cilicia. Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, Armenia*



**Gevorg Emin: Centenary**

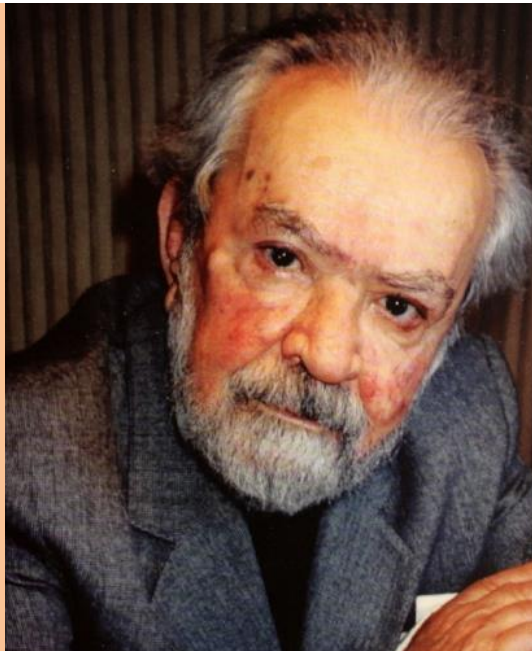
**By Sossi Yerissian**

2019 sees the centenary of Gevorg Emin; one of the most notable and versatile Armenian poets of the 20th century.

Born Karlen Mouradian on 30 September 1919 in Ashtarak, the family later moved to Yerevan where Emin graduated as a hydraulic engineer in 1940.

While one of the hydroelectric power stations that Emin designed and supervised was still producing electricity in Vartenis well-into his later life, it is for his eloquent and direct poetry that he is well-remembered.

A chance meeting with the poet Yeghishe Charents while Emin was at school, led to a fruitful mentorship relationship and friendship, indeed Emin was referred to as Charents's 'son in poetry'. Writing in his preface to *For you on New Year's Day* Emin says: "Today if I write instead of building canals and power plants it is due to two things: First the impact of Yeghishe Charents. Second, the touches of ancient manuscripts at the



Madenataran library where I worked as a student and could read and hold the magnificent old manuscripts from the 5th to the 18th centuries." While he did suffer restrictions as a writer, he escaped the fate of Charents in Stalin's purges, and was entrusted with a number of Charents unpublished works.

Emin fought in the Second World War, although his experiences were rarely the subject of his works; rather, the Armenian Genocide and his homeland is the theme he returned to most often. However, as Martin Robbins wrote in the introduction to *Land, Love, Century*, a collection of Emin's

poems (English edition), while Emin spoke about the predicament of Armenia through its landscape and more, "this wouldn't have gained international interest in his work, or own him a Soviet State Prize for *Land, Love, Century* (in 1976). His work speaks out of and to the deeper human predicament in the century of "Auschwitzes and Der Zors. In a century that is "pounding the skulls of the just," he asks: "Lord, don't you hear the red news of massacre and blood?"

**ՄԵՆՔ**

Եւ ի՞նչ էինք մենք  
 Ու երկիրը մեր,  
 Եթէ ծուռ նստենք, բայց խօսենք շիտա՛կ.-  
 Եթէ նաւ՝ ապա չոր ժայռի վրայ,  
 Եթէ գաւ՝ ապա արցունքով լեցուն,  
 Եթէ հող՝ ապա քարացած ահից,  
 Եթէ քար՝ ապա ճչացող ցաւից,  
 Զգօր մի հոգի, որ չունէր մարմին,  
 Եզակի որակ, առանց բանակի,  
 Զաջարի սպայ, առանց բանակի,  
 Պաշտամունք՝ հնի ու աւերակի...

Եւ ի՞նչ էինք մենք  
 Ու երկիրը մեր,  
 Թէ շիտակ նստած՝ ծուռ խօսենք անգամ,-  
 Զբօսաշրջի՛կ իր հայրենիքում,  
 Զիր՝ իր սեփական օջախ ու յարկում,  
 Անժողովուրդ հող,  
 Անհող ժողովուրդ  
 Եւ ցրուած հոկուրնք, որ չէր ժողովում...

**We**

Yet what are we, think,  
 We and our country ,  
 If our talk is frank, but we look away?  
 If we're a ship, we're aground on barren rock,  
 If we're clay, we're filled with tears,  
 If we're soil, we're petrified by fear,  
 And if we're stone—we cry out in pain,  
 A powerful soul with no body,  
 A rare quality without quantity,  
 A brave officer with no army,  
 A worshipper of the past and its ruin

Yet what are we, think  
 We and our country  
 If our talk is frank but we look away?  
 We're tourist while at home  
 Guests in our own homes  
 A land without a people,  
 A people without a land,  
 Scattered beads, impossible to collect...

Excerpt from Menk, translation by Martin Robbins, *Land, Love, Century* by Gevorg Emin 1988. Published by Three Continents Press. Despite searches, the copyright holder could not be found.

Emin’s poetry was translated into many languages, and it was in Russian that poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko first discovered his work to much acclaim. In the foreword to *Land, Love, Century*, Yevtushenko wrote “Emin’s mastery lies not only in the smoothness of his lines, but also in a spiritual mastery, a mastery of passionate conviction. Immensely interested in everything he comes into contact with, Emin might seem gloomy, but he is never bored...Emin’s poetry is full of wisdom and at the same time avoids the rationalistic-didactic emphasis which weighs heavily on most of our talented poets. In Emin’s wisdom there is a playful inwardness that the reader immediately feels.”

Emin was awarded the Stalin Prize in 1951 and the USSR State Prize in 1976 for his poetry. In 1972, he toured the United States with Yevtushenko giving poetry readings. In 1991, Emin was part of a concert at the Royal Albert Hall organised by Vanessa Redgrave, *Jerusalem at Conciliation*, and featuring other artists such as Duran Duran and Chrissie Hyde, where the English versions of his work were read out by Redgrave, and Richard Harris. Emin's first wife was the daughter of the distinguished Armenian poet Vahan Terian. After her death, he married a writer, Armenouhi Hamparian. He had three sons. Gevorg Emin died in Yerevan on 11 June 1998 having published 15 volumes of poetry.

**First Lines, First Prizes and the First Lady**  
by Lilit Avetisyan

719 students from 226 schools from different regions of Armenia took part in the 8th year of the National Poetry Recitation Contest telling stories and expressing their emotions through the English language poems of the greatest Western poets. The numbers exceeded all expectations of the participants and the organisers: this was our biggest annual event so far. The students’ favorite poems were *Still I Rise* by Maya Angelou, *If* by Rudyard Kipling, and *I Carry Your Heart* by EE Cummings. Thanks to support from donors all over the world, we were able to launch a *Creative English Summer School*: a five-day camp for 60 contest finalists. The camp allowed Armenia’s brightest and best pupils (forms 7-12) to develop a national peer network of English enthusiasts and to benefit from career and academic mentoring. Best of all, the camp setting in Hankavan allowed us to move away from a classroom and from the emphasis on memorisation. Students took part in yoga, art, music and dancing sessions—and even met some rescue dogs! There was much opportunity to develop new vocabulary, gain self-confidence and make new friends. The First Lady Anna Hakobyan was one of a stream of distinguished visitors. She was impressed that this world-class learning experience was being offered in Armenia. The camp stood out because we had our



own poet- in- residence, all the way from Ireland. Damian Gorman ran different sessions on poetry writing during the five days inspiring the participants “to write first lines of their poems”. In 2019, we anticipate 1300 students from every marz (region of Armenia) will take part in the contest—and



we are already missing some of our alumni who have gone on to bigger and better things. Emilia Simonian from Yerevan is now studying veterinary medicine at Cambridge University. Anahit Badalyan, a 10th form student from Kapan, will finish her last two years of high school at United World Colleges in Italy. Martin Ghazaryan, Lilit Poghosyan and Tatev Telunts from the Goris area are just some of our students who made it to the third round for Future Leaders Exchange program—and they hope to be studying in the US next year. There are lot of success stories from students we expect to see again. Diana Mitichyan was a member of European Youth Parliament Taguhi Torozyan took part in Summer Business School 2018 and her team project won the first prize as the best Start-up idea. Davit Sargysan, now a 12th former in Kapan, aspires to be Armenia’s Prime Minister in the future. He was particularly delighted to meet Ms. Hakobyan (left). We have lots of other would-be computer programmers, doctors and marketing specialists. These students are the future of Armenia.

*To support the National Poetry Recitation Contest and camp, please email [lilit.ptngo@gmail.com](mailto:lilit.ptngo@gmail.com)*

**Moonchild**  
They built a house with books and flowers  
They made a creature with heart and feathers  
She turned her face to the pale blue moon  
And glanced at the light of the bright sunshine.  
She took her first step  
And opened her wings  
And promised to meet the moon on her way.  
"But is this the path I wanted, said she  
"Is this the moon that attracted me?  
*Poem by Diana, a student from Vanadzor*

**Breaking out of the Chaotic Chrysalis by Nouritza Matossian**

In June 2018, Cyprus PEN Centre of Writers invited me to participate at their *Symposium: Woman in Arts, Literature, Society*. These three words have run through my childhood and sometimes strained the bounds of the family when I decided to escape to boarding school in England away from the taunts: "You are just a girl. One day you will be married."

**Pupa Stage:** One of my earliest memories is hiding from house chores to read books. My grandparents had sought refuge under the British flag from the Young Turk massacres from Ainteb and Kayseri. They brought centuries-old agonies and fears of persecution with a sub-Islamic code of behaviour. "Don't speak before your elders / Cover your knees / Obey your brother." My modern hard-working parents sent us to British schools, yet the expectation was, "You will grow up and we will choose a husband for you."



The Cyprus independence movement EOKA against the colonial regime had shattered the island. Students threw bombs, soldiers tramped down our street, leaflets fluttered from the sky, children waved flags for freedom, many were tortured, lessons were interrupted by curfews. News was broadcast in Greek, Turkish and English. Greek boys, even younger than 18 years were

sentenced to death to be hanged in the Nicosia Jail. But who were we the Armenians? A significant proportion - 60% in my class - never heard a word about our history or language at school. I felt that we did not exist. Only we Armenians spoke all four languages. The world was not a safe place. This was my chaotic chrysalis.

**Metamorphosis:** Boarding school in England, London University degree in Philosophy, provided by my parents against their better judgement. How liberating to be in a country where I was not recognised and was measured only by what I could do.

**Flight:** My search was for a linguistic analysis embracing all music. I interviewed leading composers, Boulez, Berio, Stockhausen, and Xenakis. Finally thrilled by the scale and power of his music I focused on Xenakis the most revolutionary, the most ostracised polymath. He combined philosophy and music, introduced computers into composition and harnessed technology. "You understand and love my music, you speak Cypriot Greek like the ancients. You are Armenian, massacred and driven out by the Turks like my family from Asia Minor." Xenakis became my interlocutor and teacher for the next ten years, not just in music but in life ensuing in a

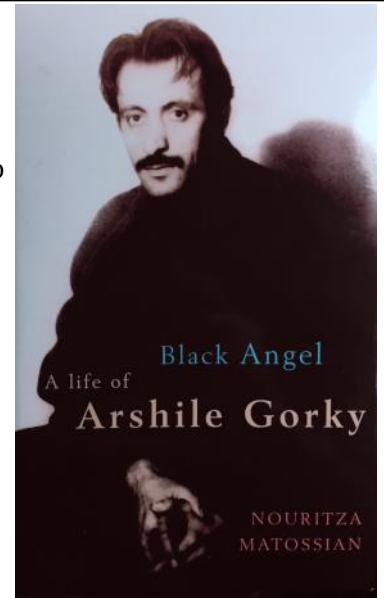
biographical study, lectures, and premiers. I had to marry an inventive composer, of course, Rolf Gehlhaar, and we had two musical boys, Hagop and Vahakn. Motherhood brought a deeper awareness of my Armenian heritage. My next enigma was Arshile Gorky's art and his Georgian camouflage. Thirty years of sleuthing revealed the Armenian Manoug Adoian, his genocide cavalry and his radical art springing from the ancient bedrock of Armenian culture in Van and his poetic soul. Reclaiming his true history in my book I was happy when the art establishment and press at last identified him not as Georgian or Russian but as "the renowned Armenian American artist." Atom Egoyan optioned the book for Ararat and I toured my one woman show, *The Double Life of Arshile Gorky* in over a hundred performances. On my trips to different diasporas I was warmly embraced, a long-lost relative welcomed into the great Armenian family.

In Istanbul, Hrnt Dink arranged for a Turkish translation and we began a film project together. I filmed our conversations, his lecture in London in 2005, but he was cruelly gunned down in 2007. The world lost an

audacious, gentle colossus of human rights who dared to achieve the unthinkable: friendship and understanding with Turks. My quest is more urgent now to complete the film we had begun along with other projects of mine.

Flying away from home in Cyprus rewarded my butterfly mine with a rich harvest. This migratory multi-cultural experience which Armenians all share in one way or another has brought the Diaspora and Armenia closer together in what I hope will be a renaissance for our country in the near future.

*Adapted from a presentation given at the Cyprus Pen Centre of writers Symposium: Woman in Arts, Literature, Society 1 June 2018*





### Three Giants by Nouritza Matossian

2018 saw the passing of three of the best-known Armenian artists

#### Charles Aznavour, France, 1924-2018

Shahnourh Varenagh Aznavourian was born in Paris to Armenian parents fleeing the Armenian Genocide, enduring a childhood of deprivation. Yet, he became one of the most loved and internationally acclaimed singers in the world. Aznavour had a repertoire of over 1,000 songs, sold more than 180 million records and appeared in over 70 films including *Ararat*. He was a prolific songwriter and superb actor who became a major benefactor to Armenia after the devastating 1988 earthquake. As the Ambassador for Armenia in Switzerland in 2009 and a delegate to the UN in Geneva, he toiled for the acknowledgement of the genocide. Aznavour was mesmerising on-stage, fascinating on the screen and gentle, humorous and acute off-stage. He was honoured with a state funeral at the Invalides, Paris, by the leaders of his two homelands, France and Armenia. The Eiffel Tower was lit up with gold in his honour and his songs played on Avenue d'Éléna with his pictures on a giant screen. Aznavour will continue to beguile and console us with his heart-warming voice and words.

#### Ara Güler, Turkey, 1928-2018 (right)

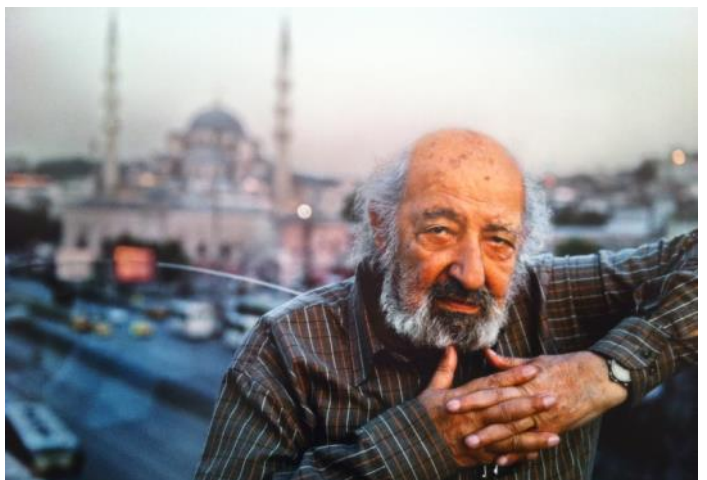
Aram Terteyan was born into an Armenian family in Istanbul. He changed his name, as required by Turkish law, and after giving up hopes of becoming an actor, he became Turkey's best-known photographer, gaining the nickname of *Istanbul's Eye*. In the late 1950s, he became a correspondent for Time-Life's Turkish branch and was soon receiving commissions for renowned magazines such as *The Sunday Times* and *Paris Match*.

Around the same time, he was invited to join Magnum Photos by Henri Cartier-Bresson and he became the first Turkish photographer to join the American Society of Magazine Photographers. In 1968 his work was displayed at the Museum of Modern Art in New York as part of the Ten Masters of Color [sic] Photography.

Ara travelled extensively throughout his life for photographic assignments, as well as meeting and

photographing many notable artists and public figures such as Marc Chagall, Maria Callas, Bertrand Russell, Alfred Hitchcock and Winston Churchill, however, he will probably be best remembered for his evocative black-and-white photographs of Istanbul, mostly taken in the 1950s and '60s. Güler said, "When I'm taking a picture of Aya Sofia, what counts is the person passing by who stands for life."

Güler won a number of awards for his work including Turkey's Photographer of the Century, 1999; Master of Leica, 1962; France's Légion d'honneur; Lifetime Achievement Lucie Award, 2009; and Turkey's Grand Prize of Culture and Arts, 2005. His passing was widely mourned, and there are current plans to open a museum dedicated to his work in Moscow.



#### Chant Avedissian, Egypt 1951-2018

The renowned artist Chant Avedissian was born in Cairo in 1951 to an Armenian family who had escaped the Armenian Genocide. He studied art in Montreal then Paris, before returning to Cairo where he began working with renowned vernacular architect Hassan Fathy at the Aga Khan Foundation, and became inspired by local materials and traditional art. He developed his famous artistic style fusing hieratic motifs of ancient Egypt with geometric shapes often featuring flat colour cut-outs from illustrated cinema magazines stencilled somewhat ironically onto backgrounds of Pharaonic, Bedouin and Ottoman patterns.

He painted a pantheon of notable Egyptians from Nasser to singers such as Umm Kulthum. His work was exhibited abroad in 25 solo exhibitions between 1969 and his passing, and is part of the collections at the National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution the British Museum, London and Guggenheim Abu Dhabi.

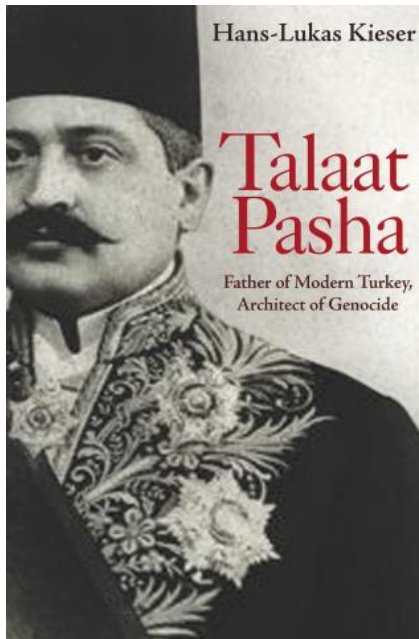
Avedissian shot to fame again when his work *Icons of the Nile*, a lot of 120 pieces (left, no.39) sold for \$1.5m at Sotheby's setting the record for a living Arab artist.

National identity and cultural heritage had underscored his art and Avedissian often mused, "In Egypt I am Armenian, in Europe I am Egyptian and in China no one bothers."



**Talaat Pasha: Father of Modern Turkey, Architect of Genocide, by Hans-Lukas Kieser, Princeton University Press, 2018. By Richard Mourad Anooshian**

This is the first English language biography of Talaat Pasha (1874-1921), the leading figure in the triumvirate (along with Enver Pasha and Cemal Pasha) that ruled the late Ottoman Empire during World War I, and the architect of the Armenian Genocide. In a major feat of scholarship, Hans-Lukas Kieser, Associate Professor in the School of Humanities and Social Science at the University of Newcastle in Australia, provides a brilliant and thoroughly substantiated analysis of “who was Mehmed Talaat and why might we call him a first founder of the Turkish nation-state even before Kemal Ataturk?”



Recounting Talaat’s humble beginnings in the Edirne Vilayet, his unfinished education that led to a junior post in a telegraph company to becoming a partisan and then head of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) - an underground revolutionary organisation, many of whose leaders hailed from the Balkans - Kieser argues that Talaat’s lack of higher education was compensated by a masterful skill in political manipulation, intrigue and double-dealing. The author convincingly demonstrates how in consolidating his power within the CUP, Talaat allowed members with extremist views to have the upper hand. These included the military Drs. Nazim and Bahaeddin Sakir and in the ideological sphere, Zia Gokalp, who gave the CUP (and foremost Talaat) a social and political doctrine. Gokalp promoted the messianic vision of ‘Turan’, a pure, homogenous Turkish-Muslim state, where “the people are the garden and we are its gardener.” Externally Talaat engineered an opportunistic alignment of the Ottoman Empire with Germany and the Central Powers. Under the guise of World War I, his policy to end the Armenian Question once and for all proved to be a precursor to other radicalised policies in Central Europe in years to come. The book provides a thoughtful discussion on the aftermath of the war, Talaat’s asylum in Berlin, the continuation of his

political aspirations and ultimately the dramatic acquittal of Soghomon Tehlirian for his murder.

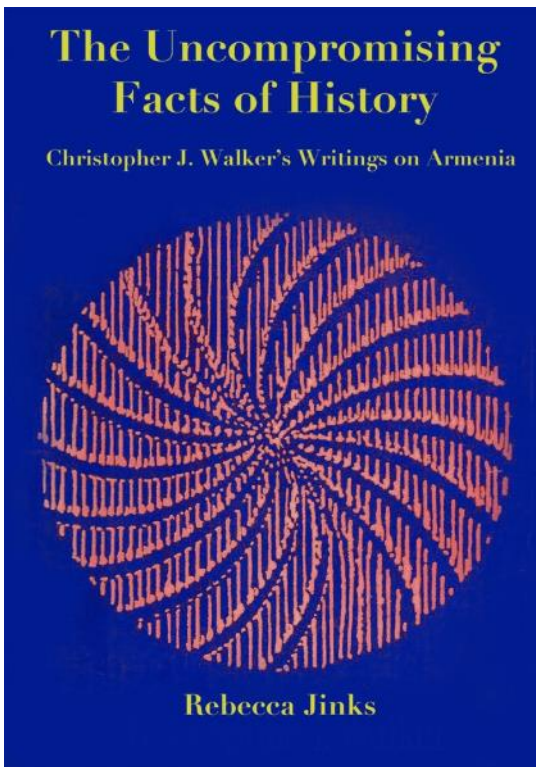
Kieser clearly documents “Talaat’s long, strong shadow”. He casts Kemal Ataturk - who from his power base in Ankara continued to implement the central CUP doctrine of the establishment of a homogeneous, Turkish-Muslim homeland in all of Asia Minor ruled by a strong, single party authoritarian government - as the spiritual child of Gokalp. While Ataturk may have abandoned the imperialist notion of ‘Turan’ stretching to Central Asia and parts of the Arab lands and desired a break with the Ottoman past, the philosophy and political ideology remained the same. Kieser very effectively evidences this by the

high offices offered to loyal young CUP governors and employees in Ankara (including many of “Talaat’s blood-stained young cadre”) and the long letters exchanged between Kemal Ataturk and Talaat where there appears a clear consensus and meeting of minds. They refer to each other as “we” in the post war shaping and consolidation of a Turkish-Muslim state in Anatolia.

This long-awaited biography is a thought-provoking piece of scholarship which complements and further enhances the recent work undertaken in documenting and analysing the historical narrative of the late Ottoman Empire. Like the scholarship of Stefan Ihrig, Kieser provides the reader with a different perspective of the already well-documented Armenian Genocide from the vantage point of its chief perpetrator, Talaat Pasha.



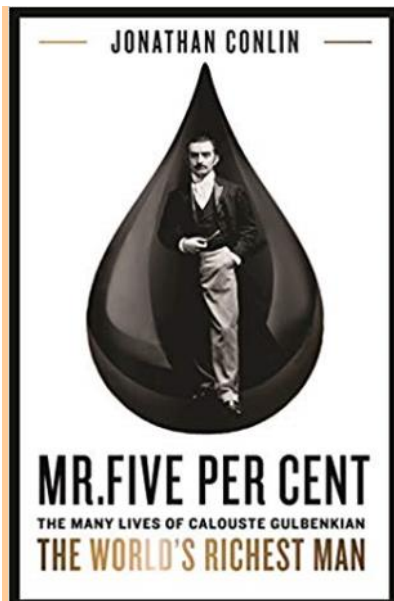
**The Uncompromising Facts of History: Christopher J. Walker's Writings on Armenia by Rebecca Jinks, Armenian Institute, by Arda Eghayan**



Following the passing of the renowned historian, Christopher Walker in 2017, the Armenian Institute organised a memorial lecture as a tribute to his works. The lecture, written and delivered by Dr Rebecca Jinks, a lecturer in Modern History at Royal Holloway University, has been published by AI, and is now available for £5.

Dr Jinks followed-up the 2017 lecture with a presentation at Kings' College London, with the KCL Armenian Society—*After Christopher Walker: New Approaches to Modern Armenian History and the Genocide*. We were very lucky to be joined by the Head of History and Head of sixth-form Enrichment for Lancing College, Christopher Walker's *alma mater*, Dr Damian Kearney, and his year 12 class for the lecture. Dr Kearney had kindly searched the school archives for Christopher Walker's contributions to the school magazine, which showed his obvious literary talents that he put to wonderful use in his historical works.

*Lancing College Magazine, Advent 1959, Amateur Dramatic Society "C.J Walker gave a very stimulating paper on Ibsen, the first paper to be given since the foundation of the Society. The paper heightened our enjoyment of the Theatre Royal's production of 'Rosmersholm' which was brilliantly acted by a cast that included Dame Peggy Ashcroft, Eric Porter and Mark Dignam."*



Also out, is **Mr. Five Per Cent: The Many Lives of Calouste Gulbenkian, The World's Richest Man, by Jonathan Conlin**. This new work covers the life story of Calouste Gulbenkian who, when he died in 1955 at the age of 86, was the richest man in the world and known as 'Mr Five Per Cent' for his share of Middle East oil production. For half a century and

through two world wars he brokered top-level oil deals, convincing governments and oil barons alike of his impartiality as an 'honest broker', and his advice was sought by Ottoman Sultans and Joseph Stalin alike. The latter recompensed him with Rembrandts from the Hermitage. Today the companies Gulbenkian created, including Royal Dutch Shell and Total, are household names. Less well known is the lasting impact the international accords he negotiated had on the subsequent fortunes of Iraq, Venezuela and many other

oil producing countries. Gulbenkian's secrecy has meant that this remarkable legacy has remained hidden - until now.

Another, recent tome dealing with secret lives, is that of **Secret Nation, The Hidden Armenians of Turkey by Avedis Hadjian**, Hadjian, a journalist who has written for the LA Times and Bloomberg amongst others, was born in Aleppo and educated in Buenos Aires and Cambridge. Researching this book, Hadjian travelled to the towns and villages once densely populated by Armenians, recording stories of survival and discovery from those who remain in a region that is deemed unsafe for the people who once lived there. The stories bring to life discussions about Armenian identity in and Armenian relationships with different ethnic groups in modern Turkey.



**ARMENIAN PUBLIC RADIO - THE ARMENIAN BBC OR GOVERNMENT MOUTHPIECE** By Mark Grigorian

**8 January 2018** Armenian Institute

Mark Grigorian, Executive Director of Public Radio of Armenia, discussed difficulties facing the institution and explored opposing approaches: is PRA a real public service or a mouthpiece of the government? Born in Yerevan, Grigorian graduated from Yerevan State University and later earned a PhD in Philology. He has worked as a journalist since 1993 in a variety of media, including as editor of *Svoboda* Russian language newspaper, *Armenian International Magazine*, and the *Institute for War and Peace Reporting* in London where he went following an assassination attempt in Yerevan. He then worked with the BBC World Service before returning to Armenia in 2014, hosting television programmes. The author of many books, Grigorian is also a cofounder of the *Caucasus Institute* in Yerevan.



**IN MEMORIAM: HRANT DINK**

**19 January 2018** Free Word Centre

The Armenian Institute was proud to commemorate the exceptional life and achievements of Hrant Dink murdered on 19 January 2007 in Istanbul and to affirm his stance against discrimination. Editor of the Armenian-Turkish newspaper *Agos*, Dink was the outspoken champion of human and civil rights in Turkey. His lingua franca in free expression opened the floodgates for repressed people seeking out and declaring their true ethnic history and identity. The term "Armenian Genocide", officially taboo, became current usage. He was punished by death. The keynote speaker was Maureen Freely, a novelist, journalist and translator, known for her translations of the Turkish Nobel Laureate Orhan Pamuk, Fetiye Çetin and Tuba Çandar's book on Dink, she has also written about literature, social justice and human rights. As chair of the Translators Association and as President of English PEN, she has campaigned for writers and

freedom of expression internationally. We also had guest singer, Suna Alan, perform. The event was organised by the Armenian Institute in association with Article 19 and English PEN.

**THE TRANSCAUCASIAN TRAIL**

**14 March 2018** University College London Ricardo Lecture Theatre

The Transcaucasian Trail (TCT) will be a world-class, long-distance hiking trail more than 3,000 km in length, following the Greater and Lesser Caucasus Mountains and connecting roughly two dozen national parks and protected areas in the region. It is currently being built by a small team of hiking enthusiasts with the support of international volunteers and local people in Armenia and Georgia. Members of the audience met some of the TCT team members, learned more how the project started, what has been achieved so far and what is planned for 2018 and 2019. They also found out more how they could get involved in building the TCT, or support the project in other ways. As a bonus, the first person who through-hiked the whole southern part of the TCT (from the south of Armenia to the Black Sea in Georgia) in 2017 also shared his experience from his epic, eight-week-long hike.



**KILLING ORDERS: TALAT PASHA'S TELEGRAMS AND THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE** Lecture by Professor **Taner Akçam** **23 March 2018** Free Word Centre

Taner Akçam presented his groundbreaking new book, *Killing Orders: Talat Pasha's Telegrams and the Armenian Genocide*, destroying the Turkish government's denial strategy. Akçam includes a recently discovered document — a "smoking gun" — that points to the Ottoman government's central role in planning the elimination of its Armenian population. He successfully demonstrates that the killing orders signed by Ottoman Interior Minister Talat Pasha, which the Turkish government has long discredited, are authentic. Akçam calls the discovery, which he found in a private archive, "an earthquake in the field of genocide studies." The evening's event was introduced by Dr Hratch Tchilingirian of University of Oxford.

Akçam holds the Robert Aram and Marianne Kaloosdian and Stephen and Marian Mugar Chair in Armenian Genocide Studies at Clark University. An internationally recognised human rights activist, Akçam was one of the first Turkish intellectuals to acknowledge and openly discuss the Armenian Genocide. His 2012 book, *The Young Turks' Crime Against Humanity: The Armenian Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing in the Ottoman Empire* was co-winner of the Middle East Studies Association's Albert Hourani Book Award and one of ForeignAffairs.com's "Best Books on the Middle East." His many awards include the Outstanding Upstander Award from the World Without Genocide Organization received in 2018.

We are grateful to our generous supporters for making these events possible: Diana & Panos Katsouris, Raffy Manoukian, Richard Anooshian, Violet & Razmik Tatevossian, Gagik & Nairi Stepan-Sarkissian, Hrant & Vera Margossian.

**HONOURING TANER AKÇAM Wine reception and book launch**

**24 March 2018** Nevarte Gulbenkian Hall

Many people responded to the invitation of the Armenian Institute to join in celebrating the work of Taner Akçam and took the opportunity to meet and speak with him. A presentation of his latest book, *Killing Orders: Talat Pasha's Telegrams and the Armenian Genocide* began the evening, followed by a wine reception. The event was supported by our generous sponsors and by University College London Armenian Society.



**SAVING SIGHT IN ARMENIAN BABIES with Dr S Chien Wong**

**13 April 2018** Medical Society of London

Dr S Chien Wong is one of the world's leading consultant ophthalmologists at Moorfields Eye, Royal Free and Great Ormond Street Hospitals, and has revolutionised eye care in Armenia saving the sight of 1 million or more premature infants and children in the region with his innovative expert surgery. A super-specialist in complex paediatric vitreoretinal surgery and retinovascular diseases, he is one of only two surgeons in the world in endoscopic vitrectomy for premature infants and young children with complex paediatric vitreoretinal diseases. In 2014 he joined the Armenian Eye Project visiting the country a number of times to perform surgery on new-born babies and adults at the Armenian Centre of Excellence for the Prevention of Childhood Blindness. He trains new doctors and introduces novel methods of gene therapy and surgery.

The event was organised by the Armenian Institute in collaboration with the Armenian Medical Association.

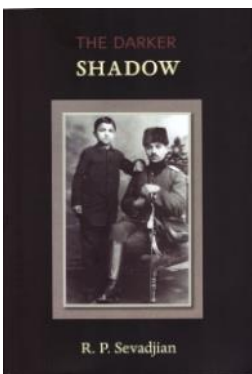
**TRUTHS AND BETRAYALS: THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE AND WHY IT MATTERS**

**With Antonia Arslan and Siobhan Nash-Marshall**

**26 April 2018** Free Word Centre

Antonia Arslan and Siobhan Nash Marshall, in conversation with each other, presented and discussed new perspectives on the denial of the Armenian Genocide, a devastating example of what we now call “a post-truth” phenomenon. Their focus was on the relevance of this poignant example to today’s seeming tidal wave of “historical engineering.”

Professor Antonia Arslan (Università di Padova) is the acclaimed author of international best-seller *Skylark Farm (La masseria delle allodole)* which was made into a stunning film, *The Lark Farm*, directed by the Taviani brothers. Professor Siobhan Nash Marshall (Mary T Clark Chair of Christian Philosophy at Manhattanville College, New York City), is the author of *The Sins of the Fathers: Turkish Denialism and the Armenian Genocide*. The Armenian Institute is grateful to our generous sponsors, Alice and Raffi Tanielian, for making this event possible.



**Book launch: THE DARKER SHADOW by R P Sevadjian**

**10 May 2018** Nevarte Gulbenkian Hall

*The Darker Shadow* by R P Sevadjian is the sequel to *In the Shadow of the Sultan* published in 2014 and tells of a long journey during the first months of the Armenian Genocide; twins Bedros and Dzovinar are compelled to leave their home town together with their uncle and his American friends. They travel over difficult terrain and through remote and devastated villages, and form an understanding of the treatment of Armenians throughout the Ottoman Empire.

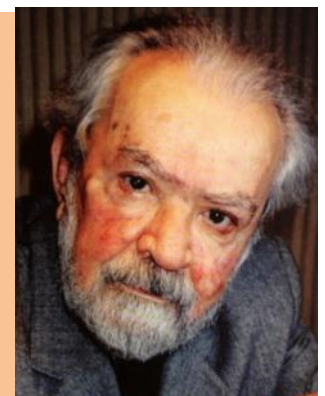
R P Sevadjian was raised and educated in Ethiopia before she left for the UK for her further education. She remained in the UK after the Derg Revolution of 1974. As well as writing the final part of her trilogy, she is researching the work of her father, Bedros A Sevadjian who was jeweller By Appointment to Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia.

**A POETRY EVENING WITH GEVORG EMIN**

**31 May 2018** Nevarte Gulbenkian Hall

This poetry evening was dedicated to the work of Gevorg Emin (1919-1998), a hydraulic engineer turned poet. He was one of the most popular Soviet Armenian poets of the 20th century whose work was translated into many languages. He was considered to be one of the few who freed Armenian poetry from the restrictions of the Stalin era and reinvigorated it after a long period of stagnation during which experimentalism was discouraged. Sossi Yerissian led a presentation of Emin’s life and work followed by readings of his poetry, in Armenian and English.

Assadour Guzelian, concluded the evening with his reminiscences of spending time with Gevorg Emin in Armenia and London. The poet and writer Assadour Guzelian published works include the epic poem *Hamo and Fadileh* and a compendium of articles published in the Armenian press over several decades.





**Book launch: THE SEAMSTRESS OF OURFA By Victoria Butler-Sloss  
6 July 2018 Chelsea Academy**

1895, Ourfa, a cosmopolitan city in the Ottoman Empire. Khatoun meets her husband, Iskender, twice her age, a poet and a dreamer who adores her but cannot express it in words. Around them, the Ottoman Empire is crumbling, the world heading towards war and the Armenian minority subjected to increasing repression, culminating in the genocide of 1915. As Iskender retreats into his books and alcohol, losing land, money and business, Khatoun holds their family together by sewing for the wives of the men who persecute them; her creations inciting lust, love and fertility. The family evades the death marches to the Syrian Desert only to lose everything when exiled by Mustafa Kemal and the birth of the Turkish Republic. What follows is a tale of love, loss and redemption in the diaspora told by four generations of women, each becoming the guardian angel of the next.

Victoria Harwood Butler-Sloss is Armenian-English from Cyprus. She moved to London at 18, began as a dancer at the Raymond Revuebar and followed that by playing a slew of exotic foreigners on British television. She trained at RADA and spent twenty years as an actress in London and Europe. She married, moved to LA, started a family, continued to work in voiceovers, and wrote her first book, *The Seamstress of Ourfa*. Wines were generously supplied by Makkas Winery, Cyprus.

**ARMENIAN LANGUAGE TUITION AT THE INSTITUTE: New tuition year  
(September 2018 - June 2019)**

Armenian Institute

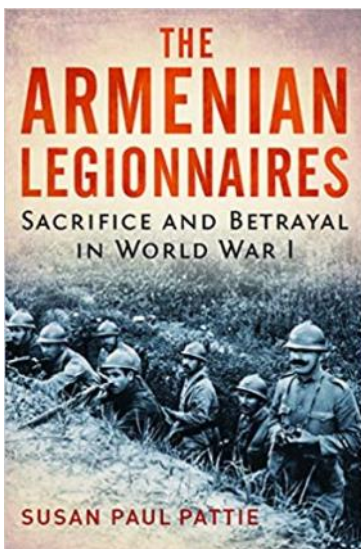
We offer a wide choice of East and West Armenian language courses and levels, both in group classes and through bespoke one-to-one sessions. Classes meet at our Kensington space either on weekday evening or on Saturdays. Our teachers are all highly experienced native Armenian speakers. We offer a friendly and stimulating environment to help you gain confidence. The emphasis is mainly on oral communication with active student participation.

ARMENIAN LANGUAGE TUITION  
at the  
ARMENIAN INSTITUTE



**The Armenian Institute at the  
Armenian Street Festival**

**15 July 2019** North Acton playing fields.



**Book launch: THE ARMENIAN LEGIONNAIRES: SACRIFICE AND BETRAYAL IN WORLD WAR I  
By Susan Paul Pattie**

**27 September 2018** Wiener Library for the Study of the Holocaust & Genocide

Following the devastation resulting from the Armenian Genocide in the Ottoman Empire beginning in 1915, the survivors of the massacres were dispersed across the Middle East, Europe and North and South America. Not content with watching World War I silently from the sidelines, a large number of Armenian volunteers joined the Légion d'Orient. They were trained in Cyprus and fought courageously in Palestine and Cilicia alongside Allied commander General Allenby, eventually playing a crucial role in defeating German and Ottoman forces in Palestine at the Battle of Arara in September 1918.

The Armenian Legionnaires signed up on the understanding that they would be fighting in Syria and Turkey, and, should the Allies be successful, they would be part of an occupying army in their old homelands, laying the foundation for a self-governing Armenian state. Susan Paul Pattie is an Honorary Senior Research Associate at University College London and former Director of the Armenian Institute. In recent years she has served as Director of the Armenian Museum of America and was Program Manager of the National Armenian Genocide Centennial Commemoration in Washington, DC. She holds a PhD in Anthropology from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor and is the author of an ethnography, *Faith in*

*History: Armenians Rebuilding Community* (1997). The Armenian Legionnaires is available from the Armenian Institute for £20.

**Book launch: ARMENIAN BANKERS IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE by M H**

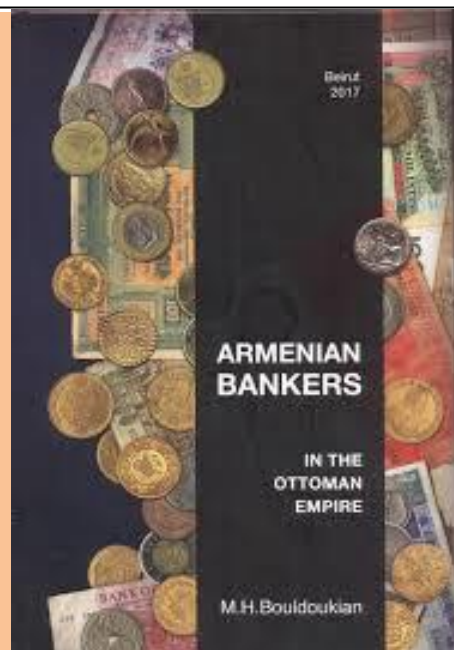
**Bouldoukian**

**27 October 2018** Nevarte Gulbankian Hall

Armenian Bankers in the Ottoman Empire is a historical perspective by M H Bouldoukian, the former Deputy Governor of Banque du Liban. The book tracks and reports on Armenian bankers during the Ottoman Empire from the 15th century onwards, providing an overview of the large role Armenians played in the Empire's economy and their eventual fate after its collapse. Bouldoukian has extensively researched the history of many of the leading bankers in the Armenian community at the time including those of Greek and Jewish descent.

The evening opened with a short talk on the role Armenians play in the Turkish and wider global economy today.

M H Bouldoukian is the author of a number of books, award-winning academic papers on international banking, correspondent banking and banking systems of Lebanon and Armenia. He has worked in banking for over 58 years for some of the largest international banking institutions in the world.



**ARMENIAN DIASPORA SURVEY: REFLECTIONS ON FINDINGS with Khachig Tölölyan**

**18 November 2018** Nevarte Gulbenkian Hall

The Armenian Diaspora Survey Pilot Project is affiliated with the Armenian Institute and funded by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. Over 18 months, the team had developed quantitative and qualitative methods to learn about communities in the diaspora. Teams were sent to Cairo, Boston, Marseilles and Pasadena where questionnaires, interviews and photographs were gathered.

Professor Khachig Tölölyan was in conversation with Dr Susan Pattie, leader of the Armenian Diaspora Survey, Dr Hratch Tchilingirian of the Advisory Committee, and other members of the team, reflecting on the findings of the recently completed Pilot Project. Prof Tölölyan also shared his thoughts about the evolution of concepts and lived realities of diaspora.

Khachig Tölölyan is Professor of the Humanities in the College of Letters at Wesleyan University, where he teaches literature, history and philosophy. In 1991 he founded, and now co-edits, *Diaspora: a Journal of Transnational Studies*, the leading publication in the field of diaspora studies. Tölölyan is the author of over 100 articles in Armenian, some collected in *Spyurki Mech* (1980), is the co-editor of

*Diaspora, Identity and Religion* (Routledge, 2004), and of scholarly articles on topics ranging from American literature and literary theory to Armenian terrorism and the Armenian diaspora.

**UNRAVELLING PARAJANOV'S MASTERPIECE: THE COLOUR OF POMEGRANATES Screening and talk by Nouritza Matossian**

**29 November 2018** Asia House

"Unlike anything in cinema history" said Martin Scorsese of this film, "like opening a door and walking into another dimension, where time has stopped and beauty has been unleashed . . . on a basic level, it's a biography of the Armenian poet Sayat Nova, but before all else it's a cinematic experience, and you come away remembering images, repeated expressive movements, costumes, objects, compositions, colours."

In an illustrated presentation, Nouritza Matossian decoded and discussed this enigmatic cultural jewel on the 18th Century Armenian poet/troubadour and the tormented Armenian genius, Sergei Parajanov. The talk was followed by a screening of the film.

Nouritza Matossian is a writer, actor, film-maker, broadcaster and human rights activist. Her biographies of composer Iannis Xenakis, artist Arshile Gorky were made into a BBC2 documentary, *Something Rich and Strange* and Atom Egoyan's *Ararat*. She performed *The Double Life of Arshile Gorky* in 100 shows and made the film portrait, *Heart of Two Nations*, Hrant Dink. This event was held in partnership with Asia House. We are grateful to the Embassy of Georgia and Embassy of Armenia for their support.



**News from down under...**

My name is Isabelle Topalian, I'm 12 years old and I live in Australia. I have never visited Armenia, but I do have Armenian heritage... this is from my dad's side. I have my Medzmama and Medzbaba who live in England and have taught me many things about Armenia. Recently at school I had a new task. We had to choose a country and try to persuade parents to take a visit to our country in our mini holiday expo. We also presented a speech to our class, promoting our country. Because of my Armenian heritage, that's the country I chose. My Medzmama and Medzbaba sent our family some lovely books about Armenia. There was *Who are Armenians?* and *Treasured Objects*. I displayed these throughout the travel expo and parents and visitors enjoyed learning about Armenia. Some were extremely interested in our unique traditions and culture. This project has made me want to go on a trip to Armenia. I have fallen in love with this amazing country, I am very proud that I am Armenian. **Isabelle Topalian**



**Recent Armenian news that you may have missed...**

Yerevan celebrated its 2800th birthday...President Emmanuel Macron declared April 24 as the date France will commemorate the Armenian Genocide...the Dutch Parliament recognised the Armenian massacres of 1915 as Genocide...Angela Merkel, Justin Trudeau, Elton John and Emmanuel Macron all visited Armenia in 2018...December 7, 2018 commemorated the 30th anniversary of the devastating Spitak earthquake which killed over 25,000...Taner Akçam launched a digital archive for documents relating to the Armenian Genocide...Diana Adamyant (left) won first prize in the senior Menuhin Violin competition 2018...Simon Martirosyan won the 2018 weightlifting world title for the 109kg division...Yuri Vardanyan, the gold-Olympic medallist and seven-time world champion in weightlifting 82.5kg class died November 2018...Karen

Khachanov beat Novak Djokovic to win the Paris Masters title...Artur Dalaloyan the Russian -Armenian gymnast won the men's all-round and floor title at the 2018 World Championships...Evgenia Medvedeva the Russian-Armenian figure skating won silver at the Winter Olympics in PyeongChang...Ferdinand Karapetian of Armenia won the European Judo Championship in the 73kg class...Alexis Ohanian has launched a new Armenian Brandy, Shakmat

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