

Prof. Der Mugrdechian Speaks at Tekeyan 75th Anniversary Event



Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian
Photo: ASP Archive

STAFF REPORT

The Tekeyan Cultural Association Metro Los Angeles Chapter marked the 75th anniversary of the establishment of the Tekeyan Cultural Association with a book launch and cultural event on Friday, March 11. The Tekeyan Cultural Association was officially established on March 10, 1947, in Beirut, Lebanon.

Master of Ceremonies Mihran Toumajan introduced the special guests in attendance including Glendale Councilmember Ardashes Kassakhian, who made congratulatory remarks on the anniversary; Edmond Y. Azadian, president of the Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) of the United States and Canada; and Aram Arkun, Executive Director of the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada and managing editor of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*.

Among the guests were relatives of the TCA founders: Haygashen Ouzounian’s daughter Ani Ouzounian; founder Zaven Gostanian’s son Bared Gostanian; and founder Sarkis Menak’s nephews Dr. Zaven Arslanian and Haig Arslanian.

Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, Berberian Director of the Armenian Studies Program at Fresno State gave an overview of the life and achievement of Vahan Tekeyan.

“Tekeyan was a significant figure in Armenian literature having experienced the significant events in the life of his people,” said Prof. Der Mugrdechian. “He was uniquely positioned to be an eyewitness and participant in the major events of his time, as he lived in Constantinople, traveled to Armenia, lived in Europe, and finally settled in Cairo.”

Der Mugrdechian then presented the book *Vahan Tekeyan: Selected Poems*, which was published as part of the Armenian Series of The Press

at California State University, Fresno.

Translated by John Papasian and Gerald Papasian and co-edited by Edmond Y. Azadian and Gerald Papasian, *Vahan Tekeyan: Selected Poems* is comprised of twenty-three of Tekeyan’s poems, in Armenian and English.

The poems in the book are organized by themes such as “Love,” “Songs of Armenia,” and “Universal.”

Nora Ipekian Azadian, the late wife of Edmond Azadian, and whose grandfather Mihran Damadian was a close friend of Tekeyan, added to the richness of this volume with her piece “Vahan Tekeyan as I Remember Him.” Alexis Halejian, grandniece of the late *Armenian Mirror Spectator* columnist Armine Dikijian, read excerpts from Ipekian Azadian’s piece.

Edmond Azadian, speaking in Armenian, gave an overview of his involvement in the publication of *Vahan Tekeyan: Selected Poems*. Azadian’s comments focused on the significant contribution that Tekeyan made to Armenian poetry and world poetry.

The cultural part of the program included a recitation of the poem “Poshee Azkuh” from *Vahan Tekeyan: Selected Poems* by Alique Artinian, a 12th grade student from the Armenian Mesrobian School student; a recitation of Tekeyan’s “Yegeghetzeen Haygagan” (The Armenian Church) by Khachig Nahabedian; and a recitation of the poem “Papak” from *Vahan Tekeyan: Selected Poems* by Alique Bardakian, a 6th grade student at the Hovsepien Armenian School.

Very Rev. Fr. Dajad Yardemian, representing the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church, gave concluding remarks and a benediction. All of the special guests were invited to bless the publication of *Vahan Tekeyan: Selected Poems*, by pouring wine on the volume.

ADISHIAN, FROM PAGE 1

opportunities that Fresno State has provided both Mark and I,” said Astone-Adishian. “We are proud of our alma mater and we believe in providing support for our students, who are the next generation of leaders.”

Debbie Adishian-Astone is the Vice President for Administration and Chief Financial Officer at

Fresno State and her husband Mark Astone is the owner and CEO of Catalyst Marketing, a local marketing and advertising firm located in downtown Fresno. Mark graduated from Fresno State in 1988 and is a former Associated Students President. Their son Andrew now works

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California State University, Fresno
Armenian Studies Program
Fall 2022 Schedule of Courses

Course	Units	Time	Day	Instructor
General Education-Breadth, Humanities, Area C2				
• Arm 1A-Elementary Armenian (Class #72489)	4	10:00A-11:50A	MW	B. Der Mugrdechian
General Education-Breadth, Arts, Area C1				
• ArmS 20-Arts of Armenia (Class #73013)	3	11:00A-12:15P	TuTh	B. Der Mugrdechian
General Education-Breadth, Area D2				
• ArmS 10-Intro Arm Studies (Class #73305)	3	9:00A- 9:50A	MWF	H. Ohanessian
General Education-Integration, Area IC				
• Arm 148-Mastrpcs Arm Cult (Class #73905)	3	10:00A-10:50A	MWF	H. Ohanessian
• Arm 148-Mastrpcs Arm Cult (Class #73381)	3	2:00P-3:15P	MW	H. Ohanessian
Upper Division Armenian Studies Course				
• ArmS 108A-Arm History I (Class #73755)	3	9:30A-10:45A	TuTh	B. Der Mugrdechian
• ArmS 120T-Genocide to Post-Gen (Class #77543)	3	9:30A-10:45A	TuTh	Kazan Visiting Prof.

Get a Minor in Armenian Studies

For more information call the Armenian Studies Program at 278-2669.
Check on requirements for the Minor in Armenian Studies in the current catalog.

HYE SHARZHOOM
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Newly Formed “Komitas Trio” Performs in Keyboard Concert



Left to right: Garik Terzian, Michael Krikorian, and Aroussiak Baltaian after the concert. Photo: Barlow Der Mugrdechian

CHRISTINE PAMBUKYAN
STAFF WRITER

“Komitas, a survivor of the Genocide and a symbol of the Armenian people, used the power of music to assert life,” proclaimed pianist Dr. Michael Krikorian, as he explained the meaning behind the name of his ensemble, the “Komitas Trio.”

On Friday, March 4, 2022, the Philip Lorenz International Keyboard Concert Series, the Fresno State Armenian Studies Program, the Thomas A. Kooyumjian Family Foundation, and the Greater Fresno Chapter of the Armenian General Benevolent Union presented the “Komitas Trio,” as part of the 50th Anniversary Season of the Keyboard Concert Series. The “Komitas Trio” includes Michael Krikorian on piano, Aroussiak Baltaian on violin, and Garik Terzian on cello.

Krikorian, a pianist, composer, and educator, has won many top prizes around the world. He has performed and competed across the United States, Italy, France, China, and South Korea. A private piano teacher and an adjunct professor of music at Los Angeles Pierce College, Krikorian also composes music for concerts on stage and visual media.

Baltaian, a member of the Pasadena Symphony Orchestra, often spends her time performing with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra. She has performed as a soloist and recitalist in the United States and Europe.

Terzian, a soloist and chamber musician, has performed throughout the former Soviet Union, the United States, and the Czech Republic.

Beginning his career as a cellist at the age of six though the guidance of his father in then Czechoslovakia, he has since performed with the Armenian State Philharmonic Orchestra and the Armenian State Chamber Orchestra.

Michael Krikorian began the concert with a thank you to the sponsors, audience, and university. He then, in a manner similar to that of a master class, introduced each composer to the audience to give more context to each piece.

First on the program was Clara Schumann, a nineteenth-century

composer, who was dealing with the illness of her husband and a miscarriage, as she created her “Trio in G minor” in 1845-46. Next, Dmitri Shostakovich dedicated “Trio in E Minor, Op. 67” to a friend who passed away during World War II. Finally, Arno Babadjanian, who after returning to Armenia from studying with Vissarion Shebalin in Moscow in 1950, composed “Trio in F-sharp Minor” as he taught at the conservatory in Yerevan. Overall, the context in which each composition was written made for a melancholy repertoire. This matched what is currently happening in the world: a war in Ukraine, Armenia attempting to recover from a war in Artsakh, and a global pandemic.

After an informative introduction, the trio began their concert with Schumann’s “Trio in G minor, Op. 17.” The piece includes “Allegro Moderato,” “Scherzo – Trio,” “Andante,” and “Allegretto.” The first of two melancholy compositions began with a serious movement, followed by a happy and sweet melody, then a passionate tune, and completed with a quick, worried, angry, and passionately distressed movement.

The “Komitas Trio” then performed Dimitri Shostakovich’s “Trio in E Minor, Op. 67,” composed in 1944. The piece includes “Andante – Moderato,” “Allegro Con Brio,” “Largo,” and “Allegretto – Adagio.” This composition began with a beautiful cello solo that evolved into a serious trio piece. The next two movements were passionate and dramatic, using harmonics in a breathtaking fashion. The final piece of the composition began with a quiet pizzicato duet from the violinist and cellist. The piece then grew into a big, loud, and passionately tense movement that allowed the audience to feel the pain of the loss of a beloved friend.

After a brief intermission, the trio performed Arno Babadjanian’s “Trio in F-sharp Minor,” composed in 1952. The piece includes “Largo – Allegro Espressivo,” “Andante,” and “Allegro Vivace.” This composition gave the audience a break from the sorrow-filled emotions of the previous two compositions and replaced those emotions with nostalgia and a

Dr. Tonoyan Presents Research on Nagorno-Karabagh Conflict in the Soviet and Russian Press

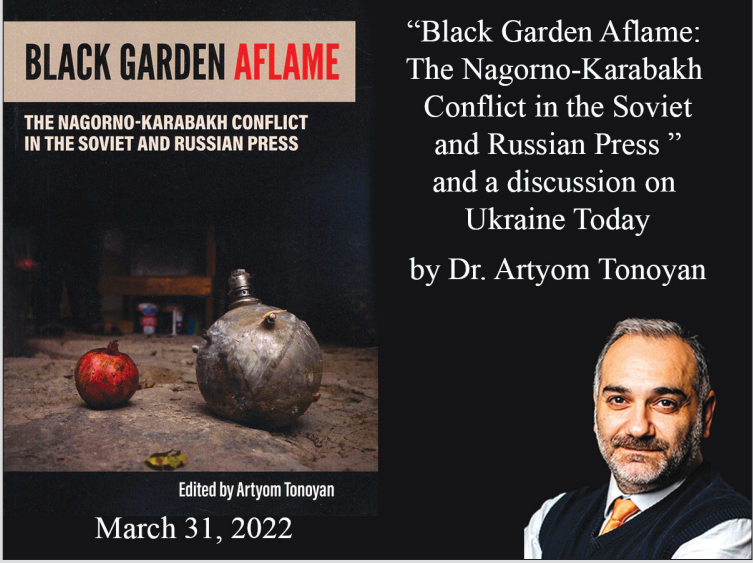
EDDY THURBER
STAFF WRITER

On Thursday, March 31, 2022, the Armenian Studies Program had the honor of hosting Dr. Artyom Tonoyan for a Zoom webinar on “Black Garden Aflame: The Nagorno-Karabagh Conflict in the Soviet and Russian Press.” A sociologist by training, Dr. Tonoyan focuses on researching the intersection between religion and nationalism in Russia and the Caucasus. He received his Ph.D. from Baylor University, and presently guest edits the *Journal of Law and Religion* for an upcoming symposium on religion and law in Russia.

Armenian Studies Program Director Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian introduced Dr. Tonoyan to the audience. Dr. Tonoyan began by thanking the Program, Prof. Der Mugrdechian, and Dr. Sergio La Porta, for facilitating this event and inviting him. He spoke for nearly an hour, lecturing and answering questions from his audience as well as discussing his inspiration for writing his new book, *Black Garden Aflame*.

During the Artsakh War, in September of 2020, there was a ten-day silence on the subject from Russian President Vladimir Putin. This silence amid the war, numerous mutual defense agreements between Armenia and Russia, and the response of shock from the diaspora and Armenian Republic led Dr. Tonoyan to the realization that perhaps the understanding of Armenians toward the Kremlin was not only incomplete, but nonexistent. Dr. Tonoyan decided to begin research on over 30 years of Russian language articles and literature to analyze Putin and the Kremlin and to better understand their modern stance on conflicts and geopolitics.

Aside from tourism or war, the South Caucasus rarely enters the consciousness of the global West, but Russian coverage is extensive and intimate. Dr. Tonoyan began to explore why this was, and why in various cases Russia supported Yerevan or Baku, while always looking out for their own best interests. Another primary motivation for Dr. Tonoyan was that it is very difficult to find physical or digital primary



Dr. Artyom Tonoyan discussed his new book at a lecture on March 31, 2022.

sources from Russia, and so by doing the legwork and compiling his research into this book, he could make all these resources available in one condensed form for future research.

Dr. Tonoyan compiled over 400 articles on the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict, organizing them chronologically, and dividing them into three sections. The first was the entrance of the conflict into the Russian and Soviet Press in 1987 during the first conflict, prior to Sumgait, and the mass demonstrations of 1988. Part two involved the violence and conflicts from the Sumgait massacres, segueing into the broader international coverage of the conflict as the Soviet Union collapsed. He also covered the conflict as it morphed from internal strife and guerilla warfare between two Soviet republics to war between two independent nations, Armenia and Azerbaijan, and their armies over the semi-autonomous region of Artsakh. Part three focuses on how four interregional actors try to involve themselves and benefit from this conflict, namely Russia, Turkey, Iran, and the United States.

One interesting factor was the consistency with which Russia advocated for an equitable solution with no clear winner or loser, making pronouncements that support either party. Turkey’s position, on the other hand, changed dramatically from Ankara’s stance in the first conflict of never supplying weapons to Azerbaijan, and promoting a peaceful solution.

Dr. Tonoyan then turned to a brief analysis of the war in Ukraine, based on his extensive history

“Black Garden Aflame: The Nagorno-Karabagh Conflict in the Soviet and Russian Press” and a discussion on Ukraine Today by Dr. Artyom Tonoyan

ADISHIAN, FROM PAGE 2
with the firm.

“The Armenian Studies Program is a pride-point not only for Fresno State but for our entire Armenian community and the programs and academic curriculum will ensure that students continue to have the opportunity to learn about Armenian heritage, which is so special to us,” stated Adishian-Astone, who earned both her B.A. in Business Administration and MBA from Fresno State.

love for one’s motherland. Once the last note of Babadjanian’s “Allegro Vivace”

Adishian-Astone wanted to honor her parents for all that they have done to support her family and for their commitment to ensuring that her family learned about their history and Armenian history.

Shenora (Kirishian) Adishian was born in Salem, Oregon. Her father, Aroot Kirishian, came to the United States during the Armenian Genocide with his mother and siblings. Adishian later grew up in Washington state and recalled that people did not

rang throughout the Concert Hall, the audience stood and cheered. The audience continued to cheer

know what an Armenian was. She was introduced to George Adishian who was born in Fresno. Shenora Adishian was the first in her family to attend college as Debbie’s grandmother was very progressive and understood the importance of obtaining a higher education degree.

The Armenian Studies Program is appreciative of Mark and Debbie Adishian-Astone’s generosity in establishing a scholarship endowment that will benefit students for years to come.

until the musicians returned for an encore of Babadjanian’s “Anurjner” (Dreams).

Congratulations Armenian Studies Minors and Graduating Seniors of 2021-2022



TATIANA SAMOUIE
Biology
Minor in Armenian Studies

What encouraged you to take an Armenian Studies course?

Through my involvement in the Armenian community, I wanted to learn more about our history, traditions, and heritage in a more academic manner. After taking the first semester of Armenian language, I wanted to continue and to pursue a Minor in Armenian Studies. Taking many

Armenians Studies courses has broadened my knowledge and allowed me to have a deeper appreciation of the Armenian culture, land, and history.

What was your favorite Armenian Studies class, activity, or event?

From courses and performances, to organizations and socials, the Armenian Studies Program offers many opportunities for students to get involved. I enjoyed making connections with fellow Armenian peers. ASO socials and events were the highlights, where Armenian students could meet and create lifelong friendships.

What are your plans after graduation?

I will be attending law school this fall and I plan on using my experiences and knowledge gained through the Armenian Studies Program to make a difference as an attorney. Whether I am involved in negotiating regional agreements or in patent litigation, I will keep contributing to the Armenian cause and helping my people.

ANI ZHAMKOCHYAN
Political Science
Minor in Armenian Studies

What encouraged you to take an Armenian Studies course?

There are so many interesting courses that have enhanced my knowledge of Armenian culture, history, and language. I was encouraged to take these classes because, even as an Armenian who has lived in Armenia and was raised surrounded by the culture, I feel there is still a wealth of information for me to learn about my country every day.



What did you value most from your experiences in the Armenian Studies Program?

The different topics in Armenian Studies that I previously had not thought to look into turned out to be some of the most interesting, and having the requirement to take them all for the Minor gave me the opportunity to do that. Nonetheless, the relationships with my classmates, fellow ASO members, and my professors from the Program are the most valuable to me.

What are your plans after graduation?

I plan on continuing my current position at a local law firm as a legal assistant. In the coming year, I will also be studying for and eventually taking the LSAT. I look forward to attending my first year of law school in Fall of 2023!



ARIANA GARABEDIAN
Speech Pathology
Minor in Armenian Studies

What was your favorite Armenian Studies class, activity, or event?

My favorite Armenian Studies course would have to be Armenian 1A, Introduction to Armenian Language. It was my favorite course because it was a fun and inviting environment to learn a language and make mistakes in. In the course, I made countless memories with strangers that I had

no idea would become some of my best friends down the road. I can thank the many laughs that the Armenian 1A class brought for the wonderful life-long friends I have now!

What did you value most from your experiences in the Armenian Studies Program?

The one thing that I valued the most was the unique learning experience it provided. Not everyone can say that they have had the opportunity to walk into a classroom twice a week to learn a little more about themselves and where they have come from. I, along with my classmates, get to say that I have had this opportunity and will cherish it for the rest of my life.

What are your plans after graduation?

I plan on continuing my studies at Fresno State studying Speech Language Pathology at the graduate level. Once this is completed, I hope to stay in Fresno as a Speech Language Pathologist in our local school districts serving children with special educational needs and services.



SOSSE BALOIAN
History
Minor in Armenian Studies

What encouraged you to take an Armenian Studies course?

The desire to learn more about my heritage motivated me to take an Armenian Studies course. Attending the Charlie Keyan Armenian Community School planted the seed that motivated me to further my Armenian education.

What was your favorite Armenian Studies class, activity, or event?

My favorite classes were the Armenian language classes. By the time I enrolled in Armenian 2A, I was able to translate a short story written by my great grandfather.

What did you value most from your experiences in the Armenian Studies Program?

I value Prof. Der Mugrdechian and Dr. Ohanessian for teaching me the Armenian language, history, and culture. I am grateful for all that I have learned and enjoy sharing it with my family and friends.

What are your plans after graduation?

I would like to use my degree in history and work as an archivist. I am also looking forward to raising my newborn daughter with my fiancé.

MICHAEL MAZMAN
Economics
Minor in Armenian Studies

What encouraged you to take an Armenian Studies course?

When I transferred to Fresno State in 2020, I was already aware of the renowned Armenian Studies Program that we have on campus. After being encouraged to get involved by my family and friends, I ended up registering for three Armenian classes in my first semester at Fresno State: Armenian 1B (language), Armenian 148 (literature), and Armenian Studies 108B (history).

What was your favorite Armenian Studies class, activity, or event?

Although I have enjoyed every Armenian Studies class that I have taken at Fresno State, my favorite was Armenian 1B with Prof. Der Mugrdechian. I found it a lot of fun to practice reading, writing, and speaking the Armenian language with my classmates. My Armenian Studies 10 class with Dr. Ohanessian was also very interesting because of its emphasis on the Armenian organizations, churches, and landmarks here in Fresno.

What are your plans after graduation?

I have been working at an independent, fee-only financial planning firm in Fresno for a little over a year. After graduation, I plan to continue working there full-time while studying for my professional certification in the financial services industry.



**Congratulations to all
Graduating Seniors at Fresno State!**



Left to right: Rev. Fr. Gomidas Zohrabian and Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian at the ASO Vigil.

ASO VIGIL, FROM PAGE 1

Armenians), in Armenian.

Prof. Der Mugrdechian then spoke about the significance of collective events such as the vigil. He called for students to use the past to motivate themselves to take action in the future.

Those who died in the Armenian Genocide were canonized by the Church in 2015. Rev. Fr. Gomidas Zohrabian, Pastor of St. Gregory Armenian Church of Fowler, led a service dedicated to the Martyrs of 1915. The service concluded with the singing of *Der Voghormia* and the placing of flowers at the center of the Monument.

Photo: Andrew Hagopian



ASO members gathered at the Statler residence to enjoy a "Game Night" on March 19.

Photo: ASP Archive

Boris and Alin Allakhverdyan Perform in Clarinet/Piano Duet



Boris Allakhverdyan, right on clarinet, performing with Alin Allakhverdyan, on piano.

CHRISTINE PAMBUKYAN
STAFF WRITER

“Thank you to everyone for coming to our concert. It is our first time in Fresno, and the audience is great so far,” said Boris Allakhverdyan after performing his first piece.

On Saturday, April 2, 2022, clarinetist Boris Alkakhverdyan and his wife Alin Allakhverdyan performed as part of the “Celebration of Clarinet Featuring Boris Allakhverdyan & Alin Allakhverdyan Piano Concert” held at the Fresno State Concert Hall. The Armenian Studies Program at Fresno State was a co-sponsor of the event.

The concert was held as part of the “Celebrating 35 Years of Clarinet” activities at Fresno State, organized by Fresno State Music Professor Miles M. Ishigaki, which included lecture performances, presentations, masterclasses, and concerts by Allakhverdyan and by Ricardo Morales, Principal Clarinet of the Philadelphia Orchestra.

Boris Allahverdyan was appointed as Principal Clarinet

of Los Angeles Philharmonic in 2016 and served previously as the Principal Clarinet in the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra. He is a founding member of the Prima Trio, a grand prize and gold metal winner of the 2007 Fischhoff National Chamber music competition, and has appeared as a soloist throughout the United States, Canada, Russia, and Armenia.

Alin Allakhverdyan, is a prize-winning pianist who began her piano studies at the age of four in Southern California. Currently a music director of the American Contemporary Gallery, she collaborates with dancers and musicians in contemporary and classical pieces, and has collaborated with many renowned musicians.

“Three Preludes,” by George Gershwin, was originally a piece written for the piano, but was arranged into a duet for the concert. The first movement was slow and the second had a more sultry and jazzy feeling. The third movement was fast and intense.

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Dr. Richard Hovannisian Presents New Book on Armenians of Persia/Iran for Armenian Studies

CARINA TOKATIAN
STAFF WRITER

“The Persian Empire has been a major empire throughout history” stated Dr. Richard Hovannisian. He found the Empire’s long existence impressive, but also notable that Armenians “have lived here century after century”—a presence that can be traced as far back as the pre-Christian era.

On Wednesday, April 20, the Armenian Studies Program invited Dr. Richard Hovannisian to speak on his recent publication, *Armenian Communities of Persia/Iran: History, Trade, Culture*. Dedicated to his late wife, Vartiter, the lecture was part of the Armenian Studies Program Spring Lecture Series.

Dr. Hovannisian was born in Tulare, California and received his Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees from the University of California, Berkeley. He later earned his doctorate in history from UCLA. He is Emeritus Professor of Armenian and Near Eastern History at UCLA and served also as Associate Director of the G.E. von Grunebaum Center for Near Eastern Studies.

Dr. Hovannisian has authored and edited several volumes and scholarly articles pertaining to the Armenian Republic, the Genocide, and historic Armenia. *Armenian Communities of Persia/Iran* is the fifteenth and final volume of the “Historic Armenian Cities and Provinces” series. The book covers the Armenians in Persia from their early presence to the modern age.

Dr. Hovannisian began his lecture by sharing how the Persian Empire incorporated Armenia under its domain in the 6th century B.C. Despite this, Armenian princes were



Front row, left to right: Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, Dr. Richard Hovannisian, and Dr. Hagop Ohanessian. Standing, left to right: Raffi Apkarian, Karina Messerlian, Ani Zhamkochyan, Armen Apkarian, Hovig Ohanian, and Michael Mazman.

still permitted to continue as governors of the region. As the neighboring Byzantine Empire began to expand, the region where Armenians lived was caught between the clashes of the Byzantine and Persian Empires. Thus, Armenian kings began to play the game of what Dr. Hovannisian called “teeter-totter” between the East and the West as a strategy for survival.

Moving forward to the 13th through 15th centuries A.D., Dr. Hovannisian mentioned how some Armenian princes ruled in the region of Maku, located near Tabriz. It is here that Armenian inscriptions have been found on a bridge that dates to the 1300s.

The presence of Armenians in northern Iran has also been attested to by the Armenian monasteries in the area. One of the monasteries Dr. Hovannisian highlighted is Surb Tadeos, where it is believed that St. Thaddeus the Apostle visited.

Today Armenians living in Iran conduct pilgrimages there, holding a special festival for *Vartavar*. One important note Dr. Hovannisian underscored is how the present Iranian government, though an Islamic State, has overseen the maintenance of these Armenian landmarks.

In addition to Tabriz, another populous area prominent in Armenian activity was New Julfa. After Shah Abbas initiated a war against the Ottoman Empire in the early 17th c., he forced hundreds of thousands of Armenians to relocate from historic Armenia to Persia in 1604-1605. Many of the Armenians settled in New social conditions,” said Prof. Der Mugrdechian. “From there, conclusions can be drawn about the causes of the genocide and how they can be prevented from happening again in the future.”

Despite the documentation of these brutal policies being used against the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, the Turkish government has continued to deny that an Armenian Genocide ever occurred. In fact, Prof. Der Mugrdechian cites denial as the final stage of genocide, which is among the surest indicators of further genocidal massacres. “The best response to denial is punishment by an international tribunal or national courts, but

Julfa, the Armenian quarter of the Persian capital of Isfahan. Old Julfa was home to successful merchants who engaged in the silk trade.

Allowing the Armenians who settled in New Julfa to reestablish their communities without interference, Shah Abbas commissioned Armenians to expand their trade. Within one generation of their deportation, Armenians extended trade routes from New Julfa to Northern Europe. Influenced by European culture, they established their own theatre in the 1880s and produced plays like Shakespeare’s *Othello* in 1920.

The modern capital of Tehran was home to an estimated 100,000 Armenians at the time of the Islamic Revolution in 1979. Because of the Revolution, many Armenians resettled in the United States and in particular in Glendale, California and have established their own societies such as the Armenian Society of LA and the Iranahay Center.

Armenian Communities of Persia/Iran also contains chapters on Armenian mural painting, the Armenian Theater, Armenian artists, the Armenian Liberation movement, and the Armenians during World War I.

Reflecting on his lecture and the information shared, Dr. Hovannisian concluded by noting the remarkable saga of the Persian-Armenians who have “managed to endure throughout the centuries.” Maintaining their culture and dialect over that long period of time were in his words “most impressive.”

that never happened in the case of the Armenian Genocide,” stated Prof. Der Mugrdechian. “The evidence which should have been made part of the world record was never brought to light.”

Because of this, the Turkish government has never been punished or held responsible for its crimes against humanity, making it easier for future genocides to occur. Prof. Der Mugrdechian referred to this “unpunishment” as a lesson *not* learned from the Armenian Genocide. Being the first modern genocide of the 20th century, the Armenian Genocide served as a model for a series of

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Prof. Der Mugrdechian Speaks at 10th Annual Genocide Awareness Week at Arizona State Univ.

MICHAEL MAZMAN
STAFF WRITER

On Wednesday, April 6, 2022, Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian gave a presentation titled, “The Armenian Genocide: Lessons for the 21st Century” during the 10th Annual Genocide Awareness Week that took place at Arizona State University, April 4-8, 2022. His discussion, which emphasized the lessons learned from studying the Armenian Genocide, was delivered in-person and also livestreamed virtually.

Prof. Der Mugrdechian began with an introduction of the Armenian Genocide and described the different policies used against the Armenians by the Ottoman Turkish government, such as the state confiscation of Armenian goods and property. “It wasn’t just a matter of killing people,” stated Prof. Der Mugrdechian. “The financial incentive of taking over Armenian homes, land, businesses, and bank accounts was an important dimension in the Armenian Genocide.”

Another noteworthy policy

implementation was the Ottoman Turkish government’s “Temporary Law on Deportation,” which authorized Ottoman officials to forcibly oust the Armenian population (including women, children, and the elderly) from their homes under the pretext of protecting them. Although the Armenian deportees were promised to be returned to their homes later, most were marched for hundreds of miles to their death in the deserts of Northern Syria

and Iraq. This was the primary method used to eliminate the bulk of the Armenian population in the Ottoman Empire.

Prof. Der Mugrdechian emphasized analyzing all facets of history as an important lesson to be learned from studying the Armenian Genocide. “To understand the mechanisms of genocide, we have to get as much information that we can about not only the history, but also things like economics and

Jendian Awarded ANCA Hovannisian Armenian Genocide Education Award



STAFF REPORT

Dr. Matthew Jendian, Professor of Sociology at Fresno State, was recognized with the Richard G. Hovannisian Armenian Genocide Higher Education Award by the Armenian National Committee of America, Western Region (ANCA-WR).

Dr. Jendian was one of eleven educators and supporters honored during a virtual awards ceremony on Saturday, April 9, 2022. The honorees, from various public schools and universities, have uniquely provided instruction, support, and education about the Armenian Genocide. Dr. Jendian was selected for “your exemplary commitment to providing educators and students access to resources that support understanding of the Armenian Genocide and other crimes against humanity.” Dr. Jendian has taught courses such as “The Sociology of Terrorism and Genocide,” a

semester-long course that in Dr. Jendian’s words “seeks to help students understand conditions that produce and sustain terrorism and genocide and provides insight to effectively mitigate and prevent these phenomena.”

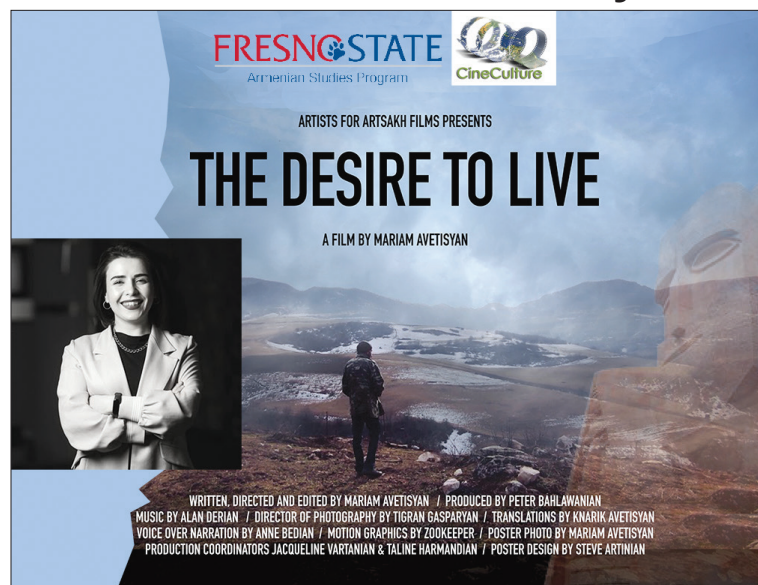
The awards committee received many nominations for educators from around the world, who have gone above and beyond the call of duty to teach about the Armenian Genocide in the context of crimes against humanity within their classrooms.

A full listing of this year’s honorees can be found at: <https://ancawr-ed.org/educator-awards/>.

The Armenian National Committee of America-Western Region is an Armenian-American grassroots advocacy organization based in the Western United States.

The ANCA-WR advances the concerns of the Armenian American community on a broad range of issues.

Discussion with “The Desire to Live” Movie Director Avetisyan



ANDREW HAGOPIAN EDITOR

“I was born in Sush in 1912. I was going to school-the third grade. I used to go to Djzdrdruz (Hunot Canyon, Shushi) and pick lillies. Our house in Shushi was the best. I wanted to protect my homeland Shushi.” These are the thoughts and words of a 10-year-old boy expressing his emotions for his homeland in the documentary “The Desire to Live” directed by Mariam Avetisyan.

The Armenian Studies Program and CineCulture at Fresno State organized a virtual discussion with director Mariam

Avetisyan and producer Peter Bahlawanian on Friday, April 22, 2022. Students and participants had the opportunity to watch the 90-minute documentary online during the week prior to the discussion. Students filled the chat with a variety of questions for Avetisyan.

“The Desire to Live” is a 110-minute no-commentary style documentary feature film, which focuses on the post-war life of Armenians and the aftermath of the September-November 2020 war against the indigenous Armenian population in Artsakh. Prof. Barlow Der Muqrdechian and CineCulture professor Dr. Mary Husain introduced

Dr. Suren Manukyan Discusses “New Trends in Genocide Studies” for Fresno State Audience

SOSSE BALOIAN
STAFF WRITER

The topic of genocide has become more “intercultural,” stated Dr. Suren Manukyan. “Forty years after the appearance of the field of genocide studies, we can appreciate how far it has reached from the interest of a small group of individuals to an academic domain with hundreds of scholars, thousands of students, and one of the most attractive and dynamically developing social disciplines.”

On Tuesday, March 8, 2022, the Armenian Studies Program welcomed Dr. Manukyan to lecture on the topic of “New Trends in Genocide Studies.” This was the first in-person lecture the Armenian Studies Program hosted since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020.

Dr. Manukyan was the Kazan Visiting Professor in Armenian Studies at Fresno State for the Fall 2021 semester. He is the Head of the UNESCO Chair on Prevention of Genocide and Other Atrocity Crimes at Yerevan State University and Head of the Department of Comparative Genocide Studies at the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute (Yerevan). He is also a visiting lecturer at the American University of Armenia and he has been a Fulbright Scholar at the Center for the Study of Genocide and Human Rights at the Rutgers University of New Jersey.

Dr. Manukyan introduced Raphael Lemkin as the founder of the field of genocide studies. Lemkin coined the term “genocide,” wrote several papers about the topic, and inspired future genocide scholars. Although the Genocide Convention was adopted by the United Nations in 1948, Dr. Manukyan said that it was not enforced for many years due to the Cold War. “It would have been almost impossible for the international community to investigate the crimes and take action if the massacres happened in the state under [the influence of either the Soviet Union or the United States of America].”

The first scholars of genocide studies focused on such topics as definitions of genocide, causes of genocide, comparative case studies of genocide, and models for prevention. “Genocide studies has come a long way over the past decade having obtained a level of intellectual sobriety, academic credibility, and public recognition,” remarked Dr. Manukyan. “New scholars have brought about new developments

Artsakh to leave by periodically cutting off the gas, telephone, and water to make life unlivable.

“For the Armenians of Artsakh, one way to survive is by dreaming of peace and to have hope for the future,” said Avetisyan. Avetisyan was asked what the hardest part of the documentary to film was. She responded by telling the story of a young boy who had lost his father in the war



Photo: Andrew Hagopian

Dr. Suren Manukyan, third from right, with students after his March 8 presentation at Fresno State.

in the field such as a shift from macro-histories to micro-histories, colonial genocides, prevention, activism, and a shift of focus from perpetrators to victims.”

Over the years, micro-histories, local studies of genocide, have gained significant attention in comparison to macro-histories, the basis of genocide studies. Dr. Manukyan said this shift offers a richer understanding of violence on a micro level. Micro-histories of genocide can be studies of communities affected by genocide and studies on perpetrators as individuals. Some examples Dr. Manukyan mentioned were *The Armenians of Aintab: The Economics of Genocide in an Ottoman Province* written by Ümit Kurt and *Talaat Pasha: Father of Modern Turkey, Architect of Genocide* written by Hans-Lukas Kieser.

Another trend is the emerging topic of colonial genocides. “Although genocide research is conducted worldwide, the field is still dominated by Eurocentric attitudes and approaches,” stated Dr. Manukyan. “Genocide is commonly understood as a phenomenon that can only occur in either totalitarian or failing states in the so called third-world. According to this assumption, the best way to prevent mass violence would be the global spread of Western style liberalism, capitalism, and democracy.” However, scholars have recently turned toward the idea of Western democracies as also perpetrators capable of genocide.

The development of genocide prevention has ignited interesting discussions as to how we must act in order to stop genocide from happening. Dr. Manukyan introduced an interesting concept of genocide scientists as doctors who are responsible for the healing, treating, and prevention of genocide. He said

that genocide scholars and the United Nations have stressed the need for early warning systems. Some have suggested that journalists’ reports could serve as early warning signals while others argue that journalists are not trained to decipher potential early warning signals nor are they in the business of doing so.

Surprisingly, one of the most debated topics amongst genocide scholars is activism. Some have argued that genocide scholars should not partake in activism because it calls the validity of their scholarship into question. “One has to wonder how an individual can work in the field of genocide studies and not be concerned with preventing genocide,” Dr. Manukyan declared. “Lemkin himself never acted as a pure academician. It was an example of successful activism that brought about the adoption of the Genocide Convention.”

The shift of focus from perpetrators to victims is another recent development in the field of genocide studies. Dr. Manukyan clarified that victim testimonies should not overshadow the role of perpetrators, but should be integrated in order to better understand the scope of the genocide.

Dr. Manukyan reminded the audience that genocide is never just about killing people, but about seizing property, destroying culture, denying memories, and silencing the victims.

The field of genocide studies has grown since its introduction in the twentieth century and works are being published in several different languages.

“New research tools are being introduced, new topics are being raised, and all the research is being redrafted,” stated Dr. Manukyan. “Genocide studies has turned into a global field having gained an institutional foothold on all continents.”

and who was reminiscing about the memories he shared with his father working in the fields. The boy especially remembered the strong bond between he and his father.

Avetisyan said that many of her interviewees were initially unwilling to open up before the camera, however she was able

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Left to right: Marie Papazian, Dr. Mary Papazian, Ani Papazian, and Dr. Dennis Papazian.

PAPAZIAN, PAGE 1

academic excellence, and success in business and the professions.

In *From My Life and Thought: Reflections on an Armenian-American Journey*, Papazian shares his reflections on a quintessentially twentieth-century American life shaped by the challenges of the immigrant experience, his family’s struggle to create a life in a new land, and his determined efforts to secure an education that would ensure a life of security and the promise of the American dream.

Born ninety years ago in the pre-World War II, pre-civil rights American South of Armenian immigrant parents from Istanbul, Turkey, Papazian pursued a Ph.D. in Russian history, becoming one of the first American students to study in the then Soviet Union during the height of the Cold War. Not only did this experience open the world to him, it also placed him in the center of major geo-political events, teaching him nuance and perspective that would lead him to become a highly sought analyst as the Soviet Union broke apart decades later.

Upon his return to Michigan, Papazian went on to live a life of contribution and service as he engaged in a decades-long career in higher education

as an educator, scholar, and administrator. During this period, he also became a key leader in the emergence of an Armenian-American community just finding its footing fifty years after the 1915 Armenian Genocide, where he made significant contributions to multiple Armenian community, religious, academic and political institutions.

In *From My Life and Thought*, Papazian shares his resilience, keen sense of perception, and vision, as well as the memorable characters he meets along the way, as he reflects on his consequential, eventful, and at times surprising life. Through it all, he writes with humor and wit, as he tells a story that will inspire readers of all generations and backgrounds and give hope to all who join him on his journey.

The Armenian Series at California State University, Fresno was established through the generous support of the M. Victoria Karagozian Kazan and Henry S. Khanzadian Kazan Endowment. Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian is the general editor of the series.

From My Life and Thought: Reflections on an Armenian-American Journey is available May 15 through Abril Books at <http://www.abrilbooks.com/> or through the NAASR bookstore at <https://naasr.org/products>.

by world-renowned genocide expert Gregory Stanton, released a Genocide Emergency Alert in November 2020, stating that Turkey’s role in aiding Azerbaijan during the war sparked fears that Turkey would resume the Armenian Genocide of 1915. These issues reaffirm the relevance of the Armenian Genocide to modern-day crimes against humanity.

Prof. Der Mugrdechian argues that in order to move forward, there needs to be education about past genocides as a means of genocide prevention.

SEE DER MUGRDECHIAN, PAGE 8

ALLAKHVERDYAN, FROM PAGE 5

The second piece, “Nocturne,” by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, was originally written for solo pianist and orchestra, but was arranged for the concert for clarinet and piano. This piece began passionate and slow, and progressed into a quick, but still passionate melody; ending in a slower melody.

The third song, “Denneriana,” by Andre Bloch, was a piece from California that is very popular in Europe, but not as popular in the United States. “It is a nice clarinet piece that was written in 1936,” explained Allakhverdyan. The staccato-filled piece was indeed nice and mesmerizing. The fourth song, “Carmen Fantasy,” by Alexander Rosenblatt, was a jazzy interpretation of Alin’s

favorite opera, “Carmen.” The piece began slow and serious, then was jovial and exciting, then slow and passionate, and finally quick yet mysterious.

“Vals Venezolano,” by Paquito D’Rivera, was Boris Allakhverdyan’s favorite, as the composer of the piece is his inspiration.

During this piece, the clarinet sounded as if it was an accordion and made the audience feel as if they would like to dance. The clarinetist was smiling as he played, making the piece that much more enjoyable to listen to.

“When putting together this repertoire, we thought, since we are playing as a duo, why not play a classic duet,” explained Allakhverdyan, before they played their final piece.

Throughout the concert, the musicians smiled at each other and made a connection with the audience.

With each piece Boris Allakhverdyan moved his whole body while playing and Alin seemed to feel every note as she played, closing her eyes with passion as her fingers effortlessly graced the keys. She leaned forward when the music was louder and serious, and she would back away as the sound became quieter.

As the last notes receded in the Concert Hall, the audience cheered and applauded as they gave the duet a standing ovation. The audience would not stop their applause until the couple agreed to play an encore, after which the couple received yet another standing ovation.

ASP SCHOLARSHIPS, FROM PAGE 1

year (application period will open in October of 2022).

Applying has become simplified and is entirely online through the Program website at <https://cah.fresnostate.edu/armenianstudies/students/scholarships-offered.html> and the University website at <https://studentaffairs.fresnostate.edu/financialaid/scholarships/scholarshipapplication/index.html>.

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ASP BANQUET, FROM PAGE 1

Dean Chapman described Armenian Studies as “the best program for Armenian Studies in the United States,” an amazing accomplishment that everyone in the community could appreciate. The majority of students enrolled in Armenian courses are not Armenian, but through these courses, they learn about a culture they might not have ever known anything about. As we have learned in Armenian Studies courses, Armenian literature and history is so rich and it is always appreciated when non-Armenians find a passion for things Armenian.

Fresno State President Dr. Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval shared his thoughts about a trip he took to Armenia with Dr. La Porta in 2019. It was in Armenia where he grew to have a profound love and appreciation for Armenian culture, and heritage, and as he playfully joked, a love for Armenian Food! Dr. Jiménez- Sandoval visited the most sacred sites in Armenia and shared his awe for the beautifully decorated Armenian alphabets he saw throughout the country. He was impressed as well with the Armenian Genocide Monument in Yerevan. It was there that he, “felt the resilience and the hope



Left to right: Dr. Hagop Ohanessian, Dr. Sergio La Porta, Dr. Honora Chapman, Dr. Xuanning Fu, Matthew Mgrdechian, Michael Mazman, Dr. Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval, Prof. Barlow Der Mgrdechian, Ani Zhamkochyan, Ariana Garabedian, Suzanna Ekmekchyan, and Kara Statler.

of the Armenian people.” His visit to the Genocide Monument reinforced how important the Armenian Studies Program is at Fresno State and how important the scholarships are for students to continue to preserve Armenian heritage, literature, culture, and language.

“In the face of adversity, the community comes together around it core values of faith and family,” stated President Jiménez-Sandoval. “My admiration has deepened with my more than

twenty years at Fresno State. I have always said this, that the Armenian Studies Program sets the ‘gold standard’ for the field.”

Graduating senior Suzanna Ekmekchyan, who received a Minor in Armenian Studies, spoke of her interactions with the Program.

“One of the opportunities that I had as a student was to participate in Armenian Studies activities and to pursue Minor,” said Ekmekchyan. “Little did I know that making this decision

THE DESIRE TO LIVE, FROM PAGE 6

to engage them in a friendly conversation, thus putting them at ease. “The men who were interviewed admitted to me that they were shocked that they would ever express emotion of sadness or grievance,” stated Avetisyan.

For Avetisyan, filming so many of the sad stories ultimately also took their toll on her. “It began to effect me greatly,” said Avetisyan. “Many times I cried as we were filming. It helped to discuss my interviews with my family.” The story about a woman who had lost two brothers and a son in the

conflict was particularly moving. She had kept her son’s cell phone and would send text messages to him. She then would read those messages as a way to remain in contact with him.

“The Desire to Live” began originally as an online documentary series to bring social awareness of the effects of the war on the people of Artsakh and their livelihood.

Within two seasons, twenty-five episodes were filmed, and over 100 subjects interviewed throughout the land of Artsakh. Bahlawanian, a movie producer from Los Angeles, personally funded this project to make

it a full feature film. Funding included personal financing plus a GoFundMe campaign which covered the costs of premiering the documentary at various film festivals throughout the United States.

Avetisyan would like the world to know of the struggles of the Armenians of Artsakh.

There are many non-profits and foundations working in Artsakh today and people can get involved by contributing to those efforts.

The episodes from “The Desire to Live” series can be viewed at this site: <https://cftjustice.org/the-desire-to-live>.

that offer classes in Holocaust and Genocide Studies as a step in the right direction. Publications in journals and professional organizations have also grown.

Surely, there is nothing inevitable about genocide. However, genocide prevention requires

more than just awareness – it requires action. Without a global effort towards the education and detection of genocide, the world may be subject to more crimes against humanity, like the Armenian Genocide, in the future.

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was to provide me with the most meaningful and memorable experience of my time at Fresno State. ... The classes that I took provided me with invaluable information about my history and culture-a fact about which I am incredibly proud. They have made me a better Armenian-one who is well informed and educated about all aspects of the culture.”

Michael Mazman was the next speaker. “Pursuing a Minor in Armenian Studies has absolutely been an integral part of my college experience,” stated Mazman. “I cannot express how happy I feel to be able to learn the Armenian language and history every day in a classroom setting.”

The Banquet is a wonderful opportunity for students to be recognized for the scholarships they have received and to be recognized for their hard work in preserving Armenian culture and taking courses in the Armenian Studies Program.

Students who received a Minor in Armenian Studies received

special recognition. This year nine seniors earned Minors and over thirty students are currently pursuing a Minor in the Program.

The Armenian Studies Program Banquet did more than just celebrate scholarship recipients, the Program also recognized all the aspects of its activities. The Program hosts an Annual Lecture Series lectures bringing a variety of guests to campus. The Program has organized nearly 900 events over the past 45 years-a monumental accomplishment.

Students are also involved with each other through Armenian Students Organization, where Armenian students come together at social events and build community.

Dr. La Porta said it best, “I am certain that the future of Armenia and the future of the Armenian Studies Program is bright, and I am certain because of all the people here this evening and all of the students who attend their Armenian courses every day.”

Armenian Studies 34th Annual Banquet Donors

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