

HYE SHARZHOOM

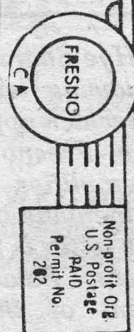
ARMENIAN ACTION

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The newspaper of the California State University, Fresno Armenian Students Organization

Armenian Studies
Program
CSUF, CA 93740

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Convention results in platform, calls for unity

By Bill Erysian

Armenian students on university campuses across the nation are finally beginning to voice a collective opinion on such crucial issues as terrorism and Armenians in American politics.

As one of five acting moderators during the recent Armenian College Students Convention, held on the California State University, Fresno campus, I feel obliged to comment on the success of the convention. Also warranting discussion are several key issues and resolutions that emerged from the vigorous debating sessions.

The convention, which was specifically designed to be a "student-oriented affair," drew more than 100 representatives from the United States, Canada and Mexico. The main purpose of the convention was to establish a working relationship among Armenian student organizations internationally and to define the role of the Armenian student in the pursuit of the "Armenian Cause."

The Issues

The students debated questions regarding four main topics: Official minority status for Armenian-Americans; Armenians in American politics; Armenian terrorism; and Armenian intellectual life at universities. Participants offered their input into five separate groups that later met in a general assembly, where three resolutions were eventually hammered-out.

Rarely can such a diverse number of young and politically aware Armenians be brought together without some degree of disagreement and confrontation. Indeed, this was the case at the recent Fresno Convention. Yet the convention did accomplish some of its main goals, most important of which I feel, called for the establishment of a "working relationship among international Armenian student organizations." This specific concept emerged in the form of a resolution, which declared the "formation of the International Armenian Students Confederation, to provide a forum for the exchange of thoughts among Armenian students." If the Armenian student is to be recognized amidst discussion of the Armenian Question, he/she must have a strong foundation from which to start. The International Armenian Students Confederation represents this foundation and provides support for future growth. The extent of that growth, however, remains to be seen.

The convention was also effective in another way. Within their separate groups, the students were given an opportunity to debate various questions relating to the four main discussion topics. These groups were truly where the bread and butter hours of the convention were logged. Here was the opportunity for Armenian students to exchange their views among peers. Here was the chance to learn how other Armenian students across the continent feel about the issues surrounding the Armenian Question. It soon became evident within several of the groups that there was a strong divergence of opinion. This is nothing new to any of us. But what did partially emerge, as a result, was a mutual enlightenment on the issues presented. The majority of students this moderator later questioned admitted that they had come away with a better education, in general, on some new facts and opinions regarding the topics discussed. Convention planners deserve credit for helping to promote better understanding of some of the differences we have as Armenian youth, and for creating a stronger awareness of the issues we all face as Armenians.

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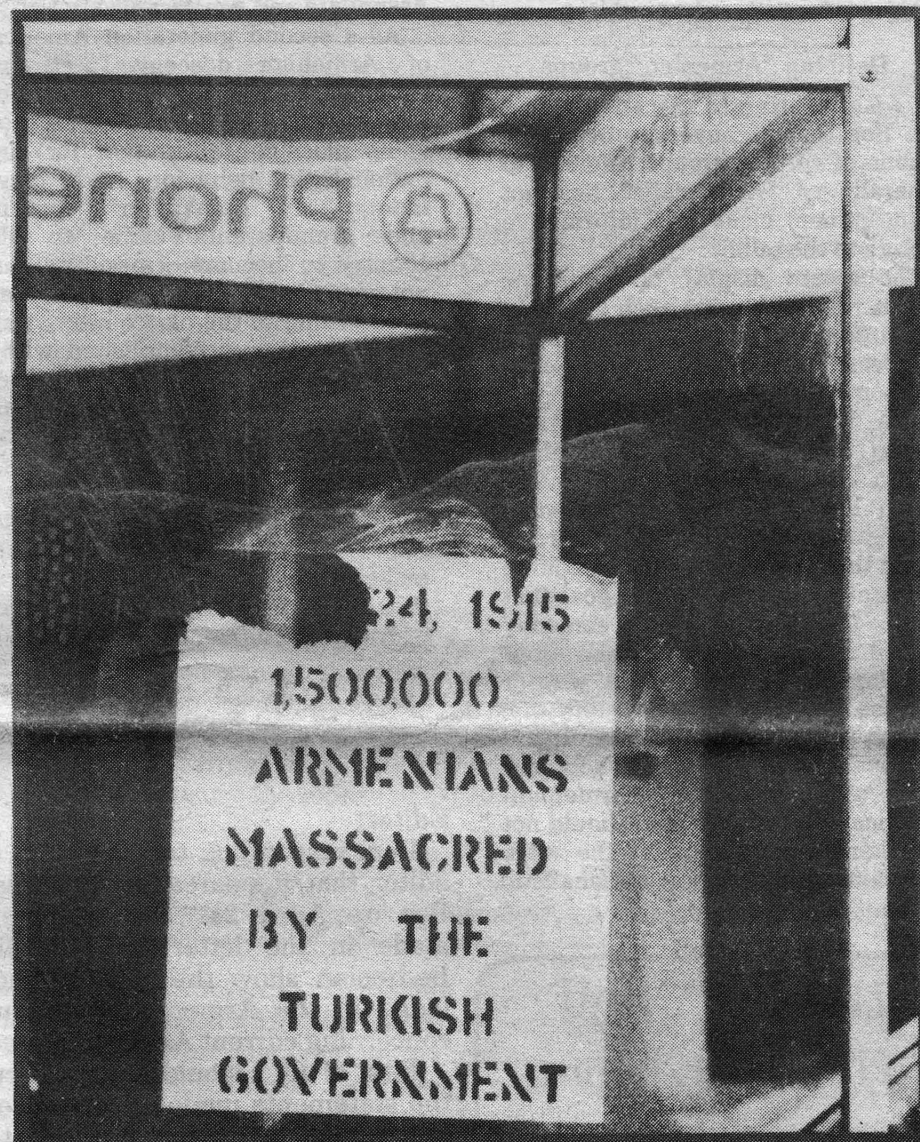


Photo by Pennie Console

By Shelli Andranigian

Twelve days prior to the 66th Anniversary of the Genocide, 750 posters commemorating the massacred Armenians were plastered on metal light poles, traffic poles, and also a small percentage on traffic signs in Fresno.

The group responsible issued a press release a week later to say they were "concerned Armenians who are not afraid of public disapproval."

To date, they have yet to reveal themselves to the public for scrutiny. One can see then, that they are actually contradicting their entire purpose. How can the group not show fear of public disapproval when they refuse to go before it?

Plastering the posters on light and telephone poles is rather harmless, but when the faces of traffic signs

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Letters to the Editor

Hye Sharzhoom has reprinted the following letter from Jack Bedrosian which appeared April 24, 1981, in The Fresno Bee. Mr. Bedrosian exemplifies the position of many Armenians in our community today. His letter is followed by a reply from Levon Baladjanian, former president of the Armenian Students Organization at CSUF. Mr. Baladjanian offers a response to Mr. Bedrosian's apparent misunderstanding of current Armenian issues.

Defining "Armenian" groups

I wish to bring to the attention of The Bee that its coverage of recent actions of certain groups referred to generally as "Armenians" has not been either clear or informative enough to the public.

The recent display of ignorance and disrespect by one such group in defacing public property with posters deserves identification and clarification. This especially after you ran a recent article quoting one person who stated, "Armenians should not assimilate into the American society, and should remain separate and distinct in order to retain their identity." This of course is meant with the apparent goal that these "Armenians" will someday return en masse and retake their homeland from Turkey one way or another.

Such irresponsible statements and actions are neither condoned nor supported by the Armenian-American community, and should not be taken as anything but the work and philosophy of a new nationalistic group.

It should be recognized that during the past 10 years or so there has been an influx of Middle Eastern refugees into the United States, many of them of Armenian origin. Arriving in this country in small groups, some of them brought the attitude and philosophy that they should have their own separate community within the community. They even have gone so far as to open their own "schools" throughout the state, thereby assuring that their young will not assimilate and Americanize.

As a second generation American of Armenian descent I strongly condemn such attitudes and actions, and wish to emphatically state there is no place in this nation for such nationalistic behavior and movements. My generation's parents and grandparents came to this country to become Americans, and not second-class people with any eye of returning to the old country. This, I believe, they accomplished with a lot of hard work and perseverance. And I for one will not tolerate any effort or action that tends to remove or erase these accomplishments.

In the future I hope The Bee will clearly define any article written regarding ethnic groups and their makeup, as the above actions or thoughts are not those of Americans of Armenian descent.

Jack Bedrosian
Fresno

Editor:

I am responding to a letter to the editor that appeared in the Fresno Bee on April 24. The statements made in the letter by Mr. Jack Bedrosian show the lack of knowledge in the Armenian community concerning current Armenian issues.

First of all, I would like to discuss the statements made in reference to the Armenian immigrants. Most of the immigrants who come to this country from places such as Lebanon or Iran, for example, stay in small groups for two reasons: 1) they are not familiar with the American way of life, 2) they are not accepted by the Armenian-American community. I think the second reason is one which occurs most frequently. Most new arrivals have difficult times finding jobs because most businesses run by Armenians turn them down. It is true that some of the new immigrants lack the skills to do some of the work, however if Armenians do not help Armenians, we cannot expect them to become an integral part of our community.

The second area which disturbed me was that concerning Armenian schools. Again, a lack of knowledge and understanding was shown by Mr. Bedrosian. The Armenian schools were not built by the immigrants. Most of the Armenian schools were built from donations from Armenian-Americans who have been here a long time. These schools were not built to separate Armenians

from the rest of the community, but were built to preserve in our youth a sense of cultural heritage which we are rapidly losing. All of these schools are accredited by the people who accredit our public schools. These schools must meet the same requirements as any other school, except that these Armenian schools offer electives such as Armenian history, Armenian art, music, and language. In fact, most immigrants cannot afford to go to these schools because of high tuition costs. But one statistic which stands out is that 90% or more of the students who graduate from the high schools, particularly in Los Angeles, either go to a two or four year college. So, the Armenian schools have something we can be proud of, not something that is secret and suspicious.

Being a second generation Armenian-American myself, I believe we must maintain our cultural heritage at any cost and also find ways to advance it. The statements made by Mr. Bedrosian are not only dangerous, but also show the state that some of the Armenian people are in. If we forget who we are and where we came from, we diminish ourselves not only as Armenians, but also as Americans. This country was made by different cultures coming together and sharing their own ideas. If we all were to lose our identities, we would have nothing to share with each other. We would all become just a number on an IBM computer.

Levon Baladjanian
ASO President, Fall 1980

Editor:

(Although) controversial sometimes, new ideas are a lot healthier than the old cliché ones which unfortunately sound good to the ear, but have lost their effectiveness. I really do enjoy your publication.

Zareh Samurkashian
Pinole, California

Editor:

Normally I find it fruitless to enter into arguments about the Armenian Genocide. The converted preaching to the converted gets us nowhere. But, I would like to address a brief message to our friends of the United Turkish Americans organization. In so doing, I think I speak for many Armenians of American birth.

A) Granted, citizens of modern Turkey and Americans of Turkish birth cannot and should not in any way be held responsible for massacres that took place before they were born;

B) Granted, the Turks of today may be as critical of Ottoman

policies as were non-Turkish groups who suffered under those policies;

C) Granted, therefore, terrorist acts against the Turkish people of today do not make sense, are wrong, and cannot be justified legally or morally.

I grant these things, honestly and whole-heartedly. I hope that the UTA members can accept this position, which I think is based upon respect for international order and for civilized moral behavior. I also hope that they accept my conviction that the UTA should respond in a similar spirit, with respect for international order and for civilized moral attitudes.

Therefore, I ask the UTA to petition the Turkish Government to return to me, Leo Hamalian, the lands that were taken from my father, Thomas Hamalian, the son of a peasant family which owned land between Van and Diabekir. This land was taken when my father and his family had to flee in order to survive the massacres then taking place under the direction of Ottoman officials. That land is now occupied by a Turkish citizen, who was given the land or simply occupied it. If the land cannot be returned to me, then I ask for just reparation. I am willing to let the Turkish Government decide how much the land is worth. When my claim is settled, I will speak no more about the events that brought my father to America. However, until the claim is settled, the book is not closed on the greatest act of injustice (committed) in our century.

The question for the UTA is simple: do they support my claim or do they continue to defend the genocidal policies of the Ottomans, to the extent that they profit from its results?

Leo Hamalian
Ararat Quarterly Magazine

ՀԱՅ ՇԱՐԺՈՒՄ Hye Sharzhoom

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Hye Sharzhoom

welcomes

response

from its

readers

Convention, from page 1

Not everything at the convention, however, emerged in crystal clear fashion. While we should look favorably upon this type of gathering, which brought together young Armenians with a variety of backgrounds and convictions, there occurred an inevitable communication breakdown. I believe the convention also served, at times, to highlight the schism between American-born and non-American-born Armenians, particularly concerning how one evaluates the subject of terrorism. Emotions ran high and the unintentional tendency was to sidestep the provided question topic and argue over theory rather than substance. This is by no means harmful, but if future conventions are to accomplish their goals, there should be more structured discussion.

The Resolutions

There exists a silent debate within the national Armenian community concerning the implications of official minority status for Armenians in this country. On one hand, it is argued that the establishment of Armenians as an official minority in the United States would provide our people with more opportunities in the fields of education and employment. One may also argue that minority classification opens the door to greater federal and state grants for cultural enhancement and other benefits.

On the other hand, there are those who would argue that minority status for Armenians would be a "step backward." Minority status, as it is argued in this sense, represents a degrading of the social status many Armenians feel they've achieved.

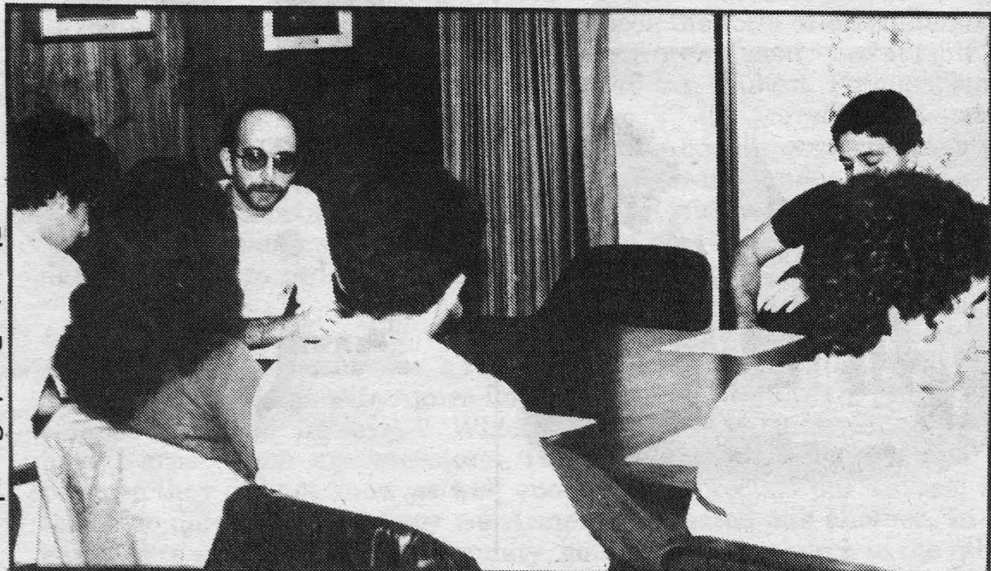
Students at the convention addressed this question of minority status with perseverance. There emerged a concurrence among the students, who felt that Armenians have been affected by the forces of assimilation. It was further concluded that Armenians should "seek to remain separate from the American mainstream." Yet there was almost unanimous agreement that legal minority status for Armenians would not preserve the distinct identity of the Armenian-American community.

During discussion of this subject I sensed a certain amount of pride in those who felt minority status could not favor the Armenians in this country. Perhaps it's the label of "minority" which dissuades a more serious look into this issue. By no means does the future of the Armenians in the U.S. depend on whether or not minority status is instituted. But it appears to be an issue that excites little discussion. Nevertheless, while recognizing themselves as a "distinct ethnic entity," the students resolved that they "should not press government officials for legal minority status."

The students also confronted the topic, "Armenian intellectual life at American universities." It was perhaps one of the areas in which the students made their strongest point. A majority felt their views were "not currently incorporated into the programs of existing Armenian organizations." This appears to be a direct message from the students to Armenian organizations—a message in which the students are calling for more input into Armenian organizational decision-making. The intellectual prowess of our youth is high, as demonstrated by the spectrum of viewpoints discussed at the recent convention. The students are, in effect, saying, "We have some ideas too, take us more seriously!"

The university Armenian student displays a keen awareness of contemporary Armenian issues. He/she is both well-informed and articulate. Therefore, it came as no surprise that incorporated into one of the resolutions was a call upon existing (and future) Armenian Studies programs to address current Armenian issues. So one can argue that the excuse of there being a "lack of interest" among Armenian students on university campuses is invalid. Armenian Studies programs cannot ignore this plea and indeed, are obliged to reflect the interest of the university Armenian student as exemplified at the recent convention.

While there emerged no resolution on the topic, "Armenians in American politics," some interesting observations can be made. The students demonstrated their basic confidence in the American political system and how Armenians can benefit from working through the system. The students also



Fall 1981 ARMENIAN STUDIES PROGRAM

ARM S 1A (4) Elementary Armenian, 1510-1600 MWThF (MWF—AG232, Th—SS109), Staff: Students will be able to read, speak, and write basic Armenian after a semester. Credit by examination is offered during the first four weeks to advanced speakers.

HIST 108A (3) Armenian History, 1310-1400 MWF—GW131, Dr. Dickran Kouymjian: Survey of Armenia's past from pre-history to the middle ages with emphasis on Urartu, kingdom of Dickran the Great, conversion to Christianity, Arab domination, and Seljuk Turk invasions.

ARM S 050T (3) Saroyan—Theater & Films, 1910-2200 Th—LS169, Dr. Dickran Kouymjian: Discussion and analyses of the theater and films of William Saroyan.

ARM S 120T★ (1) Armenians in Fresno, 0830-1600 S—CA101, Dr. Dickran Kouymjian: The early settlements of Armenians in Fresno County from the 1880's to the present. This course will be offered in conjunction with the community-wide centennial celebration of Armenians' first arrival in Fresno.

ARM S 120T★★ (1) Armenian History and Architecture, 0830-1600 S—AH209, Dr. Dickran Kouymjian: General view of the history and development of the church buildings in Armenian architecture from the 4th to the 17th centuries. This Saturday course will discuss and observe the major Armenian Architecture exhibit from Milan, Italy, concurrently on exhibit in the Conley Art building during the month of October.

ARM S 123 (3) Armenian Architecture, 0945-1100 TTh—LS175, Dr. Dickran Kouymjian: History and development of the church building in Armenian architecture, the first national architecture in the history of Christianity. There will be a survey of monuments from the 4th to the 17th centuries. This course will deal actively with the major Armenian architecture exhibit from Milan, Italy, concurrently on exhibit in the Conley Art building during the month of October.

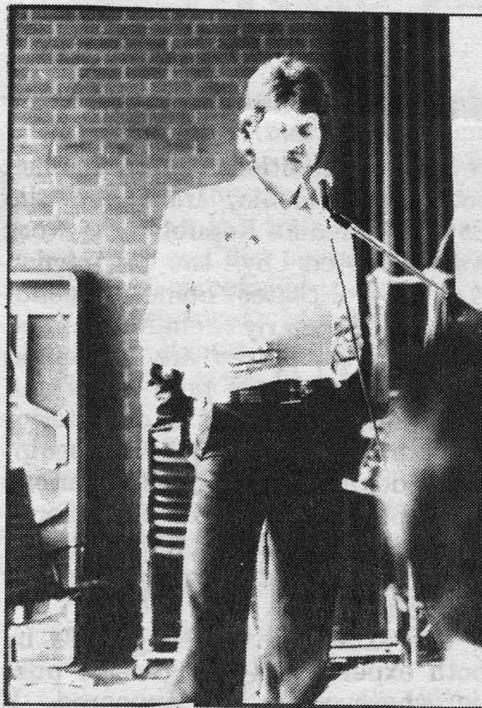
★ This class meets two Saturdays only, on October 17 and 24.

★★ This class meets two Saturdays only, on November 14 and 21.

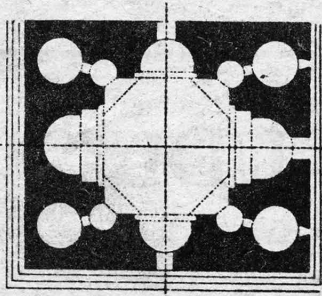
felt that the international "Armenian Cause" can be advanced in the American political arena and that the American-Armenian community can reap direct rewards from involvement in the American political process.

Here, I sensed a sincere desire among the youth to involve themselves in the political process—something that has been lacking in this country for several years. However, the students did acknowledge an unfortunate disunity between Armenian political parties, which a majority of students felt, "have not adequately served the Armenian people."

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Above left: Bill Eryasian serves as moderator for a discussion group; center, George Shaw of Davis reads a proposed resolution; right, Jack Zarkarian addresses the convention delegates.

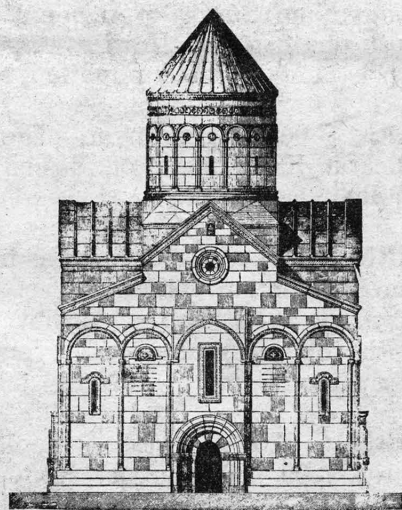


CENTRO STUDI E DOCUMENTAZIONE DELLA CULTURA ARMENA

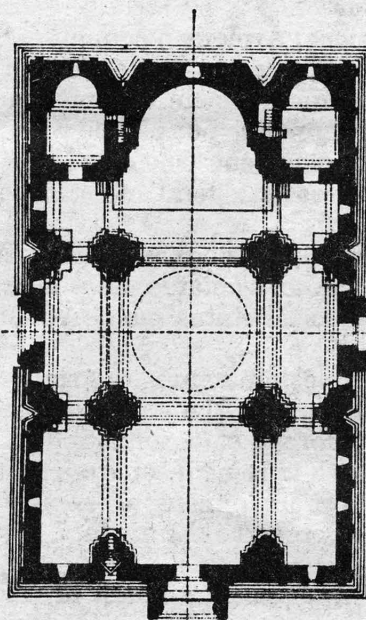
Architecture Exhibit Makes Special Fresno Showing

A vast exhibit of Armenian architecture from the 4th to the 18th century will be shown at the Phebe Conley Art Gallery on the California State University, Fresno campus from October 4th to 27th, 1981. The exhibition was conceived and prepared by a team of Italian and Armenian architectural historians in Milan, Italy. It has been acclaimed throughout the world as a model of its kind, bringing to a western public a comprehensive view of the church architecture of an eastern Christian people, the first to accept Christianity as a state religion in the early 4th century.

The exhibit has already been shown in various cities in France, Belgium, Portugal, Austria, Germany, Lebanon, Iran, Argentina, and most major cities of Italy. A joint effort of several university programs of Armenian studies, including Columbia, Harvard, Michigan, UCLA and Fresno State has finally brought this remarkable show to the United States.



ANI CATHEDRAL, c. 1000 A.D.

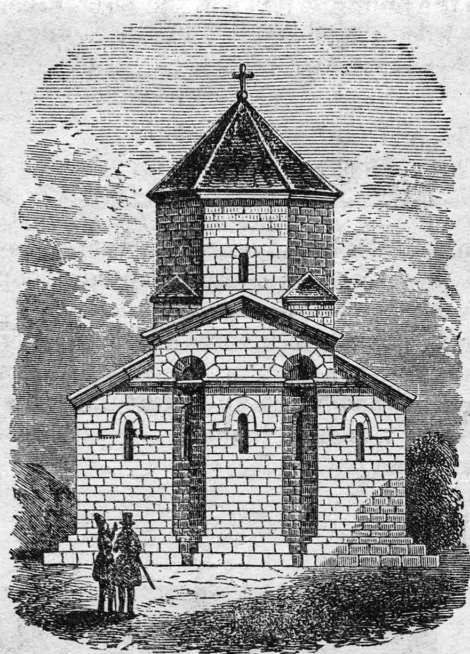


artistic carving as well as the basic substance of the inner concrete core used in Armenian churches as early as the late 5th century. The technical problem of placing a dome, sometimes of large dimensions, made entirely of stone upon a square or rectangular structure, was so masterfully and quickly passed to Byzantium (the eastern Roman Empire) and ultimately into many regions of Europe.

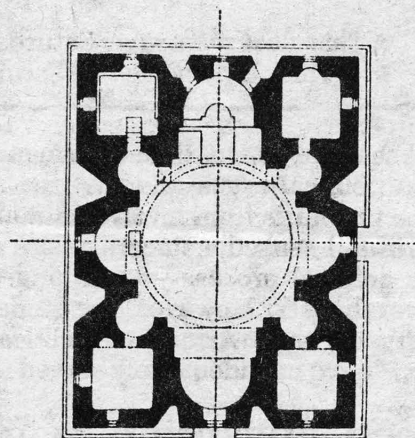
Thus, the influence of this architecture spread far beyond the Armenian plateau and the Caucasus. Though it is still debated, a considerable body of opinion feels that if Armenian architectural innovations were not the inspiration for many developments of romanesque and gothic architecture, certainly they were used in Armenia long before they appeared in Europe.

The exhibition highlights such world renowned buildings as the Cathedral of Holy Etchmiadzin, the seat of the Armenian Apostolic church, which is today essentially of the same plan as it was in the 5th century and is perhaps the oldest continuously existing church in all of Christendom. Zvartnotz, an enormous three-storied circular church of the 7th century that was the recognized wonder of its age. The church of the Holy Cross at Aght'amar on an island in Lake Van, a church unique in all Christian architecture because of the extraordinary program of extremely deep relief sculpture on its exterior walls. Or the famous cathedral of the royal capital of Ani built around the year of 1000 A.D. with architectonic features which anti-

see Exhibit, page 12



ST. HRIPSIME, 618 A.D.



genius of this remote Christian people. The various elements of the display allow the viewer to appreciate the mastery of masons who came from a stone-carving tradition thousands of years old. Some specialists even see in the various masons' marks carved on these buildings, the beginnings of the mason guilds and ultimately the masonic movements in medieval Europe.

One of the distinctive features of Armenian architecture is the material employed. All churches were built in stone, including domes, and often, even roofs. The multi-colored, light-weight, but extremely sturdy volcanic tuf or tufa stone provided the ideal material for flexible construction and

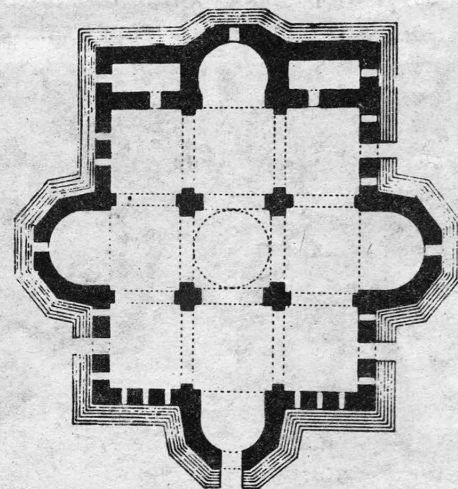
Armenian architecture has long been recognized as the first church architecture to reflect a truly unique, national style, having perfected its various and complex forms already by the 7th century. However, until recently, there were few books and no major exhibitions about these monuments for the scholar or the general public in the west to witness and study. At the initiative of a group of specialists at the Milan Polytechnic, spearheaded by Drs. Adriano Alpago-Novello and Herman Vahramian supported by the Armenian Cultural Union of Italy and the Manoukian and Pambakian families of Milan, an enormous photographic exhibit was assembled based on materials collected during

several expeditions into Turkish occupied Armenia, Iran, and the Soviet Armenian Republic; the work was assisted by the Armenian Academy of States. Some 66 monuments of early churches and monastic complexes are presented through a series of floor plans and elevations, exterior and interior photographs, and numerous sculptural details. Precise explanations accompanying each of the monuments provide the historical, structural, and artistic background for each building.

The exhibit has been praised by both experts and the general public wherever it has appeared. It unveils the mystery behind the powerful and creative building



HOLY ETCHMIADZIN CATHEDRAL



Armenians in Fresno...

By Hagop Terjimanian

This year marks the centennial of the first Armenian settlement in Fresno. Frank Normart, alias Mardiros Yanukian, came to Fresno in the late 1870's. He was a native of Marzwan in Armenia, who had come to live in Philadelphia in 1874. He was so pleased to have been in America, escaping the horrors of Ottoman Turkish misrule, that he pledged to become a new man, hence he changed his name to "Normart" — which means new man in Armenian.

The pioneers who followed Normart's footsteps considered Fresno as a favorite town, since the land they saw resembled their original homeland — the vineyards, olive groves, fig trees, pomegranates, and the climate seemed to them a welcome omen — travelling half way around the world they had finally found a home away from home.

Armenians had come to America in much earlier times. In the historical accounts relating colonial America, we meet the name of an Armenian merchant "Martin Ye Armenian" who settled in Jamestown in Virginia in 1618. During the same period, John Smith, an English captain, brought a number of Armenians to America, who were preferred over the "vagabond gentlemen English colonists wearing silk and shunning work..." In Smith's account, the Armenians were hard workers and were skilled in making pitch, tar, soap, ashes, and glass beads which were used as currency in trading with the Indians. What is even more illuminating about those early Armenian settlers was to find out that "In 1619, the Poles, and their fellow workers of German and Armenian origin went on strike. They demanded the right to vote and full equality with the other colonists..." In a tiny community this was equivalent to a major rebellion...indeed "the first consciously political upheaval in America for the purpose of extending rights to the common man. In it men of different backgrounds acted jointly against injustices for the first time in the New World," commented historian Louis Adamic, in his book "A Nation of Nations."

The story of those early Armenian immigrants reads like an epic. Men like Reuben Minassian, who came to California in the heydays of the Gold Rush, later joins Mormon leader Brigham Young, becomes a farmer, a hunter, a landowner, buys himself a silver mine, sells it, marries a Scottish woman...and in his ripe age pioneers in sugar manufacturing. In 1881 the Seropian Brothers arrive in Fresno. They soon ventured into the packing of dried figs, which they shipped to cities in and outside California, carrying them in mule drawn wagons. A year later there came another group of settlers, including Steven Shahamirian, Hadgy Agha Peters and the Markarian family...The Fresno Morning Republican, in its issue of March 26, 1905 presented their story, "...the story of the old M. Markarian, is as interesting as it is pathetic...He arrived in Fresno destitute, without a penny, without friends and without shelter to 'rest himself in'...The condition of Fresno, as he relates it, was not any better than his own country at that time. The population was perhaps 1000, with a few stores on Mariposa, and with plenty of gopher holes on J Street. He says the people used to chase rabbits on J Street, and on Mariposa, next to the Grand Central Hotel, six lots with a fairly good building were for sale for \$1200 for a long time, but no one would buy..."

The early settlers in Fresno met a great many difficulties and privations, as they had to adjust to the conditions in a new environment. And for many years there was discrimination against them. Armenians were prejudiced against for a variety of reasons. Some mistook them for Turks, because most were Ottoman subjects. Others resented their clannish features, their thrift and industry. Anti-Armenian feeling took the form of discrimination, in both housing and employment. They were refused partnership in lodges, fraternities and veteran's organizations. Hubert Philipps, commenting on the "Armenians in Fresno County" (in Ararat, 1962) stated: "in the 1920's and extending into the 1930's we could scarcely place a girl of Armenian ancestry in a teaching position following graduation at Fresno State College. School Boards would take a girl with a Nordic name and a 'C' grade in scholarship and teaching ability over a girl with an Armenian name and 'A' record in both of the above qualities."

"We had hard times, but we never felt heartbroken," remembers now Aram "Zipper" Moushavian, a resident of Fresno since 1910. Aram, aged 86, has lived with his wife Agnes for 52 years. "all these years I have never stopped working," he says, "What can I do?" has been my motto, which I have learned from my ancestors. The local people did not accept us, because they did not know us well enough to appreciate our virtues, and they also did not like the way we Armenians treated one another. In the early years we worked as a community, going from one church to the other, and when an Armenian was threatened or insulted, we joined hands and "beat" the "enemy" ...But we soon became divided by sectional and

sectarian conflicts, and this cleavage widened as the years went by..." Aram Zipper, alias Aram Moushavian, came to Fresno from Kharpert, joined the U.S. Army Signal Corps and went to France and served until war's end. He returned to Vladivostok, Soviet Far East, and later served in Japan, China and the Philippines. "After the end of World War I every person was his own," reminisces Aram Zipper, "then came the Depression, which forced the bankruptcy of many Armenian farmers. Most could not pay for the land, and half of our community left for Los Angeles and most never returned..."



The horrors of World War I and the genocide of the Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire created an influx of Armenian refugees — and those who had survived the holocaust and the deportation — the few fortunate landed at Ellis Island, the gateway to America... "REFUGE FOUND AFTER YEARS OF HARDSHIPS" was the headline news in the September 30, 1922 issue of the Fresno Morning Republican. "After four years of struggle in the wilderness, through famine infested Russia, and with the Soviet at its worst, and then through the immigration offices at Ellis Island with a hairbreadth escape from deportation, the Agajanian family, consisting of 11 members, arrived in Fresno yesterday... Freedom? Not yet! The old man's eyes glowed when he recalled yesterday the massacre of three years ago. Vengeance of the Turks was fiercely wrought. Little babes were held aloft bayonets. Men and women perished. They were thrown into wells instead of being buried. Snow was deep and the road over the mountains recalls the march of the 10,000 of Xenophon" But this is not the end. Reading through the pages of Fresno papers, such as these: in the Fresno Bee: "YEARS OF HEARTACHE END AS 8 ARMENIANS REACH FREEDOM" — the plight of the displaced in German concentration camps...

...the first 100 years

And so they came from the prisons, the concentration camps...they came as refugees to America — the land of the free, and to Fresno, the "Garden of Eden," as the early settlers were made to believe... So a hundred years ago, when the conductor called out "Fresno" and the Armenian travellers looked out the train window at the hot, dusty village of livery stables, saloons and dirt streets, they couldn't believe it was the promised land. Some even refused to get off the train. But there was no turning back... "By their sweat, blood and toil the Armenians built this county," summed up Dr. Robert Weber in 1975, when he was asked to comment on the launching of the first Armenian Community Day School in Fresno.

"My Favorite Town — Fresno, California," so wrote William Saroyan in an article published in 1941. Saroyan as much as the Armenian raisin growers made Fresno a world famous city and presently the world capital of agri-business... Nowhere else one finds so many names of Armenian ancestry who made it from rags to riches... "FAME OR FORTUNE KNOWS NO TIMETABLE FOR THOSE WHO MUST CHASE A DREAM" headlined an article in the Fresno Bee, of January 29, 1978... Krikor Arakelian,

see 100 Years, page 8

A Tribute...

William Saroyan

Paris, May 25, 1981

Dear Bill,

If cormorants might have their "heavenly tide" as you once speculated right here in Paris in *Days of Life and Death and Escape to the Moon* while describing the death of such a bird you witnessed once on the beach at Malibu, so too there is probably a special "heavenly public library" for writers, especially for book-crazy Armenian-American ones from Fresno, California. Surely such a heavenly library would receive the *Herald Tribune* or you would not have considered going there for such a long time as eternity in the first place. I know you will be pleased to read a letter sent from your own fifth-floor walkup, 74 rue Taitbout, Paris 9ème. (I resisted the temptation to write on some of the perfectly mint Hotel Scribe or Le Crillon stationary which you were so fond of accumulating.) It must be poetic justice, as the saying is, after the thousands of letters you wrote to friends and sometimes perfect strangers all over the world, that you should receive a few, at least one, from the Paris address you made famous.

In the apartment everything is just fine — all the hats, the *Tribunes* neatly stacked though yellowing, your collected stones and pebbles, those under water in jars, those wrapped in napkins in jars, the rest on the mantels and the balcony — in short everything, systematically disorganized as you left it. The hallway is dustier than usual because of a renovation on the second floor, but the climb up those five flights of unvarnished wooden steps distracts the mind differently from floor to floor and at the top it's catching one's breath, as you used to say, that is the immediate pre-occupation, not the dust. May has been rainy and cold, rainier than any May I can remember in Paris, heavy rains too like those winter downpours in Fresno. But a week ago on the 18th, the day you suddenly left Fresno and the "whole voyald" for the last time, it was wildly sunny and the flat was particularly luminous. Not much mail has piled up since Krikor Atamian sent you the last batch in early April, mostly the usual flyers and cards from plumbers advertising emergency service and locksmiths offering added security.

Your Paris agent took care of those bills you were concerned about, and announced that Flammarion expects to release the French translation of the *Adventures of Wesley Jackson* in October; maybe I mentioned that in an earlier letter, but since you seem never to be more than casually interested in such details, you probably did not comment in your reply. Arpik called from Haratch to say that the "Arts and Letters" supplement for the month of July would be devoted to William Saroyan. (I am not sure if she knows you immortalized her and the only Armenian daily in Europe in that yet-to-be-performed and unpublished play you wrote in exactly 30 days a couple of Junes ago in Paris and quite exceptionally let my

students at Fresno State read last fall. I am sure on the other hand, she will be pleased when she discovers that the entire dramatic action takes place right in her editorial offices on rue d'Hauteville.)

I finally met your lawyer friend of twenty years, Aram Kevorkian, after his return from seeing you in Fresno in mid-April. His news was good and bad, sad but sometimes laughing news too, the fusion or confusion of a proper Philadelphian's first impression of Fresno and what he discovered would be the last of you. (I understand even better now why you insisted on giving me your own keys to the apartment over my protest that I could use the set with Atamian; you already knew the ulcer was more than just an ulcer.) Aram said, at your request he played Bach, some of your old favorites, while visiting with you on West Griffith Way — exactly the first thing he did on your pianola ("remarkably in tune") when we came up here to number 74 a fortnight ago. He remembered you had bought that player piano a block down the street, precisely as he recalled the purchase of the apartment itself in 1960 from a realtor friend who was to show you various places for sale after you had decided to settle in Paris. Like your brother Henry in the "Broken Wheel," your earliest published story I



seem to recall, justifying his very first extravagance — an enormous cake — by saying he thought it looked just right, you too, seeing all that sky and light on the top floor thought the same and said to the bewildered agent, "I'll take it!" over his protesting, "But Mr. Saroyan, I have many other apartments to show you so that you can choose the one you like best." But you, "I like this just fine; I'll take it."

Here it is exactly 21 years later to the day; Aram didn't tell me that, no, you did, indirectly at least. For among the letters, manuscripts, clippings in the locked file cabinet, which, with your paintings and some books, you wanted me to ship to Fresno State for what will be a William Saroyan Archive, part of an Armenian National Museum, I found an old book, one not written by you, so of course I looked at the title: *The Cornertown Chronicles* by Kathleen

Knox, New York, 1880. Inside the front cover was the short inscription that explained why, unlike the thousands of other books piled everywhere in these four rooms, it was under lock and key: "My first day here, May 25, 1960. William Saroyan." It occurred to me that 21 years at this address is the longest you have been at any of the 'places you've done time' as you once put it, even longer than your early interrupted years in Fresno, or the later ones there in San Francisco and New York. During these past decades I guess Paris was more your home than anywhere in the world, though you will always be associated with Fresno, or rather Fresno with you.

Your friends Kevorkian and Atamian have finally met, and in true Armenian fashion found out quickly that they are nearly related. During his first trip to America, more than 30 years ago, Krikor stayed at the Kevorkian house in Philadelphia, arguing for 19 straight days about the ultimate destiny of Armenia. Not only that, once in 1963 or 1964, Aram remembers going with you to what he thinks must have been Atamian's tailor shop, not the new one on rue La Fayette, but the original one around the corner from Taitbout on Chateaudun, to get a new suit made. He repeated in French what you had already told Krikor in the Bitlis dialect of Armenian you were famous for, not to make the jacket too short. Of course each time you emphasized that point, you were assured that it would not be too short, but just right. When you finally got the suit, the jacket was predictably too short and you were in a state. After fuming that you could never wear it, Aram apparently said to simply return it and be refunded, but you replied, "I can't do that to Krikor. Don't worry, I'll write a story and get more than my money back." And curiously enough Bill, by what accident of fate I do not know, but almost directly underneath Ms. Knox's book of 1880 was a carbon of "One of the 804 Armenian Tailors in Paris" you wrote a decade later. But that's still not the end of the story. The other day when I suggested to Atamian that he call Kevorkian because they may have already met long ago during the purchase of a certain suit, the jacket of which was somewhat short, he replied, "Dickran, mdig ere (listen here), that suit, that suit, do you know what Saroyan said to me about that suit? He wrote from Fresno that he had worn it on some TV show and everyone commented, 'Bill, that's a great suit; you've never looked so elegant.'"

There is no end to the stories people tell me about you, as I am apt to tell them some of the things you did in Fresno during your final autumn. No doubt they will all become part of some Saroyan legend of myth. However, the most important point of this letter is to let you know that yesterday, Krikor, Aram and Angele and I were altogether with hundreds of your other Paris friends (Arpik was there too) at the Armenian church on rue Jean Goujon for a requiem

service in your memory performed by none other than His Holiness the Catholicos of All Armenians, Vazken I, here on a pastoral visit from Holy Etchmiadzin. And though I know you wanted no religious service whatsoever in Fresno, Paris is not Fresno and I recall how warmly you used to speak about your meetings with Vazken in Armenia. On this first Sunday after your material departure from earth — your death, they called it in all the obits — he wanted personally to eulogize you in your adopted hometown. There was already to be a service in honor of those who died at Sardarabad in May 1918 during the heroic struggle which stopped the Turkish army from taking the Ararat valley and completing the genocide started in 1915, as you remembered hearing about at age ten back in Fresno. Everyone seemed visibly moved when the Catholicos turned from SARdarabad to SARoyan, beginning with the metaphor used in the obituary on the back page of *Le Monde*, signed by your old friend John Hess (he also did the one in the *Herald*, if you were wondering), comparing you to a geyser, "Exploding," said His Holiness, "all the time with stories and everywhere he went, bursting with laughter." He also called you the prodigy of the nation; the vehicle through which three millenia of the Armenian experience was perhaps most perfectly expressed, for the tormented history of a people forced into exile coincided exactly with 'the time of your life,' you, the orphaned writer of an orphaned nation. The Catholicos concluded, "William Saroyan's writing, his humanism, speaks not just about or to Armenians but to all people about all people."

Afterward we went to Aram's house near place Maillot where he played the same Bach selections he rendered for you more than a month before in Fresno: the Air for the G String, the first prelude of the Well Tempered Clavier, Jesu, Joy of Man's Desire, and the inverted canon from the Art of the Fugue. We met his wife and endless children and grandchildren, who, like your own, are half and quarter Armenian with a good share of the rest of the nations of the world mixed in as you were so proud to point out.

Oh, I almost forgot, your mint is coming up once again all over the balcony, a bit late because it has been so cold, but robust and dark green in at least four or five of the pots out there. I still don't understand why you planted it in plain, gravelly sand, but that crazy Saroyan mint loves it. The water level in the two plastic buckets you left out last September to measure the accumulated rainfall during your annual winter migration is exactly 16.8 in the yellow and 16.1 centimeters in the blue one. I know you will appreciate that exact detail.

Your friend,

Dickran

© D. Kouymjian, 1981

To The Master

*The kind swallow has returned
To the parental nest...*

Welcome, greetings to you Master...

*His return coincides always with the vintage days,
With the golden autumn,
With the leafless, misty days...
It has been like this for many years...*

*He has returned secretly
To the manger he deserted.
He lives alone like a hermit,
He lives without complaint with his books,
He lives like a crane with a fuming, yearning heart.
It has been like this for many years.*

*Here is the source of his dreams, his inner world,
Here is the caravan of his stumblings and his sins,
It was here that shone the tear of the distant, dim star,
It was here that his green leaf,
The bud of his flower was born.*

*He confessed months ago
That he was writing memoirs, memoirs of a traveler
Memoirs of longing, memoirs of pride,
Relics of hearts
From the land of Armenians.*

*I have often heard from many people
That he is a proud man.
I have known Saroyan, and I find this description false.
I admit he is shy,
He is the ashes inherited during orphanage days,
But never proud...*

*I have sometimes shared a table with this great man
At others' homes or under my own roof.
I have always noticed that he does not smile,
He is annoyed and grieved.
Who understands the heart of the Master,
The Master who understood the hearts of the others?
But if you forget to count the glasses of raki,
He starts chatting, he becomes happy,
He talks heartedly, with a thundering voice,
Half in English, half in the sweet dialect of Bitlis,
Then you too wish to raise your cup
And drink to the health of the Master...*

*He is a diligent worker, a self-criticizing and a warm man,
He is a nationalist and a humanist,
He is a firm believer of man's goodness and kindness.*

*He has three hearts
The old Bitlis, manger of the Saroyan clan,
Little Fresno, fountain of his youth and work,
And Armenia, reborn.*

Welcome, noble Patriarch.

—by Aram Arax—

To William Saroyan

*The faces of San Francisco,
New York, Paris, and Fresno
are flowerless,
the news and ideas pass
with new age*

*The conversations of cafes and bars
rituals of dress and religion
the politics of style and images
birth of the high rise*

*I watch tyme pass into the final stages
of spoken reality
your empty cup on the avenue of the table
the tyme in early February
when you broke the fog with your blackcoat
and cigar
at the Santa Fe Depot,
and stood in a historic portrait
with the young
and exclaimed "Writers In Conference"
...and then 8 years later
on your famous bicycle
smiled after saying
"Baloian, how are you?"
and no to Armenian coffee*

*Most of the last 60 years
are vaulted in memory banks,
less the living and progress
should suffer World Wars and Depressions,
less genocides and the quiet discovery
of the middle east,
of all lands rising in terror,
and the simpleness of man's kindness to man;
hieroglyphics on the schoolground wall
and the ancient knowledge of olives
and grapevines
in the low dip of the crow
over the clear green lowland*

*A freeway concretes with fourlanes
where Arman and Archie grew,
the lost ghost of Emerson
is faint like the smell of garlic
in this modern atmosphere*

*of this unexpected
and cold
May 18th rain*

—by James Baloian—

100 Years, from page 5

who died in 1951, was 11 when he arrived from Armenia with less than \$5 in his pockets. He amassed a \$25 million fortune as a vintner-rancher. Kirk Kerkorian, formerly a major shareholder in M.G.M. and Columbia, and a chain of hotels in Nevada, sold papers as a kid in Bakersfield. Born in Fresno, Kerkorian dropped out of school at 16... "Fresno is my hometown," proclaimed William Saroyan, after attaining international acclaim. "I discovered the human race there. I discovered art there. And wherever you discover helpless man and his high hope that is your place, favorite or not."

Favorite or not, Fresno is today the home of the more than thirty thousand Americans of Armenian parentage. No other city in the world presents such a varied ethnic diversity as this average American town. And for Armenians the more it is blessed with a mosaic of backgrounds, national origins and cultural plurality. The Armenian community of Fresno is indeed a microcosm of the world. Its present day population constitutes immigrants from all around the world. One meets Armenians who came from China, Manchuria, the Ukraine, Soviet Russia, Central and Eastern European countries, and from Europe, Liberia the Middle East, Turkey, Iran, Australia, Alaska...and from Armenia. It is unity in diversity. Nowhere is America a nation of immigrants as in Fresno, and nowhere is there a cross-section of Armenian types as in this formidable little town of Fresno...

There are today six Armenian churches in the city of Fresno alone. Holy Trinity Apostolic, founded in 1890 (the second oldest Armenian church in America), Saint Paul Apostolic, founded in 1942, Pilgrim Congregational, founded in 1901, First Presbyterian, founded in 1897, Brethren

If one were to ask "What does the future hold for the Armenians in Fresno? Will there be a second 100?" — the historian will have no easy answer, other than to wish that there will be another and yet another 100 years for everybody.

In Fresno, generally Armenians live together. This is also true about Armenians living in other towns in the San Joaquin Valley. If you were to visit the California Home for the Armenian Aged, you would meet many in their 80's, 90's, as well as five residents past 100 years. On April 10, 1978, the Harikian family of Dinuba gathered for a family reunion to honor the four eldest members of the clan. The ages of the four totalled 359 years...

Visiting the California Armenian Home for the Aged is an experience so unique in kind that it will never happen again. The patients, or call them residents, are "The Last Mohicans" in this last frontier of an Armenian home. Each of the residents has a story, which nobody has dared or cared to write down. Here one can see the end of an era... These people who are now here vegetating were once the proud hardy breed of the "real" Armenians. They were the descendants of a tenacious race that struggled against adversity and cherished life for 3000 years. You can see it on their old but noble faces. There is a hazy smile in their eyes... Is this perhaps a sign that life will go on? You can see them, the residents of the California Armenian Home for the Aged, especially on a Sunday afternoon, when all come to attend the church services. And when you hear them sing, loud and clear, you know everything is not lost.



The conductor called out "Fresno" and the Armenian travellers looked out... at the hot, dusty village of livery stables, saloons, and dirt streets...

Evangelical Church, founded in 1948, Full Gospel Brethren Church, founded in 1927. By far the largest congregations are grouped around the two Apostolic churches. Armenian is spoken and heard here, in contrast to the Armenian Evangelical Churches where only a sermon in the Armenian is given each Sunday; the Apostolic is extremely traditionalist. The older generation thinks Armenian, while the younger generation feels Armenian...and yet those who do attend church are not usually the young.

An Armenian banquet is a sure thing to bring all the Armenians together. Armenian cooking seems to be the unifying thing, for which Armenians are also identified. Presently there are as many as twenty Armenian restaurants and delis in Fresno. The Fresno Armenians love festivities... Half a century ago, Fresno was the hub-bub of Armenian community life in America. There were a total of 25 cultural organizations, 10 political parties. 9 periodicals were published. Today only one English weekly, the California Courier (since 1960) is still published. Also today, the increasing inflow of new immigrants from Lebanon, Iran and Turkey, is reviving interest in Armenianism.

This interest is however wrought with some tension and questions. The native Armenians view the new arrivals disapprovingly. They look down upon these people who share a common ancestry, but seem so much "different." The fact is that the newcomers are for the most part more cosmopolitan, urbanized and better educated. Not only do these new arrivals bring in a new and more intensive Armenian "feeling" and heritage, but they also come with money... And thus in a short while the cultural shock loses its power as the old and the new merge with the larger American mainstream.

At long last the Americanization of Armenians has been accomplished. It has taken almost a hundred years. Armenians living in \$150,000 houses are made more visible now, and more Armenians are occupying a sizeable

see 100 Years, page 9

100 Years, from page 8

proportion in the city's professions. Mark, Dick, Jerry, Warren, Barlow, Jack, Bill are now also Armenian names. Even the newcomers are caught in the spirit...

and they keep on coming...the Armenians are coming!

They are coming from Los Angeles, From the East Coast, from war torn Lebanon and from Iran, they are coming to this great country, where freedom and justice are not endangered species, but real things. When one of these newcomers was asked why he preferred to come to America, he replied: "Why do you think I came to America - to have my son grow up better than me."

This is the beginning of the second 100 years...



'A Man of the Theater'

William Saroyan as "a man of the theater" will be the subject of a special course offered Thursday evenings at Fresno State by Professor Dickran Kouymjian. The course was conceived last fall by Kouymjian and Saroyan after the writer turned over to the Armenian Studies Program a number of films made of his plays in the 1950's for broadcast on the famous Omnibus television series pioneered by Allister Cook. Saroyan had promised "you show these films and I'll come to watch and hear what your students think."

Among films to be viewed will be a full length version of "The Time of Your Life" and also a version of the novel "The Human Comedy." Actors to be seen will include Helen Hayes, Burgess Meredith, and William Bendix.

Other major plays to be read and studied during the term include the early successes "My Heart's in the Highlands," "Love's Old Sweet Song," "The Beautiful People," and "Hello Out There." Also, some very, very short, sometimes one page only plays will be read. A special feature of the course will be the study of Saroyan's play technique through unpublished typescripts. These will include his "Armenian" play "Haratch" written in 1979, and a play written in his last year, "Tales of the Vienna Streets," which will receive its world premiere in Vienna this fall. Guest lecturers from the U.S. and Europe will discuss various aspects of Saroyan's life as it relates to his stage craft.

The class, Armenian Studies 50T, 3 credits, is open to all. Members of the community may register through the University Extension on a credit/no-credit/audit basis, or simply appear at the first class meeting, Thursdays, 6:30-9:30, room 169 Lab School Building (official auditors are welcome.)

For further information, contact the Armenian Studies-Ethnic Studies office, 239 San Ramon Building no. 5, new Tel.: (209) 294-2832.

April 24th —

The Wrong Priority?

By Rahageets

Too often, the overpowering effect of the fact of the near extermination of our people in their ancestral lands submerges our presently evermore important and continuing collective experience--forced exile. Armenians as a group no longer face the danger of physical annihilation. 1915 is behind us. Although alive in the eyes of our grandparents, 1915 is history and while we must strive to counter those revisionists who would rewrite history to justify the status quo, it is a mistake to accord 1915 the centrality which it now enjoys in Armenian self-definition. Focus on the past has overshadowed most perception of the great and more pressing injustice of today, when the American-armed Turkish army, much of it stationed in occupied Armenia, obstructs our return.

The Turkish policy of 1915 was to tear the Armenians from their land such that Armenia without Armenians be incorporated into an expanded Turkish homeland. But the crime did not end with the last massacre of an Armenian village or the last human convoy to set out on the death march to Deir Ez-Zor. The crime continues still today for it is, in essence, the disassociation, the eviction, of the Armenian from the land. Massacre and deportation formerly served as instruments of that crime. Today it is the prohibition against our return which functions as the final stage in its implementation. If, over time with the assimilation into the life of their countries of exile, Armenians give up all claims of their right of return, the crime will be complete, because then Armenians will have been completely disassociated from their lands; their eviction, final and unchallenged.

The media understandably finds it awkward and difficult to relate the attempted genocide of 1915 with assassinations and bombings today, and so it often attributes actions by ASALA* and others to motives of revenge or retaliation. References in newspaper editorials to "innocent Turkish diplomats not even alive during the Massacres" illustrates the failure of Armenians to properly project their grievances. If the crime addressed by the Armenians were the attempted genocide of 1915 and that alone, then of course the present Turkish Government and its diplomats are innocent or at least guilty of nothing more than distortion of history. If such were the case, a journalist might rightly consider Armenian attacks after the passage of so many years astonishing, inexcusable, and racist. But the crime is eviction of a people from their homeland, and, by seeking to ensure our continued exile, the present Turkish Government, along with its tanks and diplomats, is a party to that which began in 1915 and continues to this day.

When we Armenians perfunctorily look to April 24th activities as central to our struggle or when one of our well-intentioned Armenian underground groups refers to itself as "Justice Commandos of the Armenian Genocide," we tend only to reinforce impressions that Armenians protest against or seek revenge for events which occurred over 60 years ago. The Genocide is the how and why of our exile, then and now, which must serve as the substantive basis of our claims to the occupied territories.

Palestinians suffered eviction from their homeland in 1948 and again in 1967, but despite the passage of over 30 years, the media would never suggest that the motivational underpinnings of Palestinian military activity rest in vengeance for deaths and orphans of the past. Journalists depict Palestinian actions as part of their struggle for self-determination and an end to their exile. However, instead of likening the struggle of the Armenian seeking to return to Van with that of the Palestinian seeking to return to Jaffa, the media likens Armenian attacks on Turkish targets to what would be today--were they to take place--senseless attacks by Jews on German targets.

But if journalists are confused on this point, perhaps it is because so many Armenians, dazed by the enormity of the horror that was the Genocide, have themselves failed to develop a perspective and orientation that looks beyond 1915. A people cannot struggle against an historical event. We no longer struggle against the prospect of physical annihilation and once our presentation to outsiders centers upon our exile of today and not events of the past, then there can be no more talk in the media of innocent Turkish diplomats, the passage of so many years, race hatred, vendetta, and the desire for vengeance.

* Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia

Posters, from page 1

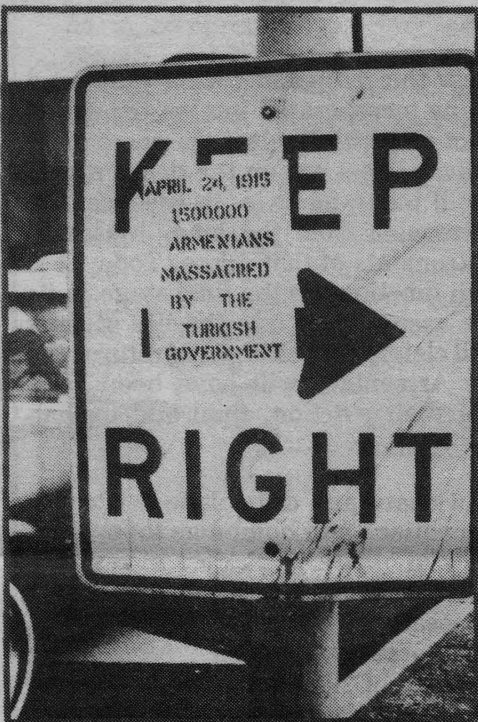
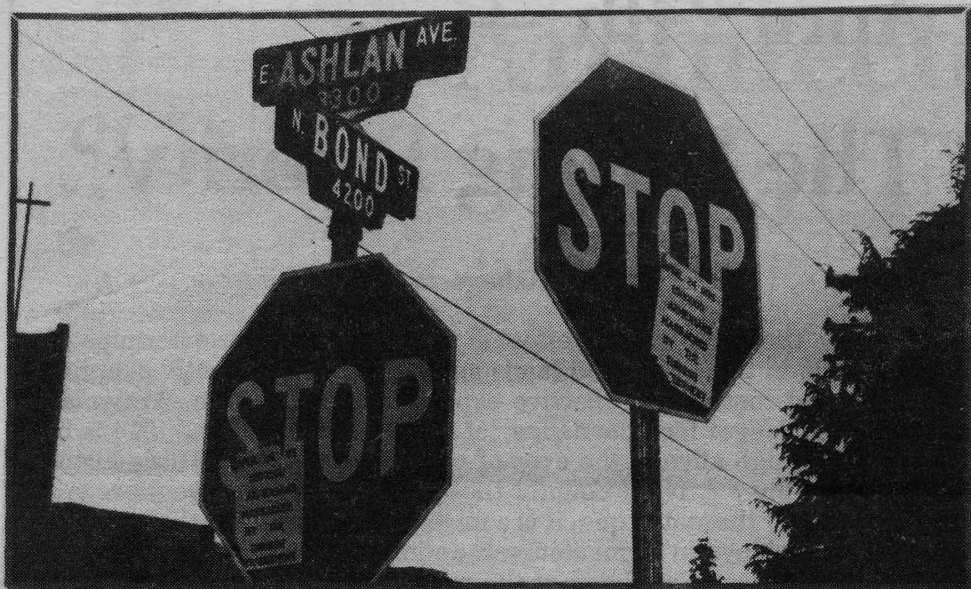


Photo by Pennie Console

were obstructed, a possible safety hazard resulted. The latter is what angered the city dwellers.

And removing the posters was no small task as U.A.C.C. members found out when they volunteered to restore the signs back to their original states, perhaps trying to redeem the Armenians' proud reputation in Fresno.

The "citizens" involved stated that their intent was not to deface public property, but they stressed that "actions speak louder than words."

Even so, some actions may bespeak the wrong words. The posters, which read: "April 24th, 1915 1,500,000 Armenians Massacred by the Turkish Government,"

...their intent
was not to
deface public
property...

emphasized a justifiable reason to protest, but the manner in which the posters were directed to the public ("defacing" traffic signs) was wrong. It gave a positive action a negative tone, not one that the "citizens"

had intended, to be sure.

The release also said that the concerned citizens "demand" that the Turkish Government, which has denied the responsibility of the Genocide, "compensate for the losses of the Armenian nation, and return the Armenian lands to its rightful owners: the Armenians."

In addition, the citizens want the U.S. Government to "publicly denounce the Massacres and promote all efforts for the return of the occupied Armenian territories."

Since the U.S. has not accomplished the above mentioned yet, while the Turkish Government continues to deny its participation in the Atrocity of 1915, the citizens were no doubt motivated by strong emotions and feelings of helplessness.

Still, the people could be made aware of the Armenian Question in ways that are more acceptable. Air-time on television or radio, advertisements in newspapers, magazines, billboards and city buses could be most affective. The only problem here though, is that it would cost a bit more.

Perhaps by next April 24th, the citizens involved will have thought of a more constructive way to get the word out, and publicly show their "concern."

WANTED

Old Books, Magazines, Newspapers and Photographs

The CSUF Armenian Studies Program again appeals to the readers of Hye Sharzhoom for any materials on Armenia and the Armenians: books-old and new, newspapers (even current ones), photographs of Armenians in the old country or in the early years in the U.S., letters and documents. These materials will be incorporated into the Armenian archives at CSUF and made available to students and researchers. The Armenian Studies Program provides a special copying service for documents, letters, and old photographs for those who wish to keep the originals.

The Armenian Studies Program has begun a file on subjects of Armenian interest: films, liberation

movements, church unity, Armenian studies, artists, writers, etc. The photographic archive, started three years ago, has several hundred items already. All of these materials will eventually be housed in the Armenian National Museum and Cultural Center planned for the CSUF campus.

Materials can be mailed to:

Armenian Studies Program
California State University, Fresno
Fresno, CA 93740

A pick-up service is available for Valley residents by calling (209) 294-2832. **DON'T THROW ANYTHING AWAY!**

Convention, from page 3

Although they were unable to formulate a written resolution on this subject of Armenians in American politics, the students have nevertheless made themselves heard. There was a clear call for unity in political participation among Armenians and a desire for sincere involvement.

The most controversial topic of the weekend was the issue of Armenian terrorism. Within their separate groups the students felt, by a majority view, that terrorism has advanced the Armenian cause among world governments. They also agreed that terrorism has "rallied the Armenian people to pursue the Armenian Cause with greater resolve."

Heated debate surrounded this issue, but the resolution that eventually emerged is a hopeful sign. In it, the students acknowledge that terrorism is a "regrettable yet inevitable act of a desperate nation whose cries for justice have been ignored by the world and by the Turkish Government." But the students went on to resolve, "that we (students) urge world governments to remove the cause for the existence of Armenian terrorism by cooperating with the Armenian nation through peaceful means to resolve Armenian demands for justice."

Their key word is **peaceful**. While acknowledging the reasons for the existence of terrorism, the students have gone one step further and called for the elimination of terrorism. This resolution is a collective effort, which represents a prima facie condemnation of the use of terrorism as a political tool.

The Future

All the solutions to the Armenian Question cannot be expected to be found in a weekend gathering of 100 Armenian students. But the convention did prove that there is a willingness for cooperation among our youth and the ability to organize effectively. This was only the second convention of its type and, as can be expected, there were a few small problems that will eventually be ironed-out in future conventions. The crucial points emerging from the convention are not ones that demand "immediate results." Rather, the need for continuity must be emphasized. Progress may be slow, but progress can be achieved in a constructive manner. University students, in particular, should realize that they are constantly involved in a learning process.

There was much dialog, interaction, enlightenment, and most of all, involvement. Armenian students have proved that they can come together and work in a cooperative manner. I hope that the interest shown at the recent Fresno Armenian College Students Convention can pave the way for future conventions to be equally productive.

April 24th — More than a day of mourning

By Shelli Andranigian

Fresno Mayor Daniel K. Whitehurst officially proclaimed April 24th Armenian Martyr's Day on the 66th anniversary of the Genocide in commemorative services held in the CSUF Free Speech Area.

CSUF President Harold Haak, Black Studies Professor Dr. Hermon George, and the Rev. Yegishe Manjikian also addressed the group.

A crowd of both young and old, Armenian and non-Armenian, were gathered for the ceremony.

Whitehurst's proclamation was presented to Armenian Students Organization President Jay Khushigian. Khushigian called April 24th "more than a day of mourning — a day of reflection on our past, a time to look toward the future." He also pointed out that the Genocide was the first of its kind in this century.

During Haak's speech, pledges from a black fraternity on campus performed what appeared to be part of an initiation ritual in the free speech area. Several members of the ASO confronted the pledges when their chants began to conflict with Haak's speech.

Shortly after the next speaker, Dr. Herman George, had started his presentation, a scuffle broke out between the pledges and a few ASO members. It was quickly halted. George had been speaking to the crowd, describing the atrocities perpetrated against the Armenians as a tragic example of man's inhumanity to man.

As for the scuffle, George took a few moments aside from his planned speech to ask the audience to bear with the situation and try to concentrate their attention on the "meaningful occasion that has brought us together."

"There is some irony in the disruption...that you've just noticed," he said. "But I will repeat, some of us are asleep. And, there are some of us asleep in all of our groups, unfortunately."

Manjikian, a teacher in the Armenian Studies Program as well as the Reverend of Fresno's Holy Trinity Apostolic Church, observed in his speech that "in science, education, in every field, you find Armenians." He then proceeded to acknowledge that when the Armenians "first came they were 'poor' people who 'could only work in the fields.'" They were the starving Armenians. And who are they now? William Saroyan, Mike (Manix) Connors, and other famous people; look around the world. So many names we can mention — not only famous people, but creative people."

He attributes this to the typical Armenian individual who always tries "to be the best, the good citizen in whichever country he lives."



Photo by Pennie Console

Whitehurst said that the Armenians "have refused to allow atrocities, torture, and genocide to be a part of what happens on this planet we live on and love."

Haak, in expressing his appreciation of the Armenian Studies Program and the ASO on campus, called CSUF the "most Armenian university in the United States."

The president also said that we should be reminded that there are genocides still going on today, and cited Cambodia as an example.

Manjikian is opposed to the forgive and forget theory. He was met with applause when he reasoned "because if we forgive, we forget."

He termed the Armenian Genocide as the "most shameful crime in history" because of the way Turkey took the Armenians to the desert, trying to erase Armenian people from the world.

"We are still alive," Manjikian exclaimed 66 years after the Genocide that took an estimated 1.5 million Armenian lives.

Dr. Sarkis Karayan, who has done extensive research on the Genocide, spoke to a group of approximately 150 in the College Union Lounge prior to the ceremonies outside.

Karayan said that it may never be known how many Armenians were killed in the Genocide between 1914 and 1918 until the number of Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire is determined.

Karayan has researched journals, letters of missionaries, and German archives, and found an Armenian population of some 4000 Armenian villages in existence in 1914.

"Two things struck me," said Karayan of his findings. The data was from a 1952 Atlas of Soviet Armenia. "One, there was a great mistake (in numbers) in that one."

"Second, as I looked for data, I saw that many people questioned how many had been killed. What disturbed me was that the Jews had already calculated how many had been killed before the Nuremberg Trials — 4.2 to 6 million. We Armenians still don't know how many were killed." Estimates vary from 300,000 to 1.9 million.

Karayan became interested in the project after receiving a request from an old medical school professor for a source of data to determine how many Armenians were killed in World War I.

A pediatrician with the UCLA medical school, Karayan has been in the United States for the past four years.

Clockwise from top left: Black Studies Professor Dr. Hermon George; CSUF President Harold Haak; Students attending the presentation in the Free Speech Area; Fresno Mayor Daniel K. Whitehurst; Dr. Sarkis Karayan; Armenian Students Organization President Jay Khushigian; and the Reverend Yegishe Manjikian.

Exhibit, from page 4

cipate European architecture by two centuries. Numerous smaller churches and chapels constructed by the various feudal families which ruled Armenia can also be examined.

The organizers of this exhibit wanted not only to present these internationally important monuments to a wider public, but also to draw to the attention of various scholars and governments the desperate plight of many of these structures. Monuments such as the cathedral at Ani or the wonderful masterpiece of Aght'amar are in danger of collapse through sheer neglect. Since the Turkish massacres of the Armenians of 1915, many of these monuments are in territory where there are not only no Armenians, but no inhabitants at all. Aght'amar is on a deserted islands and the dome of this 9th century church is about to fall in; Ani's dome has already collapsed and many other churches in Turkey have been deliberately dynamited out of existence or mutilated in such a way that their Armenian origin has been placed in doubt.

Accompanying the exhibit is a beautiful catalogue with detailed descriptions and the plans of 66 monuments. It also contains 52 superb photographs. This collectors' item is available at the special subsidized price of \$5.00 to encourage viewers not only to purchase it for themselves but to acquire multiple copies as gifts for their close friends and relatives.

A special reception will be held on the opening evening, Sunday October 4 from 6 to 8 PM in the Phebe Conley Gallery. The reception will be preceded by an illustrated lecture explaining the exhibit in the auditorium adjacent to the gallery

by Professor Dickran Kouymjian, Director of Armenian Studies at CSU Fresno and an authority on Armenian art and architecture.

The exhibit was brought to the campus by Dr. Kouymjian and the Armenian Studies Program with the help of the Phebe Conley Gallery, the Armenian Alumni Association, the United Armenian Commemorative Committee, and the Armenian Students Organization.

To coincide with this once in a life time opportunity to study Armenian architecture while the "monuments are brought to Fresno" so to say, Dr. Kouymjian will be offering two special courses in the history and development of Armenian architecture. The first of these is a regular three credit course which will study in careful detail all the monuments in the exhibit and many more by both an analysis of the various forms used and the development of these forms over the centuries. A second course designed for the general public will be offered on two Saturdays during the course of the exhibition, October 17th and 24th. The second one credit course can be taken for credit or audited by anyone simply by registering through the University Extension Division; regular CSUF students may simply add it to their schedule. Both courses will be taught with the use of the Armenian Studies Program's rich collection of color slides and will provide comparative, illustrated material from the architectural traditions of Byzantium, Islam, and Europe. No previous knowledge of art or architecture or Armenian history is necessary for a complete understanding of these courses.

For more information on the exhibit, or the purchase of the catalogue, or registration in these courses contact the Armenian Studies Program at (209) 294-2832 or the Extension Division at (209) 294-2160.

Thank You!!

HYE SHARZHOOM WISHES TO THANK THE FOLLOWING PERSONS FOR THEIR GENEROUS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THIS NEWSPAPER AND THE CSUF ARMENIAN STUDIES PROGRAM:

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Armenian Assembly Oral History Project

The Armenian Assembly, with the cooperation of the Armenian Students Organization, the Armenian Studies Program, and the United Armenian Commemorative Committee, is working on the Armenian Oral History Project. Our purpose is to interview individuals who have survived the Armenian Genocide. We are interested in recording the story of the survivor's life in Armenia as well as his/her deportation route and life in the United States. The interviews can be conducted in Armenian or English.

We would appreciate your help in this important project. We need to approach as many survivors as possible. Please help us by listing, in the spaces below, the names, addresses and telephone numbers of those survivors you know.

Return this form to:

Ms. Cindy Avakian, Coordinator
Central California Region
6790 E. Belmont Ave.
Fresno, CA 93727

NAME

ADDRESS

TELEPHONE #
