

# ՀԱՅ ՇԱՐԺՈՒՄ ARMENIAN ACTION

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Volume 6, No. 3 The newspaper of the California State University, Fresno Armenian Students Organization  
April, 1985 and Armenian Studies Program.

Armenian Studies Program  
CSUF, Fresno, CA 93740

## ARMENIANS REMEMBER:

1.5 Armenians were massacred  
in the 1915 Armenian Genocide-  
the first holocaust of the  
20th century.

See pages 4 & 5.





# Letters to the Editor

Editor:

I perused with intense interest the February, 1985 issue of the ASO publication *Hye Sharzhoom*. Some of the articles therein were very appealing to me and I really enjoyed reading them thoroughly. To encourage your organization and its members for their devotion to "Hai Tad", I am enclosing my modest contribution.

I am sorry I have been uninformed of the existence of this publication during my stay in Fresno for the past three years. I therefore think it is an opportune time for me to extend my commendations to all those who initiated and rallied round such a well deserving undertaking. "ABRIK".

David Minier's intriguing article about his knowledge of Armenian history and his evaluation of our latest struggle for existence prompted me to share with you some of my thoughts. Taking his expose' of Yanikian's case in its entirety and reading between the lines, I think David Minier's voluntary contribution of the article to your paper purports his subtle acquiescence of the validity of our armed struggle. If it was not for the dubious United States-Turkish alliance and the overvalued importance this country attaches to the strategic bases in Turkey, Minier's verdict, even in the case of Yanikian, would have been quite different. And, I am sure, David Minier realizes that every Armenian in this country feels that way.

Sincerely,

H. D. Barsamian  
Fresno, California

Editor:

I am reading *Hye Sharzhoom* as I have many times in the past, finding it informative and enjoyable. It is more substantive than *The Armenian Observer* or *The California Courier*, both of which I subscribe to.

Giving is the issue I wish to address, however. Your staff editorial, though well intended, does injustice to the many who have given their time, energy, and love to the cause these many, many years. To say that they have invested countless dollars would be an understatement.

You must remember that we are asked to give to the church, Armenian school, alumni, U.A.C.C., the newspapers, Armenian Assembly, ARS, ARF, AGBU, to mention only a few of our fine organizations. You must not forget the March of Dimes, Christmas and Easter Seals, Channel 18, The Art Center, United Way, etc. Professional dues must be included here also. Then there are college expenses for the children and all that, which brings me to the point:

As you grow and learn to take on more responsibility, you will find that all is not as simple as we might think when we are young, bright, energetic, frustrated, and discouraged. I know, I was once like you.

Enclosed please find a check for your continued success.

Sincerely,

Richard Pandukht  
Fresno, California

Editor:

I have always enjoyed reading *Hye Sharzhoom* and continue to be impressed with the quality of writing. I hope I can continue to receive it indefinitely.

It is with a sense of shame that I write. For some time I have intended to send you a contribution, but somehow I found it convenient to postpone action until the intention faded from my memory. Your editorial, "A Cinderella Story", was very effective, at least for me in not permitting further procrastination. It is, indeed, discouraging that only five of your many readers in the Fresno area saw fit to send you a contribution.

You will find a modest contribution enclosed which you may share equally with the Armenian Studies Program.

Your February issue was one of the best of many excellent issues. I especially liked the article on Gourgen Yanikian by David Minier and the photographs of Fresno scenes. The article on Cyprus supported some of the remarks I heard from Cypriot refugees in London shortly after the Turkish invasion.

Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,

Berge Bulbulian  
Sanger, California

Editor:

Your newspaper is done in excellent journalistic style. We commend you for your interesting and factual articles and urge every Armenian family in California and other areas where your newspaper is available, to support your fine work, with generous donations.

The enclosed donation is to help you in your work and dedication, to further the cause and culture of our great people.

Congratulations on a job expertly done and our best wishes to you for much success in years ahead.

Sincerely,

Martin and Julia Koobatian  
Santa Barbara, California

## Editor's Note

On behalf of the Armenian Students Organization and the Armenian Studies Program at CSUF, we at *Hye Sharzhoom* would like to extend a warm thank you to those who have supported us with your contributions and letters.

Response to the February issue has been exceptional. A count of donations received has shown a marked increase in quality and quantity over that of the previous issue.

As always, readers from outside the Fresno area are a constant source of support. They prove that Armenians around the world are still interested in efforts to preserve and project their culture.

Support from Fresno readers has also been encouraging. In the past two months since the last issue of *Hye Sharzhoom*, Fresno Armenians have demonstrated their generosity by more than tripling the previous number of contributions. (It is hoped that the staff editorial which appeared in the February issue served as a subtle reminder of the need for assistance.)

The Fresno areas has, of course, the most to gain from the ASO and ASP. These two entities should not be seen as being exclusive to the Fresno Armenian community, but as interacting parts of a greater whole.

Finally, a special thank you must be given to Martha Ensher. Her patronage to Armenian cultural activities seems to have no end.

Editor:

I did not realize that the *Hye Sharzhoom* publication existed until my sister passed her copy on to me recently. I found it to be most informative and well written. I particularly found the Karabian map from the 20's and 30's most interesting since my mother, Mary Ensher, came from the old country at about that period. She lived with other Armenian immigrants on Hazelwood Blvd. and attended Emerson School in order to get her American citizenship. I would like a regular subscription and encourage the continued efforts of your fine publication devoted to the Armenian community throughout the world.

Sincerely yours,

Raymond Ensher  
Fresno, California

## ՀԱՅ ՇԱՐԺՈՈՒՄ

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*Hye Sharzhoom welcomes prose, poetry, articles, manuscripts, and other material from its readers. For further information concerning the newspaper or the Armenian Studies Program, contact the Armenian Studies Office (209)294-2669 or the Ethnic Studies Office (209)294-2832.*

Armenian Studies Program  
CSUF  
Fresno, CA 93740

## Bozigian presents dance workshop

Karen DeOrion  
Staff Writer

One of the foremost teachers of Armenian folk dance in the United States came to California State University, Fresno.

Tom Bozigian, a native Fresnan, gave an instructional workshop on Armenian folk dance Saturday, March 23, 1985. The Armenian Students Organization of CSUF and the CSUF Social Dance Club hosted this all day event, which not only included a dance instruction, but also a film presentation and a lecture by Bozigian.

Approximately fifty people attended each of the two sessions.

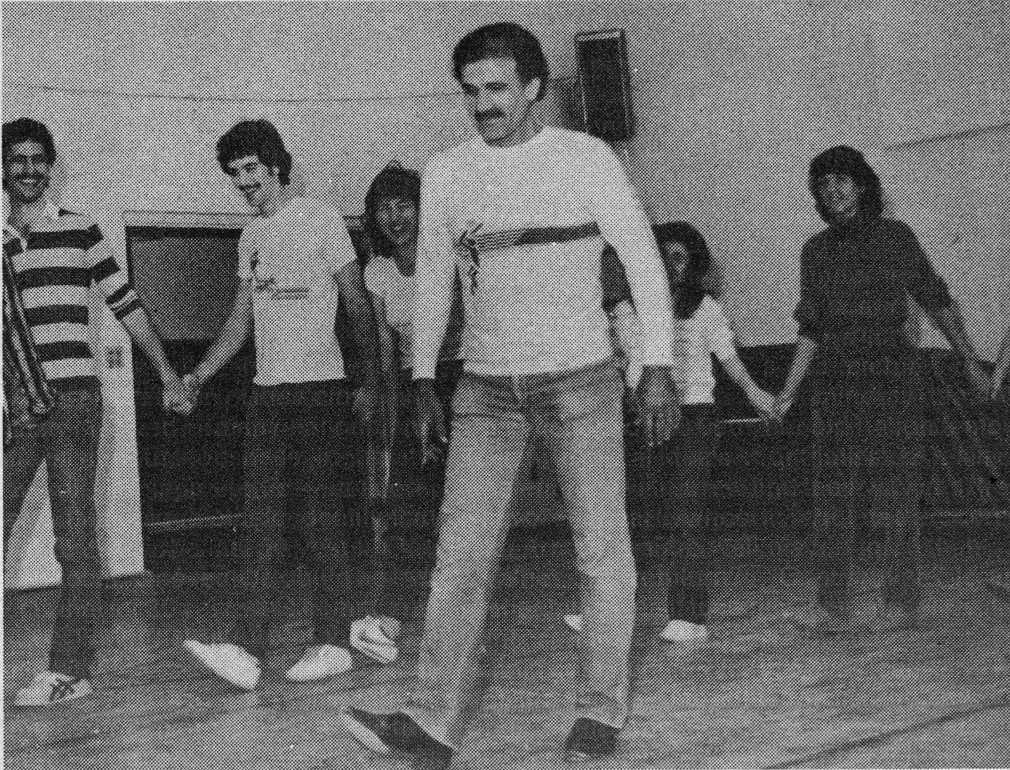
Bozigian taught such dances as *Heenkou Meg* ("Five and One"), *Kocharee* ("Goat Dance"), *Loosvee Shoghov* ("Moon-

light Dance"), *Harsneek* ("Wedding Dance"), *Miserlou*, *Ambee Dageets* ("From Beneath a Cloud"), *Sulemani*, and *Tamzara*.

The students found that most of the dances were easily learned, although a few of the steps were quite difficult to follow. Regardless of the complexity of the dance, an enjoyable time was had by all.

Bozigian's aim was to teach non-Armenian and Armenian students some of the more popular folk dances which could be put to use at community functions. He taught the importance of the leader's role in a line dance as well as the importance of being a follower. Females received special instruction on how to gracefully and artisti-

See Bozigian, page 8



Bozigian taught for six hours and moments like these were frequent.

Aram K. Messerlian/Hye Sharzhoom



# "TRUE HEROISM"

By Marc E. Agabashian  
Contributing Writer

Historical research  
By Robert Vartabedian

Armenian-Americans, in order to confirm their allegiance to the United States, have traditionally attempted to undermine their commitment to the "Old World," with false charges or innuendoes. Feeling secure as conservative members of an established order in an aggressor nation, Armenian-Americans are ill to compare themselves with the hapless defenders of an autonomous minority. People who sit so well with the earth's strongest nation shyly return to align themselves with one of the world's weakest. For many Anglo-Armenians, the genocide serves as the historical focal point of embarrassment, rather than sorrow or anger, and justifies the clamor for Americanism rather than Armenianism — all this in a shallow world that admires winners and denegrates losers.

These Americans suggest that the Armenian generations involved in the genocide were either religious zealots, sold out to the Turks, or were outright cowards — anything but courageous warriors defending their land. To these Americans I say you are wrong; this simply is not the case. As was the case with the American-Indians, Armenians were trapped within the confines of a more powerful nation and faced an army of astronomical proportions. With inferior arms, numbers, and no supplies or medical facilities, they, like the American-Indians before them, fought long after there was no hope. The cases are not few, but many. For the convenience of my star-spangled friends, however, I would like to cite some lesser known examples.

## ZEITUN 1895-1896

Zeitun was a town in Cilician Armenia. The population of the province, almost totally Armenian, was estimated to be around 25,000 people. During the period 1894-1896, 300,000 Armenians were massacred by Turkish and Kurdish soldiers and townspeople as a response to grievances issued by Armenians to the Turkish government, requesting provincial reform. In realization of the massacres taking place throughout the empire, the Armenians of Zeitun launched an offensive of their own. They attacked the Turkish garrison in the city, confiscated the guns, canon and ammunition, and took 400 Turkish soldiers as prisoners. In retribution the Armenians attacked the surrounding Turkish villages, forming for a short time a safe, free Armenia.

The Sultan, enraged at the audacity of the Zeituntzees, retaliated by sending 20,000 Turkish regulars and 30,000 Bashi-Bozooks (coalition militia made up of Muslims of low social standing) to Cilicia. The Turkish forces began by attacking outlying areas controlled by Armenians. The Turkish army drove the Armenians back toward Zeitun and, in December 1895, laid siege upon the city. The Turkish Army held seven major offensive against Zeitun before finally agreeing to an armistice in January 1896.

The Armenians, refusing to deal with the Turks, held the subsequent armistice mediations through the British Ambassador Sir Philip Currie. But before the hostilities ended, the surrounded Armenians, who had experienced only minor casualties, left 15,000 Turkish regulars dead in the field.

## FUNDIJAK 1915

Approximately ten miles southwest of Marash was the small town of Fundijak of 1600 persons. When news of the 1915 massacres and deportations reached Fundijak, the townspeople opened their doors to refugees from nearby villages, stored the village, and then prepared to defend the city. Fundijak was a mountain town and as such there was only one pass through which the city could be entered; thus, it was easily defensible.

The Turkish government ordered Captain Omar Bey to subdue Fundijak with a force of Gendarmes (Turkish police) and Turkish townspeople. The fighting raged through the city streets and market places, but finally the Turkish force was completely liquidated.



Upon hearing of these events, the outraged district commander in Adana, Ali Bey, ordered a force of 8000 Turkish regulars to crush Fundijak. Ali Bey, hoping to avoid a protracted battle, tried to trick the Armenians into surrender with offers of peace and general amnesty. Three Armenian clergymen from Marash were sent into Fundijak with the Turkish government terms — all were rejected. The rejection added to the irritation of the Turkish officials, who immediately ordered an attack for the next day. At the time of the attack, there were only 500 Armenians left healthy enough to fight; of these, only half had modern weapons. Still the Armenians held the Turkish army at bay. The Turkish commander, worried for his troops, began shelling Fundijak into submission. The artillery laid open the village for twenty-four hours when the Turks finally entered the town. Seeing that St. Mary's Church was filled with Armenian women and children, they subsequently burnt it to the ground. Eventually the whole of Fundijak was subdued, but not before the Turkish army paid a tremendous price.

Many Armenians under the command of famous freedom fighter Aram Bey Cholakian hid in the Evangelical Church, escaped under the cloak of darkness, and resumed the resistance in the surrounding mountains. In partial retribution for their 7000 casualties, the Turks had the captured Armenian fighters, women, and children taken to nearby Marash, where they were hung and shot for the entertainment of the local Muslim population. Aram Cholakian and his men, however, continued to raise such havoc among the Turks that they renamed the mountain *Gavor Dag* — Infidel Mountain. Many of the men survived countless encounters with the enemy and lived to tell about it at the end of the war.

## LEGION D'ORIENT 1916-1922

Armenian soldiers who had fought the long valiant struggle at Musa Dag escaped and later grouped with other Armenian refugees and prisoners of war at Port Said, Egypt. The Armenian soldiers, having no other taste for life in the camp and eager to meet the Turks again on the battlefield, approached French representatives in Egypt seeking a military sponsor. An agreement was reached and, in November 1916, the French government created the Legion d'Orient.

A training facility was established on Cyprus under the French Colonel De Piepade and another fifty French officers, all of whom were highly experienced. In July 1918, three battalions of Armenians (approximately 3000 men), along with a company of Syrians and artillery, entered into Palestine and took position facing the 7th Ottoman Army under the command of Mustafa Kemal Pasha (who would later become the first president of the Turkish Republic). After stopping the 7th Ottoman Army, the Legion took part in the capture of the Heights of Arara in Palestine, a strategically important victory along the Mediterranean coast. The Turks were driven northward by the Legion d'Orient and, by the end of September 1918, had been rooted out of Palestine and Syria. Renamed the Armenian Legion, the soldiers spent the next three years fighting in the occupation of Cilicia, Asia Minor. British theatre commander General Edmund Allenby, following the Cilician occupation, stated:

"The Armenians have fought brilliantly and have played a great part in the victory."

From 1919 to 1922 the Armenian contingent watched the French forces slowly withdraw from Cilicia. Knowing full well the consequences, the Armenians chose to attempt to defend Cilicia. Shortly following the final withdrawal of the French, the Armenians were engaged by the Kemalist nationalist troops; by mid-1922 almost all of the Armenian Legion had died brutally in battle.

## SARDARABAD 1918

When the Turkish army entered the Yerevan province of Russian Armenia in May 1918, they had as their goal the final liquidation of the Armenians as a people.

After the Bolshevik Revolution, the Turks made preparations for an offensive across the Erzingan Truce line in Turkish Armenia. On February 1, 1918 the Turkish army launched an all out offensive against the Armenian front. For four months the Turks drove the Armenians back until the Armenians took hold in the fields of Sardarabad.

A life and death struggle was to unfold. If the Turks were allowed to break through, they would massacre the remaining Armenians, completing their plan of Armenian extermination. Armenia as a nation and as a people would be finished. To defend the Yerevan District (Central Armenia), the Armenians had six-thousand war torn troops hardened from years of battle. The Armenian commander General Toumas Nazerbekian spread his men over three fronts to face a Turkish army of over twice that number. In the savage fighting that followed, the Armenians were driven back to Karakitsia, where they finally held firm.

On May 22, 1918 a Turkish army of 15,000 men attacked the Armenians at Sardarabad. The Armenian soldiers, under Generals M. J. Silikian and Drastamat 'Dro' Kanayan, held the Turks in the fiercest fighting of the war and then drove them back 30 miles to the west. The generals wanted to continue the offensive when they received word that an armistice had been reached between the Ottoman government and the Armenian National Council (the provincial Armenian government). The generals were enraged by what they thought was treachery



by their own civilian government. In fact, General Antranig left the Yerevan District and went to Nakhichevan, where he would never again have anything to do with the Armenian government. The general always maintained that troop moral was high and a prolonged offensive as far as Alexandropol or even Kars may have succeeded. Regardless, the Armenians saved Yerevan from the Turks so that on May 28, 1918 and independent Armenia was proclaimed.

For the Armenian-Americans who have leveled the gavel of cowardice against their forefathers, I remind you that these examples are not the exception but the norm. Volumes have been and could yet be written on Armenian armies, freedom fighters, ad hoc units, guerilla warriors, etc., who have faced tremendous odds in the pursuit of liberty. Those who have read Armenian history from Tigranes I, to Murad of Sebastia, cannot help but being impressed by their bravery.



# THE CHILDREN ARE CALLING AGAIN...

## Armenia — 1915



## Ethiopia — 1985



### **Starvation. Suffering. Death.**

**The news of Armenia seventy years ago.**

**Americans responded with generosity, donating tens of millions of dollars to save Armenian lives**

**and rescue a nation. Today, Armenians in America have the opportunity to share that same spirit of generosity. Today, the cry of pain belongs to Ethiopia.**

**The CSUF Armenian Students Organization asks that you commemorate the tragedy of the Armenian Genocide by relieving the tragedy in Ethiopia. As Armenians, we understand suffering. We recall the agony of our own 1.5 million martyrs. But now, we as a people can do something about the agony of others.**

**This April 24, remember by giving. In the name of the martyrs. In the name of our fellow Christians in the Ethiopian Church. In the name of humanity. Your contribution will allow the Armenian Students Organization to make a united statement of compassion on behalf of Armenians everywhere.**

*Please complete this form and mail it along with your donation to:*

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

*Make checks payable to: Armenian Students Organization. The ASO will present a collective donation to the International Red Cross.*

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**AMOUNT OF DONATION:** \_\_\_\_\_



## CSUF Commemorative Activities

# Hovannisian to lead off lecture series

By Vahe K. Messerlian  
Editor

Dr. Richard Hovannisian, Professor of Armenian and Near Eastern History at the University of California, Los Angeles, will speak at California State University, Fresno on Sunday, April 14. Hovannisian's topic will be "Denial of Genocide: The Armenian Case."

The lecture, the first in a series of commemorative activities at CSUF, will take place in the CSUF Satellite College Union at 3:00 p.m. and is open to the public.

Hovannisian will discuss the history of the denial of the Armenian Genocide, including the recent campaign of Turkish denial. In the past decade, Turkish leaders have stepped up efforts to distort the facts of 1915 in order to counter intensified Armenian political and militant activity. The resulting Turkish strategy has been aimed toward public opinion and officials in federal government.

Professor Hovannisian presented a paper on the subject of genocide denial at the International Conference on the Holocaust and Genocide. His scholarship has focused on the Armenian Question in the Ottoman Empire and on the short-lived Armenian Republic (1918-1920).

Hovannisian, a native of Tulare, California, received his doctorate in History from UCLA and went on to teach there in 1969. In 1979, he was appointed as Associate Director of the UCLA Near Eastern Center and, since that same year, has represented California on the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE).

Dr. Hovannisian is well-known for pioneering the Armenian Oral History project, which records the lives of survivors of the massacres and their accounts of the Genocide. He is the published author of numerous research articles and books and is currently working on the third volume of *The Republic of Armenia*.

Also speaking on campus will be Mark Arax of the *Los Angeles Times* and Dr. Dickran Kouymjian, Professor of Armenian Studies at CSUF.

Arax, a Fresno State graduate, will speak on Thursday, April 18 on "The Armenian Question in the Media." The lecture will begin at 7:30 p.m. in the CSUF Upstairs Cafeteria, Room 200.

The lecture will entail a discussion of Armenians in the media, and a comparative analysis of how the Jews and Armenians present their cases via the media.

Born and raised in Fresno, Arax received his B.A. from CSUF and then obtained

his M.A. in Journalism from Columbia University, where he graduated fourth in his class. At CSUF, he was the editor of *Insight* and *The Daily Collegian*.

Arax has written several published works on the Genocide, William Saroyan, and his family.

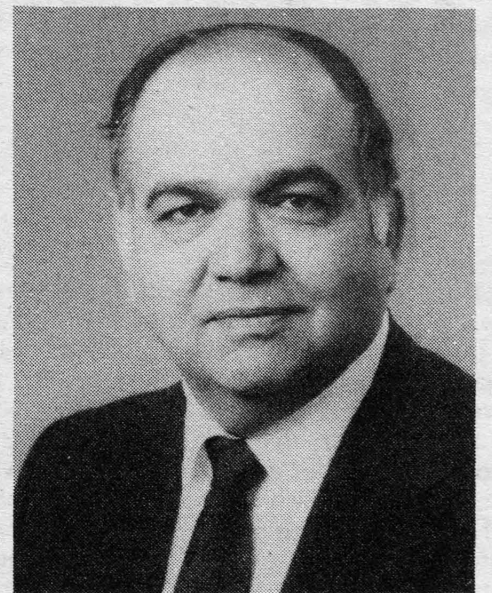
The final lecture will be given by Dr. Dickran Kouymjian, who is on leave this semester from his teaching position at CSUF. The talk will take place on Thursday, April 25 in the College Union Room 312-314 and will begin at 7:30.

Kouymjian will lecture on "The Destruction of Armenian Monuments as a Continuation of the Turkish Policy of Genocide." His presentation will be illustrated by slides of Armenian churches which have suffered deliberate destruction.

Kouymjian spoke on the same subject at the Permanent Tribunal of the People last year as testimony for the Armenian Case.

Kouymjian, the Coordinator of the CSUF Armenian Studies Program, will be returning from Paris to give a series of lectures on the East Coast (April 14-April 21) before traveling to the West Coast.

Also part of the commemorative program is a showing of the film, "Nahapet." This moving documentary, which is in Armenian (without English subtitles), de-



Prof. Richard Hovannisian

picts one man's survival through the Genocide and the beginning of a new life as he emigrates to Soviet Armenia.

"Nahapet" will play on Sunday, April 21 at 7:30 p.m. in the College Union Room 312-314.

The lectures and film are sponsored by the CSUF Armenian Students Organization and Armenian Studies Program. Admission is free to all events

## 70th Anniversary Commemoration of the 1915 Armenian Genocide



April 14, Sunday — *Dr. Richard Hovannisian, Professor of Armenian and Near Eastern History at UCLA, will lecture on "Denial of Genocide: The Armenian Case." CSUF Satellite College Union at 3:00 p.m.*

April 18, Thursday — *Mark Arax, metropolitan reporter of the Los Angeles Times, will speak on "The Armenian Question in the Media." CSUF Upstairs Cafeteria, Room 200 at 7:30 p.m.*

April 21, Sunday — *Film showing of "Nahapet." College Union Room 312-314 at 7:30 p.m.*

April 25, Thursday — *Dr. Dickran Kouymjian, Professor of Armenian Studies at CSUF, will lecture on "The Destruction of Armenian Monuments as a Continuation of the Turkish Policy of Genocide." College Union Room 312-314 at 7:30 p.m.*

FREE ADMISSION

SPONSORED BY THE CSUF ARMENIAN STUDENTS ORGANIZATION AND  
ARMENIAN STUDIES PROGRAM

## Kouymjian to speak on East Coast

PROVIDENCE—The Armenian Students' Association is setting precedent by jointly commemorating its 75th anniversary and the 70th year marking the beginning of the Armenian Genocide. The Board of Trustees and the Central Executive Committee will be offering to their members and the general public a series of lectures on the "Meaning of the Genocide in 1985."

In order to provide as wide and dynamic a discussion as possible, the Armenian Students' Association has asked Dr. Dickran Kouymjian, Professor of Armenian Studies at California State University, Fresno, to address its various branches throughout the month of April.

Special emphasis will be placed on the powerful verdict made against the Turkish state in April, 1984 at the conclusion of the session of the Armenian Genocide by the Permanent Tribunal of the People in Paris.

Kouymjian testified at the Tribunal on the subject of "The Destruction of Armenian Monuments as a Continuation of the Turkish Policy of Genocide."

Kouymjian will also speak on the meaning of Genocide today and address such questions as, "Are Armenians too obsessively caught up with the Genocide? Should they focus more on positive aspects of their history and culture?"

Dr. Kouymjian's schedule is as follows: April 14, New York City; April 15, Syracuse; April 16, Worcester; April 17, Boston; April 18, Fairfield County, Conn.; April 19, Providence; April 20, Washington, D.C.; and April 21, Philadelphia. He is also a participant at the NAASR-Bentley Genocide Conference on April 20.

For further information or questions, please contact:

Armenian Students' Association  
P.O. Box 6947  
Providence, RI 02940



# Armenian American Contribution in America

By Vahe Oshagan

It used to be said that "the sun never sets on the British Empire". The same can be said of the Armenians since the 17th century, and even more now. They have been a restless, centrifugal people, settling in all five continents and contributing in some way to all the host countries, from the Byzantine Empire in the 5th century AD to the present time.

It is necessary to define the concept of "Contribution". From a strictly Armenian point of view, the mere presence of survival of their nation constitutes in itself a contribution to mankind because the Armenians conceive of themselves as agents of cultural and economic progress, a vision that has determined their entire history. Hence the secret of their tradition of survival — to adapt to the world without changing, or rather, to adapt all the while fully realizing that the basic realities of life do not ever change. So that, historically, contribution means adaptation to the host country and, given some of the characteristics of the Armenians -- love of work, talent for building, skill in manual labor, spirit of enterprise (I exclude the business sense as that is a recent phenomenon and is true only for a very small class of Armenians), sense of communal solidarity -- it becomes obvious why Armenians would always contribute something wherever they settle. Against this definition we have the non-Armenian concept of contribution -- a participation that makes a difference, adds something that is meaningful, that enhances the donor and the recipient at the same time.

There are in all 6,000,000 Armenians with the greatest concentrations in Soviet Armenian (3,000,000) and North America (600,000). Although the first Armenian on record to come to this country goes back to 1618 (one Martin the Armenian, a gentleman's gentleman and later a planter in Virginia) the bulk came in three waves. The first came in 1896-1913 and the second in 1920-1930, both as direct results of Turkish genocidal attempts on the Armenian populations of the Ottoman Empire. The third started in mid-70s as a result of the disruption of the political and economic structures in the Arab Middle East and in Iran. The major contributions to America are the work of the first two immigrations, while that of the last is still not clearly perceptible.

By 1935, there were approximately 300,000 Armenians in this land, concentrated mainly along the East Coast and the Fresno area, and they were, in the purest sense of the word, men and women who had come to remake their lives, people in search of dignity, security, and happiness. When we say "dignity", it should not be understood to mean that they were morally desitute, uncivilized, illiterate peasants. They had inherited an ancient culture, they had a language, a church and an art of their own; they were Christians, and although most of them were peasants, the rate of literacy in their native tongue was quite high, 92%, higher than in most comparable communities. Very few of course knew any English but they soon learned it, reluctantly, to the point that within two generations, by 1972, only 10% used Armenian at home! The dignity is the basic respect a human being needs to make life worth living and which they lacked totally in the Ottoman Empire. The same applies to security.

This brings us to the heart of the question of contribution. I think we can say that the contribution of an ethnic group makes is largely a function of its culture. So, what did the Armenians bring with them, what is the image of Man in traditional Armenian culture? It is one characterized by the very high value placed on its ability to *survive*, an almost total absolute priority. All else serves this purpose and hence has less importance. These values are -- strong family and ethnic links, reliance on emotions, ethics of hard work, of sacrifice, love of church and country, a strong sense of ethnic uniqueness and difference from the rest of the world, attachment to moral values. In the field of art, this attitude creates a pragmatic or rather utilitarian approach to art, a submissive spirit vis a vis the Establishment, hostility to innovative persons and movements of dissidence, in a word, for the Armenians, their art and culture should be used as *means of survival* rather than as expressions of personal joy or despair. Such was the cultural ideology of the immigrant communities. Furthermore, Armenians came burdened with a crushing sense of inferiority. And the unwritten law of the new land may have told them — keep a low profile, adapt or perish. And adapt they did, as quickly and as reluctantly as they could, some changing their names aping the local accent.

A passive, complexed, uprooted people in a highly competitive, showy, aggressive, action-oriented society. So they were discriminated, persecuted, as in Fresno in the 1910s. But one thing they could do better than anyone else -- work, the basic ethical principle of the country. Hence no one thought of the future because they had no option but the present, the fight for *survival*. No Armenian schools were built while the law of survival made them construct walls around themselves to keep the hostile world away until they gained respectability and were accepted. From a different angle, we can say that the Armenian traditional identity and culture were incompatible with the American identity and civilization.

Under these conditions, what contribution could Armenians make? Perhaps it is ridiculous to think that a minority of 0.002% can make a difference. The fact is that it has! I will consider the question from two angles -- the popular culture and the elite culture.

As a people, the Armenians have achieved prominence in almost every facet of American life and the percentage of Armenians who have made their marks in the various American professions, industries and trades is stunningly higher than the percentage of 0.002% they represent of the total American demography. With an estimated 10,000 physicians, 5,000 attorneys, over 2,000 university professors, thousands of engineers, businessmen, over 100 millionaires and nationally renowned individuals in almost every branch of human activity, the Armenians are second to none among the nationalities. This popular culture includes the entertainment industry and sports, politics, the business world, the military and mass media. One outstanding example is the Armenian agricultural and horticultural community in Fresno, California, in the 1930s. It is generally held that these Armenian peasants played an important role in developing the melon and wine industry of the region.

It is not my purpose to paint the Armenian Image in bright colors because, if you

read the Armenian papers and literature, you will get a very dark picture. All writers day and night lament the fact that assimilation is taking a very heavy toll on the community -- loss of traditions, loss of language, intermarriage with non-Armenians, decline in interest toward the community, transformation of the church into a social club, etc. In other words, contribution to a foreign culture or society appears to be conditioned by a large degree of assimilation within that society. Contribution has therefore its price, it's a double-edged sword which cuts both ways. However, the Armenian Americans (they prefer to call themselves American Armenian, making thus the former an adjective to the latter which remains a noun...) maintain that assimilation has in no way diminished their feeling of belonging to the Armenian nation nor their love for Armenia.

A second level of contribution is constituted by the artistic elite. Armenians pride themselves on being an artistically gifted, creative people and there is some truth to that. The Saroyan phenomenon is world-famous but what is less well-known is that Saroyan also forms part of the long line of Armenian provincial and rural writers extending not only back into the 19th century Armenian provinces of Turkey but also forward in this century and in this country in the person of writers like Levon Surmelian, Hamasdegh, Peniamin Nourigian, Vahe Hayg, Aram Haigaz and others. There is no doubt Saroyan is the most important Armenian American novelist, short story writer and playwright whose example gives substance to the chances of survival of ethnic literatures in the United States. That is why a man of his stature

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*"for the Armenians, their art and culture should be used as means of survival, rather than as expressions of personal joy or despair."*

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can belong equally to two literatures at the same time, Armenian and American, because contributions do often work both ways. The spontaneous, warm-hearted characters, his humanism, his deep understanding of and sympathy for the underprivileged, folksy classes of society come directly from the Armenian historical experience and tie the two literatures together. By and large, Armenian poets and prose-writers of some distinction numbering perhaps a hundred, have not strayed too far from the ethnic themes, and maybe the model they used was Saroyan. Poets like Diana der Hovannissian, prose-writers like Peter Sourian are already accepted by the American literary establishment and that acceptance is the major condition that validates the idea of Armenian contribution to America and vice versa.

But few achievements highlight better the effort of the American Armenian intelligentsia to serve both cultures than the two quarterlies *The Armenian Review* and *Ararat*. The first, published in Boston since 1946, is devoted to historical, social and literary scholarship centered on the Armenian cultural history, while *Ararat*, published in New York since 1959, has been a forum for critical and creative writers of Armenian descent, as well as non-Armenians. Both have acquired recognition as first-class publications by English-speaking scholars and writers, and there is no doubt that they can easily hold their own against anything comparable published in the Armenian world. Unfortunately, their combined readership doesn't exceed 2,000 and this fact reflects a serious crisis in the American Armenian community.

Music is another area of valid Armenian contribution to the American cultural scene. Composers like Alan Hovhannes and Richard Yardumian, musicians like Cath Berberian, Varouhan Kodjian, Roupen Gregorian, Ani and Aida Kavafian, Lucine Amara, Lili Chookasian and Dicran Atamian are astride both cultures. Again, people like Hovhannes and Yardumian practice an art that draws inspiration from both ethnic, national traditions and American sources. On the plan of scholarship, the endowed chairs in Armenian Studies at UCLA and Harvard University, as well as programs in Armenian language, history, art and letters at Columbia University, at the Universities of Southern California, Fresno, Pennsylvania and Michigan have made the United States second only to the Soviet Armenian Academy with respect to research and teaching in Armenian culture. The entire Diaspora looks to the United States for academic excellence and leadership. This, to my mind, is an important contribution and it enhances both the Armenian community and the American nation in the eyes of the Armenians all over the world.

There is a third level, probably the most important at which Armenians have made meaningful contributions to America. Far from being a question of elite, this concerns the entire Armenian population. I'm talking about the ethnic temperament and way of life, and what it means in the present context.

We have already seen some elements of this temperament. The fact is that everything in this temperament rejects the Melting Pot model that some quarters try to impose on America. The Armenians without exception fanatically believe that their ethnic identity *should* be preserved at all costs, short of denial of their American loyalty. Furthermore, they are convinced that it *can* be preserved despite disturbing evidence to the contrary. This stand, however irrational and emotional it may appear, is shared by the entire nation and in fact supplies much of the spiritual energy with which the American Armenians are fighting the whole world to liberate their homeland from Turkish occupation. I mention this to give you some idea of the kind of force that sustains the Armenians and their determination to survive. If the



# ASO teams post winning seasons

## ASO I gains playoff birth; loses in opening round

By Randy Balorian  
Assistant Editor

Led by a talented and cat-like-quick front line, *ASO I* qualified for this season's CSUF intramural basketball playoffs.

It marked the first time in ASO intramural history where an athletic team of any kind has reached post-season play.

Center Mark Tufenkjian anchored the ASO front line and was flanked by forwards Gary Kazanjian and Joe Padilla. Although the trio is not as bulky as most front lines go, the three more than compensated for their lack of size with four-

plus years of playing experience and superior jumping ability.

"We seem to compliment each other very well," said team captain Kazanjian.

Indeed, anyone who was able to watch the team play would be quick to comment on the special contributions made by each player: Tufenkjian, on his inside scoring and rebounding play; Kazanjian, on his shot-blocking prowess; and Joe Padilla, on his outside shooting and timely rebounding.

Despite being placed in a tough league (three of the five teams qualified for the playoffs), *ASO I* managed to post a 3-1

record with the lone loss coming at the hands of the powerhouse *Celtics*. In addition, *ASO I* was ranked 11th in the intramural poll.

After defeating *Wednesday's Trash* in the final regular season contest, the *ASO I* squad felt they were in good position to make inroads into the post-season tournament.

"We had a lot of confidence going into the playoffs," said Kazanjian.

*ASO I* was matched with 10th ranked *Bad Manners* in the first round of the playoffs. In a low scoring affair which saw more that its share of fouls, missed shots, and inconsistent officiating, *ASO I* led at half-time by a 5-point margin.

However, in the end the foul situation proved to be *ASO I*'s undoing. Tufenkjian and Kazanjian fouled out with five and two minutes to go, respectively. "The officiating was the worst of the season,

and definitely had a factor in the outcome of the game," said Kazanjian.

With certain defeat staring them in the face, the *ASO I* squad mounted a furious rally. Not to be out-done by the front line's success, guards Lance Armo, Charles Mugrdechian, Mark Kazanjian, and Jim Kirkorian formed a make-shift alignment which held *Bad Manners* virtually scoreless in the final minutes.

A small, but vocal, crowd of ASO rooters looked on as Joe Padilla sunk a clutch 15-footer to pull the team within a basket. Successive missed free-throws by *Bad Manners* provided the break the squad needed. But, *ASO I* was unable to convert on their last two possessions and ultimately fell to a 33-31 defeat.

Although disappointed and angered at the game's final outcome, Kazanjian expressed that he was glad to bring a winning season to ASO sports fans.

## ASO II makes successful first appearance

By Vince Gambero  
Staff Writer

At the onset of this year's intramural basketball season, *ASO II* seemed determined to prove the critics wrong.

While *ASO I* was marching into the playoffs, the *ASO II* squad was completing an impressive 3-1 season. Because the team competed in the lower just-for-fun league, they did not have the opportunity to qualify for post season play.

The main forces on the team were point-guard Vince Gambero, off-guard Randy Balorian, forwards Vahe Messerlian and Bob Vartabedian, and center John Tufenkjian. Forwards Jim Malkasian and Aram Messerlian, along with guard Don Arax, rounded out the rest of the squad.

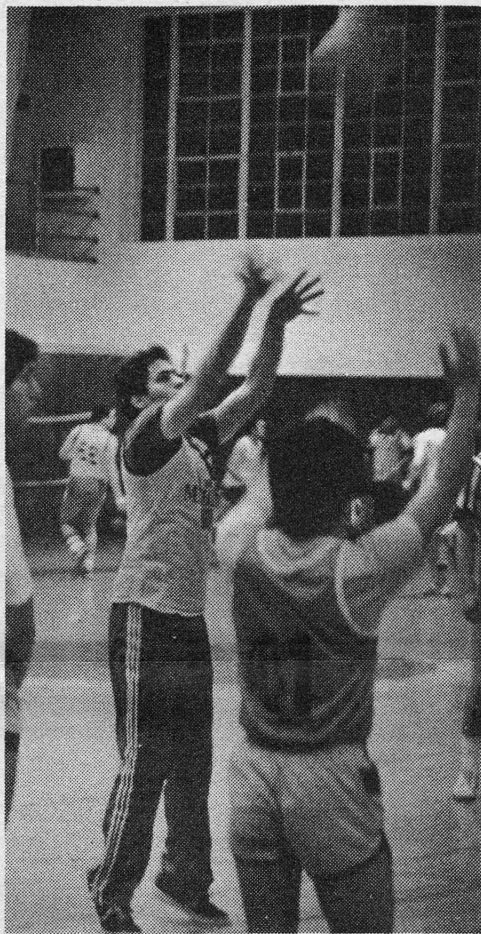
*ASO II* held the upper hand in the three wins with such scores as 25-23 (OT), 51-13, and 37-25. The only loss was a 44-34 set-back to the eventual league champs, *The Land Butchers*.

As player-coach Randy Balorian noted, "If you didn't know any better, you would think that we have all been playing together for years."

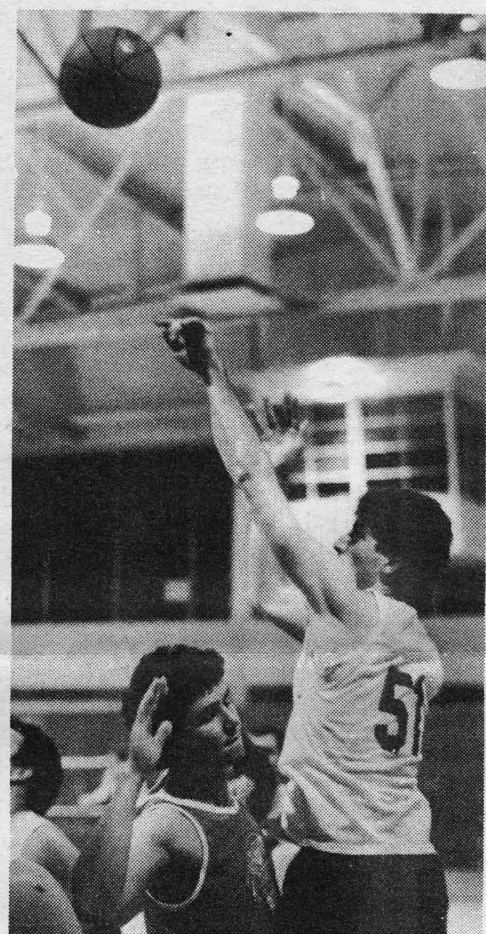
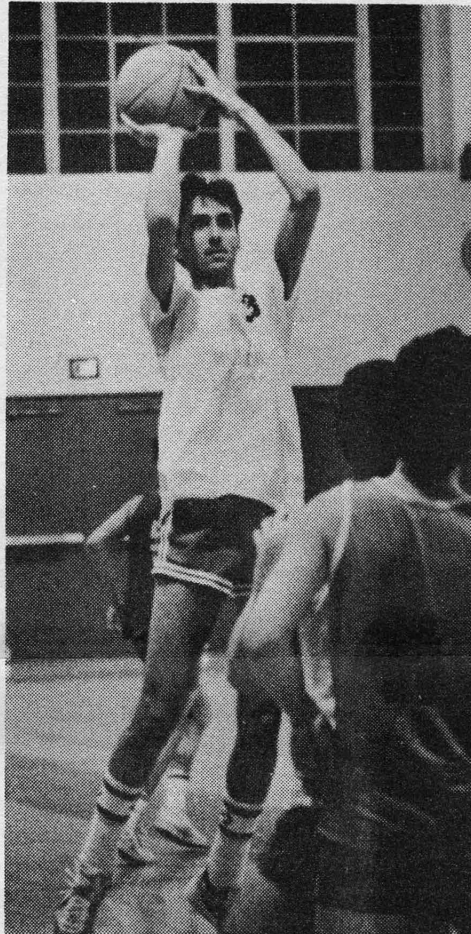
The truth of the matter is that this was the first time the team had played competitive basketball together.

The same group of players had suffered through a dismal intramural football campaign. "After struggling in football, it's sure nice to redeem ourselves in basketball," said guard Don Arax.

By the beginning of the regular season,



Left: ASO II reserve Jim Malkasian hits a clutch free throw. Center: Forward Gary Kazanjian of ASO I takes the open shot. Right: ASO I high-scorer Mark Tufenkjian shoots over a defender.



Massis Chahbazian/ Hye Sharzhoom

each player seemed to be familiar with his role on the court: Gambero as the play-maker, though he took scoring honors in the final two contests; Vartabedian as the rebounding, fast-breaking, and occasional outside shooting forward; Tufenkjian as the dominant rebounding center; and V. Messerlian as the do-everything forward.

The reserves, Malkasian, A. Messerlian,

and Arax, also played key roles with timely scoring and rebounding.

All players displayed the intensity which led them to their winning record. Vahe Messerlian probably said it best when he stated, "If we started to struggle, someone would take charge and guide us to victory."

Messerlian proved to be more than a match for opposing centers. There were

many instances where he would crash the offensive boards, giving second and third efforts until finally getting the hoop.

The showing by this first year *ASO II* team was strong and can only get better. The players are looking forward to next year when they may possibly take one step upward and enter the men's independent league.

## Contribution

continued from page 6

Turks could not destroy them no one can! It's this kind of passionate thinking that the Armenians bring to their rejection of the Melting Pot theory. Another aspect of this rejection bears on the Armenian vision of history. For a variety of reasons, they believe that their future lies behind them, is in their past. Armenian political thinking places the Golden Age, the Heroic Age back in the past — here again it is at odds with the American attitude which is forward-looking and committed to the principle of Progress. A contemporary Soviet Armenian poet of some standing, Razmig Tavoyan, said recently in a poem that if an Armenian, in his movement in time, doesn't meet his ancestors then he has taken the wrong direction. This then, is the major Armenian contribution — the staunch support of the pluralistic, polyethnic society of America. The Armenians bring to this ideal all the force of their close-knit family traditions, all the strength of their passionately involved human relations, and they support it with all the virtues of almost atavistic industriousness, ingenuity, perseverance and versatility, as well as the love of all things ethnic — folklore, food, dances, songs, dresses, etc. It is to preserve this unique ethnic identity that they have built about 200 churches in the United States in the last 50 years. One thing however, the Armenians never did — build schools. One reason could be that they had no intention of taking root here. Another is that for 30 years this community helped finance a great part of the cultural and social infrastructure of the other communities of the Diaspora because it was the wealthiest of all and was inspired by the example of American generosity. Unfortunately hardly any intellectual or moral help was forthcoming from overseas and the American Armenians to this day have to look after their needs by their own means. The recent immigration of vast numbers of Armenians from the Eastern Diaspora (the Arab Middle East and Iran as well as Soviet Armenia) has created two parallel intelligentsias and two masses of Armenians of different cultural backgrounds, especially in the West Coast who

have difficulty of communication and cooperation. This is an added strain on a community already plagued by administrative division in the Armenian church and political tensions. In spite of all this, the last twenty years have witnessed a certain revival of ethnic culture, due mainly to immigrant initiative. There are today 18 Armenian day schools functioning in the United States, 28 periodicals are published in the United States, of which 10 are in the English language. There are four major resource and research centers, of which NAASR (The National Association of Armenian Studies and Research, founded in 1950 by the Armenian American community) is the best known, scores of libraries and bookstores, etc. The list is long, but one thing is clear -- the Armenian community is in a state of turmoil and transformation under the impact of the massive new immigration that has given rise to a veritable culture-shock. Under these conditions, it is rather difficult to foresee the shape Armenian contribution will take in the future.

I have tried to give a fair picture, but it is very hard to do justice to the innumerable ways a small minority can influence a great country like America. The wisdom of a 3,000 year old nation tempered by great suffering, its example of loyalty to moral ideals of patriotism, of family love and all sorts of solid virtues of an ancient race will surely find their way into the lives of others and perhaps serve as a king of spiritual flywheel to regulate the course of a society so difficult to harmonize. The Armenians are well placed to do that.

What of the future? "Contribution" is an issue raised only with the smaller nationalities, as if to justify their presence, their continued independent existence. Who speaks of WASP, Irish, German or Italian contributions? These powerful ethnic communities are the Americans and would perhaps not feel very unhappy to see the smaller ones disappear. But the Armenians are here to stay as Armenians and Americans at the same time, and one has the feeling that the very incompatibility between their two identities, their tensions and frictions, will be a motivation to contribute to both.

--Hal Endanik



## Bozgian

continued from page 2

cally move their hands in both lines and solo dances.

After six hours of teaching, Bozgian showed a film presentation of his travels and studies in Soviet Armenia, where he spent two years in Yerevan, the oldest capital in the Soviet Union. Bozgian is a graduate of the Sayat Nova State Choreographic School. He also researched ethnic songs and dances in coordination with the Ethnographic Institute of the University of Yerevan. Bozgian brought back many dances to teach his students.

When he is not busy teaching or performing, Bozgian spends much of his time choreographing stage productions. Although he does not create new folk dances for the stage, he does alter the old dances so they may be made pleasing to watch by a seated audience.

Bozgian has spent many years traveling around the world teaching Armenian dances. He commented that everyone has

been receptive to his lessons, but the Dutch and Japanese demonstrated a great enthusiasm and a quick talent for learning the dances. "They (the Dutch and Japanese) love it," said Bozgian.

Bozgian feels a great responsibility to pass down the historical dances of his ancestors which are slowly being lost. He said, "Many of the dances that the immigrants brought over are being lost, especially now that the number of original immigrants is getting fewer and fewer." Bozgian wants to preserve these traditions, so he visits the remaining immigrants to learn their dances. Often, he learns these dances verbally. "It's not easy to learn, but it's all that's left," said Bozgian. He further added that many of the informants are already too old to perform the steps themselves.

As a man of determination who has achieved much in his life, what does he plan to do next? Bozgian responded that he would like to travel around the world again, continue to teach, and to perpetuate the heritage of Armenian provincial folk dances.



Folk dance enthusiasts seem to be enjoying themselves.

Aram K. Messerlian/Hye Sharzhoom



Bozgian pauses a moment to explain some Armenian words.

Aram K. Messerlian/Hye Sharzhoom

## SAROYAN ARCHIVES

The Henry Madden Library and the Armenian Studies Program of California State University, Fresno have a major archive of the writings and the papers of William Saroyan. These documents are for the use of scholars and researchers from all over the world. The archive is by no means complete. We are collecting; and it is growing. Everything which pertains to the life and writing of William Saroyan is significant.

This is an appeal to the readers of Hye Sharzhoom and their friends kindly to forward to the Armenian Studies Program at California State University, Fresno, for inclusion in the archive such items as the following:

Any letters -- to or from William Saroyan. (If you wish to keep the originals, photocopies are fine.)

Published or unpublished photos are needed. Send a copy; or if there isn't a negative, send the original for copying, and it will be returned.

Any and all newspaper or magazine clippings.

Programs of William Saroyan plays performed anywhere in the world.

Tapes of Saroyan plays performed in regional theatres.

Any tapes of William Saroyan himself.

Communities that honored Saroyan or who plan to honor him are asked to send two copies of all programs, flyers, leaflets, and clippings -- in other words, everything that is related to the tribute.

Any and all William Saroyan memorabilia will be appreciated. If you wish restrictions on their use, for example prior permission by you, please indicate that. We shall report all such on these pages, unless you indicate that it should remain an anonymous gift.

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