

# ՀԱՅ ՇԱՐԺՈՒՄ ARMENIAN ACTION

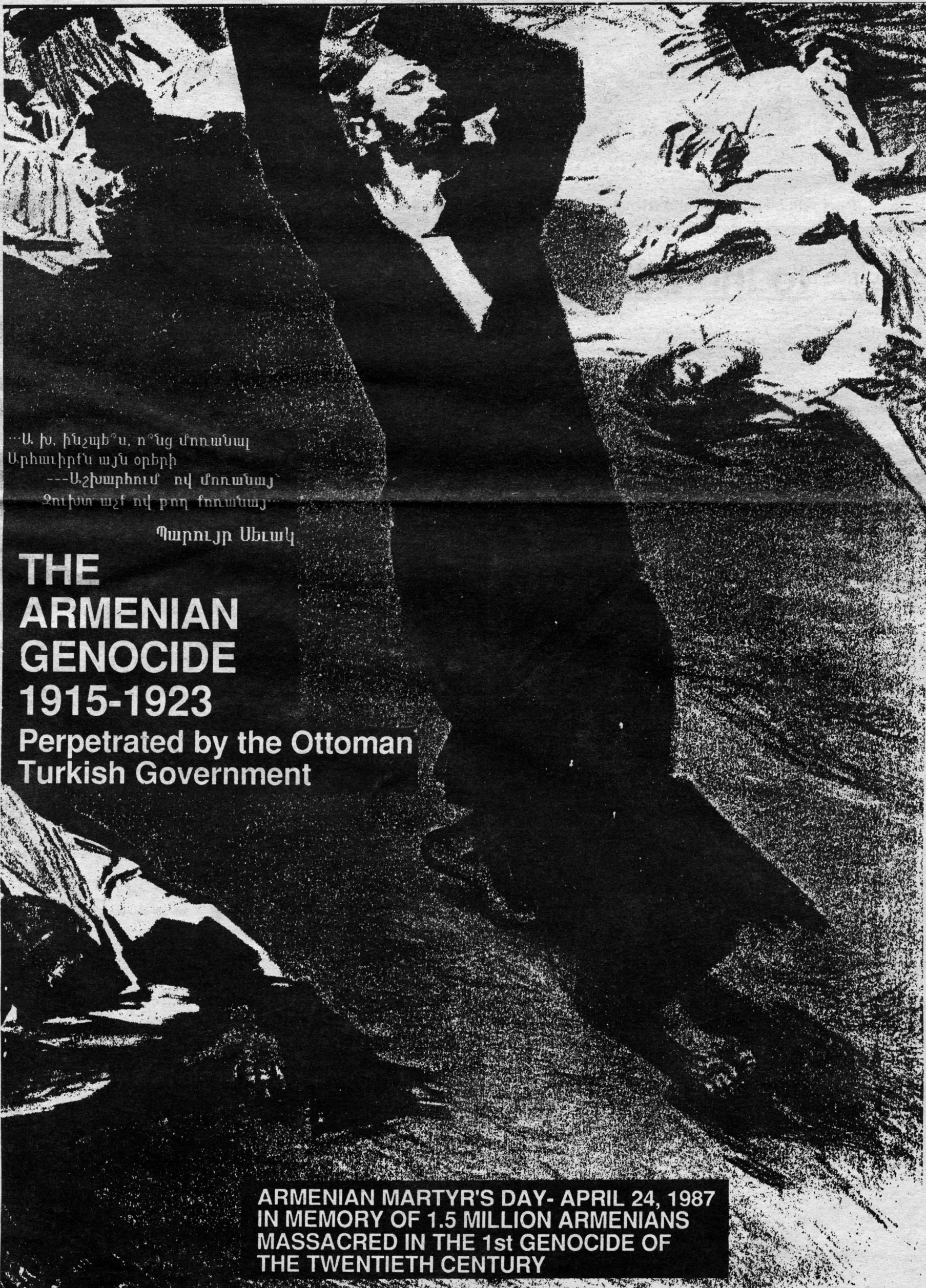
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...Ա. ի. ինչպե՞ս, ո՞նց մոռանալ  
Արհաւիրքն այն օրերի  
---Աշխարհում ով մոռանայ  
Զուխտ աշխ ով բող բողանայ

Պարույր Սեւակ

## THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE 1915-1923

Perpetrated by the Ottoman  
Turkish Government

ARMENIAN MARTYR'S DAY- APRIL 24, 1987  
IN MEMORY OF 1.5 MILLION ARMENIANS  
MASSACRED IN THE 1st GENOCIDE OF  
THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Կոմիտաս Վարդապետ  
Գծեց Գրիգոր Խանճեան

Gomidas Vartabed  
Drawing by Grigor Khanjian



**By Lynette Zerounian**  
*Staff Writer*



## Peters Building donors and friends

The ground breaking ceremonies began with a musical prelude by the CSU Fresno Zalud Brass Quintet. A welcoming address was given by CSU Fresno President Dr. Harold H. Haak. He said, "We celebrate the life of a man (Leon S. Peters) whose name goes beyond this building. He was an inspiration for each and every one of us."



**Mrs. Leon S. Peters (Alice) and CSU Fresno President Dr. Harold H. Haak turning the first shovel of soil for the new building**

The Leon S. Peters Business Building will be an asset to the university and the community in the years to come and the California State University, Fresno Armenian Studies Program will be a strong contributor to that future.

The Armenian Studies Program under the direction of Dr. Dickran Kouymjian, played a pivotal role in the fund raising for the Valley Business Center, by leading a campaign in which Armenians donated nearly \$100,000 for the project. The Armenian Students Organization also showed their support by

Armenian Studies Program  
California State University, Fresno  
Fresno, California 93740-0100



# Եօթանասուներկու Տարի Վերջ

Գրեց Պարլո Տէր Մկրտիչեան

Այսօրի Բանընդորսին անգամ մը եւս կու գանք յարգանք մատուցանելու մեր քիւրաւոր նահատակներու, յիշելով իրենց տառապանքը ու սպանդը: Դիւրին չէ նստիլ Ֆրեզնոյ մէնք ինչ պիտի ընէինք եօթանասուն երկու տարի առաջ, եթէ մենք ներկայ ըլլայինք այն ահաւոր օրերու ընթացքին: Գիտեմ անկարելի բան մըն է: Եւ ինչպէս բացատրել աշխարհի մը որ լաւ տեղեակ է բոլորին:

Թիտղոսին մը ունիմ աշօրուայ հայուն մասին որ կ'ապրի ու կ'աշխատի, նամանաւանդ երիտասարդ

սերունդին մասին որոնց հետ գրեթէ ամէն օր յարաբերութեան մէջն եմ: Անոնք կը տառապին հոգեկան ախտէ մը, այնքան խորունկ հիւանդութիւն մը որու բուժումը դժբաւ չկայ: Այդ հիւանդութիւնը կը կոչուի՝ անտարբերութիւն:

Անտարբերութիւն դէպի մեր պատմութիւնը ու մեր մշակոյթը: Անտարբերութիւն մը որ կը մաշի իսկ մարդու հոգին. և ականատեսին մէջ զարմանք ու ահ կը պատճառէ:

Եւ՝ որպէս ուսուցիչ հայագիտական նիւթերու օր ըստ օրէ կը դիմագրաւեմ այս զգացումը գիտնալով հանդերձ որ այս երիտասարդներն են որոնց

հետ պէտք է պայքարիմ յաղթահարելով տգիտութիւնը՝ իմաստութեամբ: Երբեք չեմ գանգատիր այլ միայն կը բացատրեմ:

Անշուշտ եւս յանգանքը կը վերագրեմ անոնց որոնց արժանի են՝ Թուրք ռեալիզմներուն որոնք մինչեւ հիմա անպատիւ մնացած են: Բայց իսկապէս անպատիւ մնացած են: Նայինք Թուրքիոյ այսօր՝ աղֆատ, անկազմակերպած երկիր մը որու ժողովուրդը յոյս ալ չունի ապագային: Իմ կարծիքովս Թուրքիան անկարելի է որեւէ զարգացում մը արձանագրել մինչեւ այն օրը երբ ցեղասպանութեան յանցանքը

ընդունի:

Վերջ ի վերջոյ մեր ուշադրութիւնը պէտք է դարձնենք դէպի ներքինը բուժելու համար մեր տգիտութիւնը: Ապագան փայլուն չէ, ալ լեցուն դժուարին գործերով և մեր ուսերը պէտք է զօրաւոր ըլլան: Կը փափաքէի որ ամէնքս միասին լուծուինք այն աշխատանքին որ է հայ երիտասարդը դարձնել տիպար հայու մը՝ պատրաստ օր մը վերագրաւելու մեր պապենական երկրին՝ խմելու անգամ մը եւս հայոց անոյշ գինին ու ջուրը:

## APRIL 24th RESOLUTION EFFORTS

**Joint Resolution designating April 24, 1987, as "National Day of Remembrance of the Armenian Genocide of 1915-1923"**

*Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That April 24, 1987, is designated as "National Day of Remembrance of the Armenian Genocide of 1915-1923", and the President is authorized and requested to issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe this date as a day of remembrance for the 1.5 million people of Armenian ancestry who were victims of the genocide perpetrated by the governments of the Ottoman Empire from 1915 to 1923 prior to the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, and in their memory this date is commemorated by all Armenians and their friends throughout the world.*

By Greg Eritzian  
Staff Writer

This February, bills recognizing the Armenian Genocide were introduced into the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate. These bills will formally recognize the Armenian Genocide of 1.5 million Armenians between 1915-1923 by the Ottoman Turkish government and call for a national day of remembrance for the victims on April 24th. Representative Richard Lehman of Sanger, California introduced House Joint Resolution 132 and Senator Alan Cranston of Ca. introduced Senate Joint Resolution 43. It is noteworthy to mention that Rep. Tony Coelho and Rep. Chip Pashayan who are both representatives of Fresno area districts, and Sen. Pete Wilson of California have also co-sponsored the bill in their respective houses of Congress. Through the lobbying efforts of the Armenian Assembly, the Armenian National Committee, and the Armenian Rights Council of America, over half of the required 218 co-sponsors of the House and 14 of the 50 required co-sponsors of the senate have been enlisted as of the second week of March.

As Armenians we should all feel grateful towards these Congressmen for recognizing and supporting a bill of this nature, depicting the plight of our people to the world. Our thanks should also go to the Armenian Assembly, the Armenian National Committee, and the Armenian Rights Council, for their lobbying efforts to even get these bills introduced on the House and Senate floors.

It should be known that this bill has come under a tremendous lobbying attack by the present Turkish Government and by the U.S. State Department. This should not come to us as a great surprise because a similar bill was previously defeated and then bottled up in the committee process in 1985. It is obvious (to us) why the present Turkish government is attacking this bill. They do not want to draw the public attention of a new generation to the

brutal policies of a historical Turkey for these reasons:

There is the very remote possibility that the world powers would pressure the present government to admit these atrocities and accept the responsibility of the former Ottoman government which might include reparations to the Armenian people. (This would be similar to present day Germany having accepted the atrocities of the Jewish Holocaust and it still making reparations to Jewish victims). Seventy-two years after the fact, I see this above possibility as likely to occur as a snowball in hell. If these reparations were ever to have been made, it would have been at the end of World War I when President Woodrow Wilson suggested the formation of an American mandatory, and in the unratified Treaty of Versailles which proposed an independent Armenian state.

The main reason why Turkey opposes this resolution is because the revelation of brutal policies of the Ottoman Government may and will bring revelations of the present brutalities of present day Turkey. Yes America, as of 1987, Turkey still persecutes its religious and ethnic minorities. As reported by Amnesty International in 1984, Turkey is one of the worst human rights violators of any country in the world. At the time of the report, Turkey ranked number one per capita. Reports were coming out which stated that Kurds (a nomadic Moslem minority of Turkey - population 10 million) were being arrested and tortured in jails (similar to situations in the movie "Midnight Express") just for being Kurds and for speaking the Kurdish language in public. It was reported that several Kurdish peoples' tongues have been cut out of their mouths for speaking Kurdish.

More recently in the bombing of an Istanbul Jewish synagogue (where about 17 Jews were killed), the Turks in their sophisticated investigations immediately reported Arab Palestinians were responsible. This "for sure" statement was made even though the bomber's body was unidentifiable

and no Palestinian group claimed responsibility. Reports stated that this bombing was the work of Turks and was concealed by their government.

As of this March, plans were drawn up by the Turkish government, for the relocation of 9.5 million people, involving the depopulation of 700 villages and towns; from the eastern provinces, the southern Mediterranean coast, and a couple of western coastal or near coastal towns. The people will be resettled into the Turkish interior. It should be noted that these listed regions are predominately Kurdish. Another area from which the inhabitants are to be relocated is the northern area of the Black Sea coast. These inhabitants, about 100,000, are Cherkez (a Russian-Turkish mixed, Moslem tribe). According to Turkish Minister of Agriculture Husnu Doghan, "The aim of the relocation is the well being of the villagers."

Wake up world! The last time the Turks implemented forced resettlement as it has been called, the objective was the attempted genocide of a race, namely 1.5 million Armenians.

The State Department in its infinite wisdom has chosen to side with the Turks. Their reasons are stated by State Department spokesman Charles Redman on March 30, 1987, "Turkey's strategic importance makes the genocide resolution a delicate issue." He points out that Turkey serves as a "bridge and buffer" between east and west. Another standard State Department line is that Turkey is a valuable and dependable ally. First, the only reason why Turkey is an ally at all is because the U.S. pumps over one billion dollars annually into their government so they (Turkey) may continue their barbarous activities against its minorities. Secondly, how trustworthy is an ally if it claims to be strained in its foreign relations with the U.S. if the U.S. makes a statement about its atrocious human rights record?

"His brilliance", Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger in a statement released to

the Turkish government just a few weeks ago states that Turkey can be assured that the Administration and the State Department will not support any Armenian Genocide resolution bill because of their strategic importance and their value as an ally. He says that even if the bill passes in the Congress, the President will veto the bill. I can understand this from his point of view, but he then continues that support of these bills doesn't reflect the views of the American people.

For our country's sake and the world's sake Caspar, I hope this attitude of indifference is not the view of the average American. If this is the attitude toward our fellow man, I would wish that my people were seals or whales. If we brutally maim or kill these cute or cuddly animals, we see direct governmental interference to prevent these "cruel slaughters". Examples include Canada and its seal hunts, Japan and Russia and the whaling industry, animal humanity laws and formation of the S.P.C.A., etc.

Yet when it comes to the wholesale genocide of people (which includes cute and cuddly babies and children) which has happened to the Armenians, Jews, Cambodians, Africans, Ethiopians, etc.) the world turns its back and pretends to see nothing.

To the Congress, State Department, and President Reagan, I strongly recommend your support of this Armenian Genocide Resolution bill because if we are too afraid to approach the previous human rights violations of Turkey, we may see another genocide of 100,000 Cherkez and 10 million Kurds.

To the Armenian people, I urge you to write your Congressman asking for his support on the bill. But don't get your hopes up on its passage. If this bill doesn't pass it will in no way diminish the degree of atrocities suffered by our people.

## Medical Help Sought

Recently several doctors visiting Armenia were impressed by the need for certain medical equipment and medicines. In particular they were struck by the need for medicine to combat Mediterranean Fever.

According to recent medical releases an estimated 10,000 to 60,000 Armenians in Yerevan are suffering from Mediterranean fever (Yerevanian Disease) and lacking the required medicine, Colchicine, for their illness. Each patient needs two tablets of Colchicine daily for the rest of his life, once the diagnosis has been made.

A group of concerned Armenians purchased a tablet pressing machine and sent it to Armenia where the tablets can be made to meet the demand. To facilitate this project a nonprofit, tax deductible organization has been formed. Any individual wishing to contribute to this cause may send their donation to:

**Medical Outreach for Armenians, Inc.**  
c/o Dr. Vartkes Najarian  
1030 S. Glendale Ave., Suite 503  
Glendale, CA 91205



# Zabel ...I haven't forgotten

Linda A. Abrahamian  
Contributor

Sometimes when you're lost you begin to ask yourself some questions, and I was beginning to examine a few - namely, why didn't I sleep in like the rest of the group and what was I doing in Jerusalem. Since I was awake, I decided to go to mass. So I took the familiar path that lead to the Church of the Arch Angels, but it somehow ended in a garden. Ancient trees shielded it from the sun, and an old woman sat beneath one, breaking string beans in half. Remembering to use the formal when speaking to the elderly in Armenian, I asked her directions to the Church. My accent must've confused her, instead of responding and perhaps inviting me to a cordial cup of coffee, she stared at me in silence - never missing a bean.

I found the Church, only because I followed the voices of the seminarians as they echoed through the labyrinth of walls protecting the Armenian Quarter. Although the Liturgy, in it's aesthetic beauty, usually has a hypnotic effect on me, on this occasion I was distracted. The old woman's image kept repeating itself in my mind, there was something disturbing about her eyes. And as I looked around, searching for something else to focus on, I realized that the paintings were piercing me with the same expression in theirs.

When mass was over, I walked over to the seminary for lunch. We always had our meals with the seminarians in the huge hall downstairs. We were a group of seven students, all but one from Fresno, in Jerusalem on a work/study program and guests of the Patriarch of the Armenian Quarter. The boys lived in the seminary, and we girls had our own apartment located just outside the monastery wall.

We were all as different as people can be; among us up and coming historians, educators, chemists, and me, a sort of undisciplined Socrates. But we did share two things in common: our ancestry and the fact that we, for our own reasons, were on pilgrimage together. My parents financed mine and told me to consider the trip a quest. Although they neglected to tell me what it was that I was searching for, they gave me some advice. They told me that if I should ever find myself lost, home would be the best place to go. I remember thinking their advice trivial, almost too trivial to mention, but I smiled anyway and gave them one last kiss before boarding the plane.

After lunch, we either took a rest or Kevork, our patron guide, would take us on a journey through the Old City or somewhere else. On that day we went to Ramalah, the closest West Bank city to Jerusalem, famed for its Palestinian ice cream. Although it took some deliberation, we finally decided to take a walk through the city before satisfying our cravings for sugar. Since I could find no issues to question in their conversation, I walked ahead of the group, alone. There was something I wanted to ask Kevork, a question about the old woman, but everytime I'd remember, something would distract me and I'd forget. They caught up to me when I stopped to watch an ant.

The ant was balancing a fruit pit, ten times it's size, on it's back and moving at a snail's pace towards an ant hill about five feet away. We were all standing around it, watching, when Kevork said: "You see, for some things, struggle is necessary for survival." With that, someone, I can't remember who, picked up the pit, along with the ant, and placed it on the hill. Everything Kevork said seemed to contain some secret message, but I didn't think that lessening the ant's struggle suggested it. So I looked around to see if anyone else was enlightened, but their expressions indicated that they perceived nothing at all.

There's something deceptive about the skies of Jerusalem. With each sunrise, a new coat of blue is sprayed over anything dark - and never does a cloud dare violate it. I guess somewhere in between the excitement of the city, the serenity of the skies, and the solving of word puzzles, the old woman was somehow forgotten. But one day while exploring the Armenian Quarter, I realized that we were in her garden. She wasn't sitting in the shade breaking string beans in half, so I described her to Kevork. He pushed his glasses up and nodded, then, without saying another word, turned around and walked towards one of the doors embedded within the walls of the garden. The door, almost as thick as the wall, must've taken much strength to pull ajar, strength that the old woman obviously possessed.

We were all standing under one of the trees debating over our evening plans when Kevork returned and said: "I explained to her who you were, but she doesn't want to meet you. She doesn't want to meet you because you'll go home and forget her."

His words were so carefully chosen that I wasn't sure if they were her actual words or another one of his attempts to convey a concealed message. But I did know that something about her really bothered me after that. "Forget her. What do you mean forget her?" I asked, but Kevork said he'd tell us later because he wanted to show us the library. It seemed whenever I was close to getting some answers, he'd whisk us off to some other place. "No. I want to know now," I protested. "The library closes at seven, so we have time for you to tell us now." I may have been acting childish, but I sensed that the old woman was somehow the solution to the word puzzles. Kevork finally agreed to tell us, but not in the garden, so we went to the orange juice stand near the monastery gate.

Orange juice is orange juice in Jerusalem. You order a glass and the person behind the counter immediately slices at least three oranges in half; Kevork ordered eight. My glass was half empty and I was playing with the pulp when he finally told us her story.

"Her name is Zabel," he said. "Zabel is a survivor. She was brought to the orphanage in Jerusalem when she was about four years old. The church has taken care of her since because she cannot take care of herself...you see, she was brought here blind."

Blind, I never suspected that she was blind, but blindness only seemed to be a partial explanation for the expression in her eyes. Kevork's articulation of the word was evidence enough.

"Zabel and hundreds of other children were tied to stakes in the desert," he continued. "They were forced, by the Turks, to stare into the sun until their eyes were burned with blindness. If the children tried to save themselves from blindness, the Turks would take their heads...you see, the price for sight was death. The heads of her brothers and sisters rolled at her feet, but she survived. She is a survivor."

Each word seared through me like the sun that burned through her eyes, and I too found myself bound to a stake. When the heat

subsided, along with a scar, it left me with an understanding. Everything was finally falling into place, the old woman, the messages, and my parents' advice. Being lost was nothing uncommon to me, only because I didn't know where home was. My heritage was something I took for granted, so I sought other avenues to find myself.

"In about ten years, Zabel and all the other martyrs will become saints, but she doesn't

See ZABEL page 5

Drawing by Norayr Minassian

## MY NAME IS ANTRANIK

The grape vines make Armenian boys crazy. Row upon row of long stocks and green leaves become the palms of the hands of millions of Armenian women, mothers, daughters, sisters, aunts, that fell in the hot summer to bear their spoiled fruit on the Turkish desert.

The dirt and to remember is the toil of the countrymen. Their expression is puzzlement, with faces forever sad from having heard the screams of our women; from the vines that have grown gnarled toward the sun in the vineyard. The city men have become penny-pinchers, chislers, cannivers huddled in store fronts, door openings, collectively ruminating their loss.

The vines grow strong and dark in the sun. The tears of one thousand Armenian martyrs have already filled the canals and ditches that flood the fields near Fowler. The heavy steel pumps draw the sweat from the brows of honest mens' labor to make the thirsty berry plump.

Hail, to the heroes, on horseback, that fought back with rakes and shovels. They were the ones that followed the plows that broke open the earth that gave rise to our vines. My name is Antranik and I tend the vines, my face grows red and I heard the roaring in my ears that is the cry from my people.

Ygnish Stephen Bulbulian  
Fowler, CA



# ESSAY WINNERS

Hye Sharzhoom is happy to announce the winners of the recent Essay Contest on the topic - *How to resist assimilation?* The winners are Michael Masgalajian of San Francisco State College and Taleen Marashian from Stanford. Each will receive a first prize award of \$100.00 donated by Mr. and Mrs. Babken and Anahid Khanjian of New York. Following is the essay by Michael Masgalajian and it will be followed by Taleen Marashian's essay in the next issue of Hye Sharzhoom.

By Michael Masgalajian  
San Francisco State University

I believe that the best way to answer the question of how we, as Armenian-Americans, should resist total assimilation is to first answer the question of why we should resist this assimilation. Our actions need a solid grounding, a reason. Only when this reason is established will courses of action be effective. The task of this essay then, is to answer the how by way of the why.

So why should you resist assimilation? Assimilation means shaking off the silly archaic bonds of your old-world Armenian tradition in order to more fully identify yourself as a denizen of America. America! The bright new world. The best place on earth. The richest nation in history. Here is to be found the greatest highways, the most automobiles, the largest cities, the best entertainment, the latest fashions, the newest technology--this is the land of the superlative. Nobody starves here. There is virtually no government oppression. There is no need to worry about car bombs or bodily parasites. And most important of all the things America has to offer is something called freedom. A freedom that goes far beyond mere political freedom, beyond the right to vote. This is a freedom to be, a freedom to think, a freedom to act. If you decide to dye your hair green to protest CIA involvement in central Africa, you can do it. If you decide to drop out of society and experiment with alternative modes of consciousness, you can do it. If you decide to run for state senator, you can do that too. Here in America you are not bound by tradition. You are an individual and separate self, free to make your own tradition.

So what's the problem? Why on earth should you prevent yourself from becoming assimilated? Well to answer this, we must look at that word freedom again. If you notice, it comes in two different but related senses-- freedom to, and freedom from. We know that Americans are free to do basically anything they want. Why is this? It is because they are free from certain things. They are free from undesirable things like tyranny, fanaticism and superstition. But this freedom from is a double edged weapon, for American are also free from something good, something essential-- the commonality of identity, background and history that makes up a tradition, an ethnic tradition. They are free from that human bond. This, combined with the vast scale of the American scene, can leave a person lost and alone. Out of individualism comes isolation.

Think of it. In America today, nearly every human being you come across is a stranger. Drive down a super-highway-- everyone you see you've never seen before and will never see again. Go to a local supermarket or shopping mall-- you'll be surrounded by hundreds of people and yet chances are you won't know a soul. People here are out of communication. Should you worry about this? Probably not. No one else is worrying, they're too busy watching television. That's right, why worry about not being able to communicate with your fellow man when you can watch a two-

ZABEL  
continued from page 4

believe that there will be anyone left to be saints for," he continued, only pausing to take a drink. "For many years she's suffered to keep her painful memories alive for one reason: to preserve her people. Over a thousand times she's told her story, but she says it's always forgotten. She can feel her people falling apart around her, melting into their new cultures...that's why she won't meet you. She won't meet you because you'll go home to America and forget her. And since you'll forget, she says it's also time for her to forget."

dimensional image of him on your screen. And television is not the only device for taking ones mind off of real human interaction. Modern America offers a host of electronic machinery, gadgets, and playthings that are just as effective; VCR's, compact disk players, video games, big stereos for your house, little stereos for your car, real little stereos for your belt, etc. These are the products of the marriage of technology and consumerism. The art of communication has become less important than skill at button pushing. It is through these commodities that many people today find their only source of the commonality of experience that is so important. Although most modern Americans have no common cultural experience, they have a common "Family Ties" experience, a common "Star Wars" experience, a common "Run DMC" experience. Human bonds of this sort cannot suffice, not for real people. These bonds are not of flesh and blood, but of circuits and wire, the techno-consumer lifestyle even effects the most important human bond--romantic love. The attitude taken towards marriage today seems to be the kind one would apply towards a tape player-- if it doesn't work throw it away and buy a new one. Given this attitude, combined with the general lack of a common background, is it any wonder families are being ripped apart? The very notion of family seems out of date. The modern society is producing individuals with complete freedom from, their fellow human beings.

So now it can be seen that there are at least some undesirable elements to modern American life. We have seen that the new world is warped in some ways. We now have some good reasons to resist assimilation, although so far these reasons are wholly negative. Now let's look at our funny old world Armenian culture. Are there any positive reasons to embrace it? Does it contain any elements that are relevant to people living in the modern world? The answer to both of these questions is a heartfelt 'yes'. This answer is rooted in the idea that while progress and change occur in the material side of life, the foundation of one's being, his soul if you like, remains forever the same. No matter if he is living in the most modern situation, in a big-city highrise or in a space station, man's need for human interaction, spirituality and love are always with him. Now where should we, Armenian-Americans, look to find these necessities of the soul? We need look no further than our ethnicity.

We are perhaps jaded from living with the Armenian scene all our lives, but imagine seeing it for the first time. Look at the people all around you--in the church, or the social hall, or at the cultural events. Chances are you know everyone by name. With these people you have a common look, a common tradition, a common history, and common blood. This is a vast extended family. Consider the way in which these people relate to you. There are younger people who look up to you as if you were an older sibling. There are mature adults who take joy in your growth and accomplishments as if you were their own child. And there are the old people, the ones that remember your common history, who look at you as if they were proud of your existence, because they somehow live on through you. There is a sympathetic connection between the members of this family. When one member achieves success, all members share in that success. For instance when George Deukmejian won the governorship, it was as if we all won something. Likewise when tragedy strikes one member, all members share in that tragedy.

Look at the various elements in our culture. Think of the spectacle of Armenian dancing-- everyone linking fingers and gyrating in rather complex fashion to wild hypnotic music. If the dancing of couples is viewed as an expression of sexuality, what must this express? It expresses the mutual bond, the oneness of

the community. In modern societal terms it is a strange and wonderful thing indeed.

Think of the food. It comes with funny names like madzoon, boureg, and pasterma, and it's the best food in the world. This is not the bland stuff you find at Safeway--this has taste. It's true Armenians love to eat, but its not because we're starving, it's because we know what a joy eating can be.

Think of the Armenian Church service. What beauty? A blast of sublime music and stained glass color. The sound of chanting and the smell of incense. An ancient and mystical ritual. A modern person may be tempted to question the relevance of this, but nevertheless, there is a relevance. This ritual, besides being beautiful for itself, is evocative of a deeper meaning of existence. It symbolically points to the true foundation of life that lies beyond the everyday material world.

Finally, think of the way the ethnic community satisfies the need for romantic

love, the love between man and woman. Because of the cultural bonds we have spoken of, there is an ideal environment in which this love can grow. Armenian men and women, once they get together, tend to stick together. Their bond goes deeper than mere sexuality.

So, in conclusion, we have seen that while America has many great aspects it is woefully lacking in certain elements that are essential to human existence. These elements are and always have been provided by our Armenian cultural life. Knowing this, and being convinced of it, is the best way we can begin the process of resisting assimilation. At the same time, though, I do not believe we should turn our backs on America altogether. We Armenians-Americans live in the unique position of being able to enjoy the best of cultures. So let's live within the context of the freedom America has to offer but keep our ancient tradition. Let's live in the new world but retain the spirit of the old. Retain it and not forget it. For the old world is not old, it is eternal.

The following poem was kindly sent to the Editor as requested, during poet Diana Der Hovanessian's visit to Fresno. The Editor wished to print the poem for all to read as one of the many beautiful examples of Ms. Der Hovanessian's poems about the Armenian people.

## TWO VOICES

"Do you think of yourself as an Armenian? Or an American? Or hyphenated American?" Question from D.M. Thomas.

In what language do I pray?

Do I meditate in language?

In what language am I trying  
to speak when I wake from dreams?

Do I think of myself as an American,  
or simply as woman when I wake?

Or do I think of the date and geography  
I wake into, as woman?

Do I think of myself in my clothes  
getting wet walking in the rain?

Do I think velvet, or do I think  
skin?

Am I always conscious of genes and  
heredity or merely how to cross my legs  
at the ankle like a New England lady?

In a storm do I think of lightning  
striking? Or white knives dipped  
into my great aunts' sisters'  
sisters' blood?

Do I think of my grandfather telling  
about the election at the time  
of Teddy Roosevelt's third party,

and riding with Woodrow Wilson  
in a Main Street parade  
in Worcester?

Or do I think of my grandmother at Ellis Island,

or as an orphan in an Armenian village?

Or at a black stove in Worcester  
baking blueberry pie for my grandfather  
who preferred food he had grown  
to like in lonely mill town  
cafeterias while he studied  
for night school?

Do I think of them as Armenian  
or as tellers of the thousand and  
one wonderful tales in two languages?

Do I think of myself as hyphenated?

No. Most of the time, even as you,  
I forget labels.

Unless you cut me.

Then I look at the blood.  
It speaks in Armenian.



# Murad: Hero of Sebastia

By Haig Beloian  
Contributor

We have repeatedly mentioned our massacres to the world. Why not also mention our most courageous heroes? Without them nothing we have now could be saved. It is so wrong to say that they caused our massacres. They were brave enough to protect us against a giant tyranny by sacrificing their own lives.

Antranik and other great heroes had their memoirs published. Murad Khrimian never spoke a word about himself. Two books were published after his death about him. Perhaps I am the only person living now that has had close contacts with Murad for several years. Among about half a dozen wonderful *fedayee* (*Hyetook*) leaders I have known personally, I have found Murad to be an exceptionally brave, farsighted, serious, skillful, and a first class organizer and speaker in spite of his very poor education.

Who was Murad? Murad was born in 1874 at Govdoon near Sivas (Sebastia). He was born as just another Armenian, guilty enough to be prosecuted an even murdered. He became a good hunter and wrestler while he was a teenager. He grew up as a fighter against such an unbearable injustice. At sixteen he killed a Turk in self defense. In Istanbul he joined the underground *Hunchag* party. He managed to get to Russian Armenia when he got in a jam with the Sultan's police there. In the Caucasus he joined the *Tashnag* party to be more useful for the nation that he worshiped. He was a happy man when he got to Sasoon to join the *fedayees* there.

In 1904 Sultan's army and the Kurdish hoards (armed with government guns) began their attacks on the villages in Sasoon. Murad showed unusual bravery. He was a well known sharpshooter.

During 1905-1906 neighboring Tartars of Russian Armenia, massacred many people in the Armenian villages. Czar's government was pleased to see the



Murad of Sebastia

nationalistic Armenians punished. Murad arrived with 200 volunteers on horseback. With a crushing victory he saved 30 Armenian villages.

Murad went back to Sivas in 1909. His first magnetic speech was given at the immensely large mother church. His advice to us was to raise the children to be familiar with knives and guns; to be able to survive in Turkey. (The toys of Zeitoun children were guns and knives, Mr. Khoren Tavitian of Fresno tells me. These "toys" successfully repulsed the Ottoman Empire armies in 1895). I was about fifteen years old then. For the next four years before I had to leave to the United States, I would witness Murad's self defense activities.

It was almost a miracle to see the Armenians in the state of Sivas arm themselves. How did Murad lead them, while smuggling Russian and German weapons to every corner of Sivas (including Shabin Karahisar which fought the Turkish army down to the last man in 1915)? One magical encouraging word from Murad and we were ready to take any risk. Bands of *Hunchag* and *Tashnag* fighters were organized in harmony. One brave band was to blow up the Turkish garrison overlooking us. Another band was to enter the Turkish section of the city. Turkish militarists sensed all of this and made no attempt to massacre us, unlike the Adana district which suffered a terrible massacre in 1909.

Somehow Murad sensed that the Young Turks rulers had decided to destroy the Armenians in Turkey, even before W.W.II. He would keep repeating "Don't trust the Turkish government." That is still true.

In 1915 the Turkish government used many tricks to minimize the Armenian resistance. They even succeeded to disarm Zeitoun and many other places. Murad insisted that they die fighting in the state of Sivas but he was suspected and ignored by the influential Armenian elders and the clergy. He was hurt deeply, because he would be blamed for the coming events. So he had no choice but to escape alone (with a few brave men) when the Turks wanted to arrest him by a trick.

Only a man like Murad could escape to Batoum (Russian Georgia) on foot, sick part of the time, fighting all the way from Sivas, for several months. The second book written about Murad is a description of this escape.

Disappointed in what occurred in Sivas, and deeply grieved because of the massacres he witnessed there, Murad kept on fighting the Turks with the Russian army. After reaching Erzinga, the Russian

revolution came on and the Russian army left the front. This was an unexpected disappointment. Already the Czarist Russia had repeatedly been unfavorable for a free Armenia. Murad took full charge of the front there with some Armenian volunteers. My friend Kevork Chooljian was there with him and told me all about it. (Kevork died in Fresno a few years ago.) Murad tried hard to get help from the Caucasus Armenian headquarters when the Turkish army came to Erzinga, but they failed him. So Murad was compelled to retreat with his small army with the Erzinga Armenians back to Erzinga in bitter winter through enemy bullets.

When he finally got to Russian Armenia he found confusion among the Armenian leaders. Turkish armies were advancing but the old *fedayee* spirit stopped them at Sartarabad. During the confusion Murad, and his old companion heroic Sebooh, went to Baku and joined the retreating forces of communist Shahoomian, to fight the Turkish soldiers and Tartars there. They tried to get help from the communist Russian government but could not. Murad again showed unusual courage and leadership against the Turks but was killed in a battle. The Armenian population of that oil town suffered massacres after his death. This was the end of a great hero.

If we want to win our sacred lands back some day, the only way would be to back our leaders like Antranik and Murad and fight for it.

The *Hye Tad* must be won. Let us all know more about our many past heroes. Let us know each other more, so that we can work together instead of suspecting each other which only causes disunity.

## ARMENIANS THROUGH THE CAMERA'S EYE



A slide/lecture presentation of historic photographs reproduced from the family albums of Armenian-Americans by Ruth Thomasian of Project SAVE of Watertown, MA  
Friday, May 1, 1987  
12:00 noon  
California State University, Fresno  
College Union Room 312-314

Sunday, May 3, 1987  
3:00 pm  
Armenian General Benevolent Union Hall  
1720 Fulton

Sponsored by the California State University, Fresno Armenian Studies Program and the Armenian Students Organization

The CSU, Fresno Armenian Studies Program  
Armenian Students Organization  
Zoryan Institute

present

## An Armenian Oral History Symposium

participants

Dr. Donald E. Miller, USC School of Religion  
"The Status of Armenian Oral History Research"

Salpi Haroutinian Ghazarian, West Coast Coordinator of the Zoryan Institute  
"Oral History as a Human Experience"

Taline Voskeritchian Salibian, Ph.D., Holy Martyrs Armenian Ferrahian High School  
"The Uses of Oral History in Education"

Dr. Rouben Adalian, American Armenian International College  
"The Uses of Oral History Interviews in Research"

Saturday, April 25, 1987  
10:00am to 3:00 pm  
CSUF Old Science Building Room 121

Free Admission and Parking  
The Public is Invited



# DER HOVANESSIAN GRACES FRESNO

By Yvonne Sahagian Minassian  
Editor

Cambridge, Massachusetts poet Diana Der Hovanessian visited CSU, Fresno April 2, 1987 as part of the Ethnic Studies department's series "A Celebration of Ethnic Writing". She was invited to speak by the CSU Fresno Armenian Studies Program. Der Hovanessian is the author of *How to Choose Your Own Past* and has written works such as an interpretation of Daniel Varouzhian's *The Songs of Bread* and *Come Sit Beside Me and Listen to Kouchag*, translations of the poems of Nahabed Kouchag.

Der Hovanessian began her presentation by giving some background on her writing career and translations. She credits her father for her early interest in literature and poetry, although she laughingly admits that as a child, she wasn't always particularly interested in sitting through his readings. Her father would read from Varouzhian and Siamanto both famous Armenian poets who lived in Constantinople at the onset of the massacres in 1915. In another of her poems she later credits another member of her family for her love in writing. "...and I am in love as if for the first time with the literary word. This affair began when my grandfather promised me that true love would always be returned".

Der Hovanessian cites the obsession with literature the Armenian culture has, especially for poetry. "Little Armenia is the perfect laboratory to study the history of poetry because it has the longest unbroken chain of poetry in one place."

Several of Der Hovanessian's poems are created from her experiences and the people she's encountered, especially the

experiences with her own family. For example when a literary encyclopedia asks about when and where she was born, it is these kinds of questions that cause her to go backward to her Armenian roots. In an answer to the questions, she wrote, "I was conceived in 1915 when the blood of my (other) grandparents soaked through the earth of Kharpert and seeped, seeped, until the 30's when it reached Worcester, Massachusetts. I was born in a garden when war cracked the face of the earth that had not listened to the 1915 blood."

This was Der Hovanessian's second visit to Fresno, a city she fondly terms "Saroyan territory". She and the late writer corresponded regularly and he expressed an interest in visiting her in Cambridge. A few years later, Saroyan did visit Cambridge on the occasion of the publication of her first book on Armenian poems, *Anthology of Armenian Poetry*. Der Hovanessian jokingly said "the community had it all planned so that we were never alone to talk, except for one short walk". Familiarly, Der Hovanessian wrote a poem a year later in tribute to the meeting with Saroyan. She says one of the first places she took him to see as he requested, was to see the first church that the Armenian community in the U.S. had built there in Cambridge.

The last poem Der Hovanessian read to the crowd required some history behind its origin. She explained that among the 200 Armenians who were rounded up in 1915 (in order for the Armenians to be left without leadership) poet Daniel Varouzhian was kept in prison for two months before being executed. During this time he kept a notebook of poems and after he was killed, it was ransomed by his jailers to a village priest and published in 1921 in the Diaspora. These poems were called *"Songs of Bread"*. Der Hovanessian



Poet Diana Der Hovanessian

commented, "You wonder what kinds of poems someone would write about in hell". However, despite Varouzhian's situation the poems are full of kindness, peacefulness, and as close to everyday (normal) life as possible in the village. Some of the excerpts from the poem Der Hovanessian read were very moving, and tragic, despite Varouzhian's attempt at remaining upbeat:

"...the Turks allowed it, what harm in a pen soon to be theirs? A notebook...theirs, a coat...theirs, unless too much blood splattered. You read and picture me in a tranquil village, a church on the Bosphorous, on a hillside...not in anguish, not in fury, not holding the sun still a few more hours...making bread out of words".

A question and answer session from the audience was held afterwards, the main question having to do with how the process of translating is done. Der Hovanessian explained her involvement in translating began when someone asked her to do a Bulgarian anthology. Someone would read it to her and word for word she'd write it into English and then make it into a poem. Since then different individuals and organizations have approached her to translate some work.

See POET page 8

## Voyages Author Visits Fresno

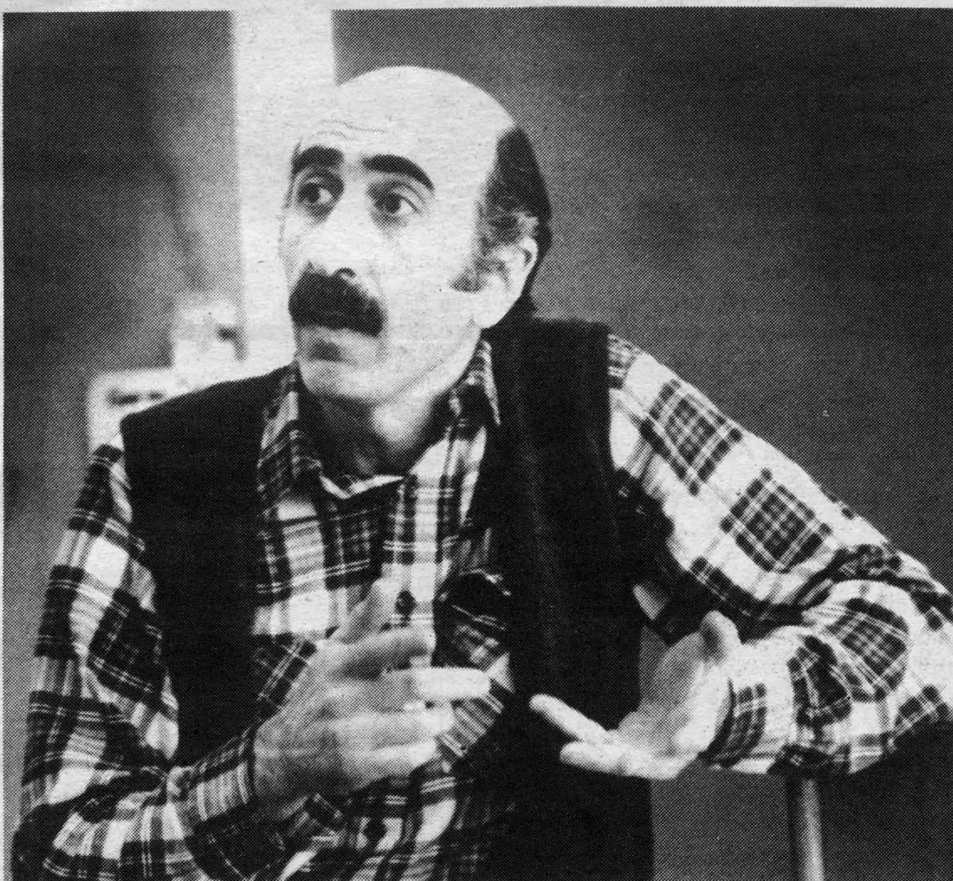
By Yvonne Sahagian Minassian  
Editor

Author Peter Najarian of Berkeley, California spoke informally to students enrolled in the Armenian study classes at CSU, Fresno on March 13, 1987. Najarian is the author of *Voyages* and the recently completed *Daughters of Memory*. Najarian spoke on the topic of his 1980 visit to Istanbul, Turkey and of his family background, including his early beginnings in writing. Students were particularly interested in the visit Najarian made to Turkey, especially in reference to the situation of the Kurds and asked several questions on the topic. Najarian described his experience there as "enjoyable and well received."

Najarian was born in Union City, N.J. which he describes as "filled with Armenians, until everyone started moving to the suburbs." Asked about his early beginnings in writing, Najarian spoke of his experiences as being Armenian which naturally lead to his first book having an Armenian theme, stressing however, that his experience as just a human being is a major influence in his writing.

The author commented on the poor reception his first book *Voyages* received (and continues to receive) by Armenians. "It (*Voyages*) was totally ignored by the Armenian community...up until today. Because the Armenian community in American is a very bourgeoisie, middle class community with certain ideas about what Armenians should be and what they should express." Whereas, exiled Armenians now living in America accept anything done by any Armenian because it's considered "family".

Najarian believes that writers must deal with history, whatever ethnic group they may be from, and use that history in their



Author Peter Najarian

writings. Since the horror in Armenian history is recent, Najarian says he uses the Armenian experience when his writing deals with tragedy.

Najarian devoted an evening discussion about his books to a group at the First Armenian Presbyterian church that same evening. He read many humorous and moving excerpts from his new book, *Daughters of Memory*. A reception sponsored by the Armenian Students Organization and the church's HYEM group followed the talk.

Najarian currently teaches a creative writing workshop at San Francisco State University.

## William Saroyan Festival

The musical version of the *Human Comedy* by the Fresno High Drama Class:

May 13, and 15, 1987 at 7:30 pm  
Admission: \$2.00 - Students & Seniors, \$3.00 Others.  
Location: Fresno High Auditorium.

### Special Student Performance

May 15, 1987 at 9:30-11:45 am  
William Saroyan Writing Contest  
(Awards to be presented)

### Saroyan Town Walk

May 16, 1987 at 10:00 am  
(Meet at Saroyan Theatre)





Left to right: Barlow Der Mugrdchian, Acting Director of the Armenian Studies Program; Serpouhie Messerlian, President of Fresno Chapter of the Hamazkayin Armenian Cultural Association; Poet Diana Der Hovanesian; Edward Megerditchian; Seda Sadoian.

## ARMENIAN STUDIES PROGRAM FALL 1987 CLASSES

**\*Armenian Studies 10-Introduction to Armenian Studies: 3 units MWF 910-1000 SS 210**

The history, geography, literature, language and art of Armenia from ancient times to the present with emphasis on resources, bibliography and report writing.

**\*Armenian Studies 10 Sec. 2 Introduction to Armenian Studies: 3 units TTH 945-1100 am LS 175**

**\*\*Armenian 1A-Introduction to Armenian 4 units MWF 1210-1300; T 1410-1500, LS 175**

Beginning courses of graded lessons acquainting the student with basic structure and pronunciation of Armenian through practice, reading and writing. Credit by examination is offered during the first four weeks to advanced students.

**\*\*Armenian 2A-Intermediate Armenian 4 units MWF 1310-1400; T 1610-1700, LS 175**

Grammar review; selected readings; compositions and conversations on assigned topics; pronunciation.

**HISTORY 108A-**

**Armenian History**

**3 units TTH 1245-1400, LS 175**

A survey of Armenian history from ancient times to the Mongol and Turkic invasions of the 13th century.

**Armenian Studies 50T-Life and Writing of William Saroyan 3 units MWF 11:00-12, LS 175**

A survey of William Saroyan's literary career based on reading of selected stories, plays, novels, and memoirs with a study of recent books on the Pulitzer prize winning writer.

**Armenian 120T-Armenian Diaspora and Immigration**

**1 unit Fri. Oct. 9th 1700-2200; Sat. Oct. 10th 900-1700**

A survey of the formation of the Armenian Diaspora and the Armenian communities around the world. Present day immigration patterns of the Armenians will also be examined.

**Armenian 120T-Armenians in the Holy Land**

**1 unit Fr. Sept. 25th, 1700-2200, Sat. Sept. 26th 900-1700**

A survey of the Armenian community in the Holy Lands with specific emphasis on the Armenians of the Old City of Jerusalem and the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem. Illustrated with slides and movies.

**Armenian 120T-The Armenian Church**

**1 unit Fri. Nov. 6th, 1700-2200, Sat. Nov. 7th 900-1700**

A historical review of the role of the Armenian Church, its customs, traditions, and beliefs from the earliest times to the present.

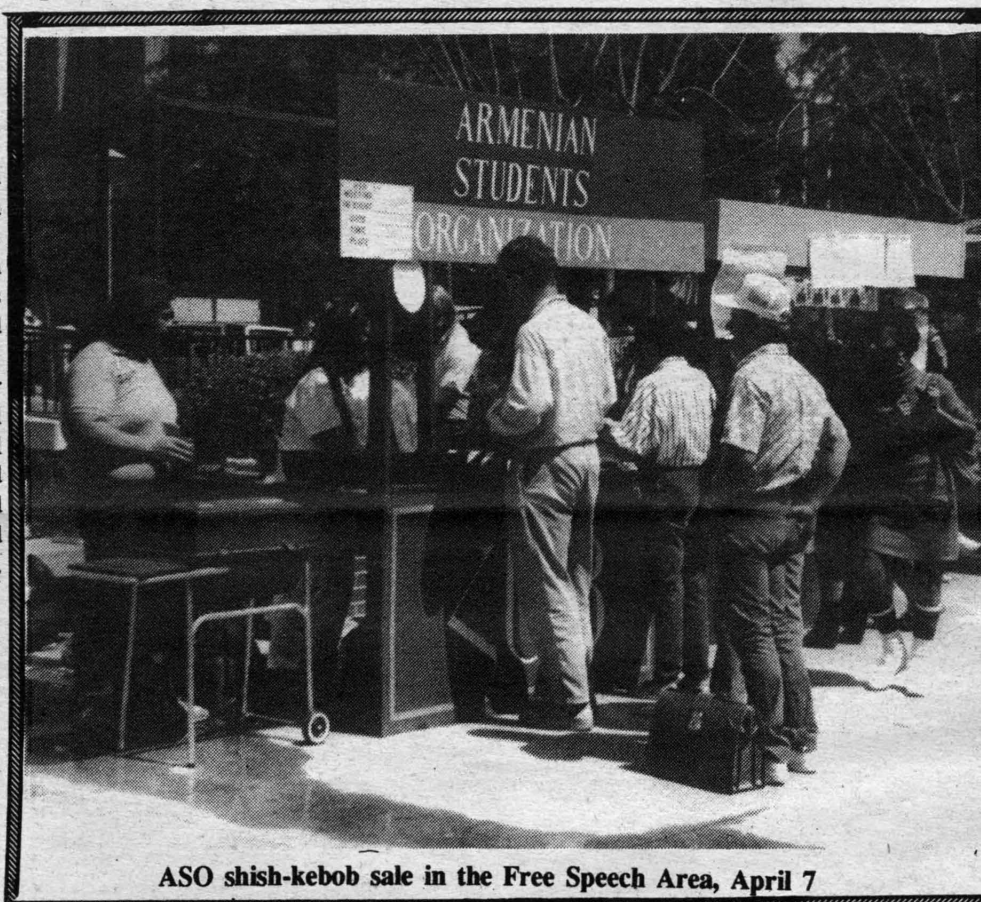
### POET

continued from page 7

She would then have it read and checked by someone to make sure her translation didn't change the original work too much. She started the Armenian anthology with her father and when about a third of it was completed they met Dr. Marzbed Margossian who offered his help.

Der Hovanesian spoke the next day for the Fresno community at the Social Hall of the Pilgrim Armenian Congregational Church in Fresno. A reception was held afterwards and Ms. Der Hovanesian signed many autographs of her works and talked and met many people in the eager crowd. In addition to her writing, she teaches workshops for teachers, and high school and elementary students in the Cambridge area.

Der Hovanesian's visit was sponsored by the Armenian Students Organization, the Armenian Studies Program of CSU, Fresno and the Hamazkayin Armenian Cultural Association of Fresno.



ASO shish-kebob sale in the Free Speech Area, April 7

## HYE SHARZHOOM NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT

Hye Sharzhoom is the official newspaper of the Armenian Studies Program and the Armenian Students Organization of California State University, Fresno. It is sent without charge to thousands of Armenians throughout the world. Though there is no subscription fee, we urge readers to support our efforts with donations of any amount. This request has assumed a special importance because of increased production and mailing costs.

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Readers are encouraged to send in their material and photos regarding the Genocide

\*Meets General Education requirements in Division 9  
\*\*Meets G.E. requirements in Division 7

## THANK YOU!

Hye Sharzhoom wishes to thank all of the generous donors to the Armenian Studies Program and the Armenian Students Organization

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