

HYE SHARZHOOM

Armenian Action

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March 1997

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Supplement to The Collegian

Conference Focuses on Saroyan at 15

By Michael Kloster
English Department, UC Berkeley

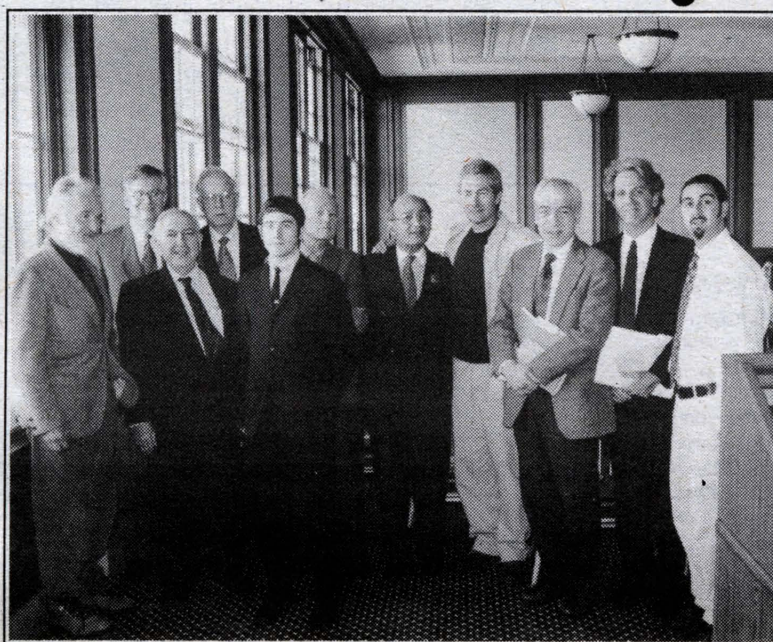
On November 15th an international conference "Saroyan Plus Fifteen" was held on the University of California, Berkeley campus to commemorate the work and life of William Saroyan. The gathering was jointly sponsored by the newly established William Saroyan Chair of Armenian Studies, the English Department, the Center for Slavic and East European Studies, International and Area Studies, the UC Berkeley Armenian Alumni, and the UC Berkeley Armenian Students Association. The event was also supported by the William Saroyan Foundation.

The symposium was organized and directed by Dickran Kouymjian, William Saroyan Visiting Professor of Armenian Studies at UC Berkeley to complement the course on Saroyan he is teaching in the English Department. Dr. Kouymjian is holder of the Haig and Isabel Berberian Endowed Chair of Armenian Studies at California State University in Fresno and author of numerous articles on Saroyan and the editor of two volumes of previously unpublished plays: *An Armenian Trilogy* (1986) and *Warsaw Visitor* (1991).

In officially opening the conference, Dean Richard Buxbaum of International and Area

Studies referred to his first encounter with William Saroyan as a young boy in Germany recalling from memory a passage from the story "The Fifty Year Dash" from *My Names Is Aram*, in which Aram feels as though "never before has any living man moved so swiftly," until he opened his eyes and realizes that "Three boys were ahead of me and going away." Dean Buxbaum stressed the importance of Saroyan's ability to reach humankind through diverse manners of expression.

The all day conference was divided up into one morning and two afternoon sessions followed by a roundtable discussion. The first panel, "William Saroyan after Fifteen," chaired by Professor Kouymjian, featured individuals who had an intimate knowledge of Saroyan as a person, as a writer, or both. First to reminisce was San Francisco writer Herbert Gold, a self-described "sometimes professor," and author of a dozen novels (including *She Took My Arms As If She Loved Me*, which will appear next year), was a friend of Saroyan the last twenty years of his life. He recounted a twenty year friendship "from their meeting at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art to double dates and all-night parties." He summed up their relationship succinctly: "The man had a soul and it was a privilege to lurk around with it."



Participants in the Saroyan Conference, from the left: Herbert Gold of San Francisco, Jon Whitmore of the University of Iowa, Aram Kevorkian of Paris, Richard Buxbaum, Dean of International and Area Studies UC Berkeley, Michael Kloster of Berkeley, John Leggett or Napa, Dickran Kouymjian, Barry Gifford of Berkeley, Harry Keyishian of Fairleigh Dickinson University, David Calonne of Andrews College, Micah Jendian of San Diego State.

Next was Aram Kevorkian, Saroyan's longtime friend and Paris lawyer, who provided touching stories of his relationship with Saroyan including an emotional and tender remembrance of winter in Paris when Saroyan discussed his feelings about Christmas and the loss of his father and related them back to a short play in the 1942 collection *Razzle Dazzle*. Taking a scholarly turn Professor John Whitmore, Provost and pro-

fessor of Theater Arts at the University of Iowa and author of *William Saroyan: A Research and Production Sourcebook*, discussed a lost and legendary late Saroyan work - *Adios Muchachos*. Saroyan wrote the memoir—which he referred to as "this piece of writing, this history, this rhapsody of life, this dirge, this novel, this unidentified flying object"—over a 100 day period in 1980. The huge manuscript (which is over 335,000

words), zig-zags among rambling descriptions of day-to-day life, colorful pictures of fascinating people, and descriptions of his personal health and state of mind, during the final months of his fight with terminal prostate cancer. The discussion of this lost manuscript prompted Lawrence Ferlinghetti, famous San Francisco poet and publisher, founder of City Lights Books, who was present throughout the conference, to remark that Saroyan was the first American author he read as a child. He expressed interest in publishing any of the diverse unpublished and unknown works of Saroyan and inquired about the availability of such manuscripts.

Following lunch, the second panel, "William Saroyan, the Critics, Karl Jung, and the Immigrant Experience," was chaired by Bonnie Hardwick of UC Berkeley's Bancroft Library. Ms. Hardwick was responsible for cataloguing the William Saroyan archives, a labor of six years, and is the editor of the 307 page guide the *William Saroyan Papers 1926-1981*. First to speak was John Leggett, author of a recently completed biography waiting publication: *William Saroyan: The Daring Young Man*. Leggett extensively discussed Saroyan's war with the critics, shedding light on an author considered by many

See Saroyan, Page 4

"Refuge" Showcases Artifacts of Fresno's Armenian Heritage

By Jacqueline Arikian

Hidden in the Special Collections section of the Henry Madden Library at Fresno State, exists a display of Armenians in America: Fresno as "Refuge." It is in the side room of the fourth floor where one can walk through Little Armenia and grasp a taste of Armenian life.

In this exhibit lies the stories of those who first set foot in the agricultural area of Fresno. Displayed books tell the story of Hagop Seropian and his brothers who came to Fresno in 1881 and started a grocery business. Shortly after their arrival, they wrote letters to their families in Armenia and in 1883, forty-five families arrived from Marsovan to begin a new life in Fresno, California.

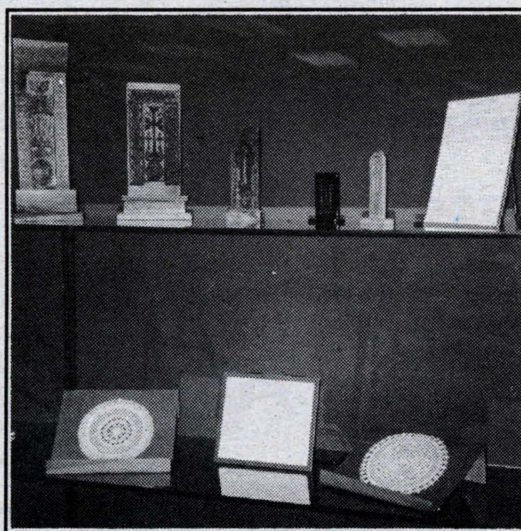
Other books tell the story

of William Saroyan, a famous Armenian writer to one and all. On display are pictures of the author and copies of some of the books which he has written.

In addition to all the stories, one can also see the lyrics and musical notations of old Armenian folk songs. These songs were passed down through generations and were sung as a means of entertainment.

In this display also lies the core importance of Armenian life: the church. Pictures and manuscripts express the religious customs and beliefs of the Armenian people.

In this presentation, one can also see the detail of illuminated manuscripts, the reproduction of carved wooden crosses, hand made table decors created through needlework, and slippers that were



once used in public bath houses.

This wonderful display of Armenian life was put together through the help of Dr. Dickran Kouymjian, Dr. Isabel Kaprielian, Meliné and Sarkis Kalfayan, Barlow Der Mugrdachian, and the

essentially the inspiration for the Armenian showcase at Fresno State. "It was a nice tie-in with what we wanted to do," says Tammy Lau, one of the coordinators at the special collections department.

This display is unique in

Special Collections department of Fresno State.

The showcase was inspired by a display which can be experienced at the Chinatown Art and Education Art Gallery. It is there that one may see photos of the impressive work of Lawrence Cone (Condragian), the first Armenian architect in Fresno.

This display was es-

sential the sense that it truly captures a holistic view and representation of Armenian life, what it once was, and in similar ways, still is. It also takes one back into time, guiding one through the history of a people who struggled to create a new life for themselves in the Little Armenia of Fresno.

It was because of Rueben Minassian, the first Armenian visitor to the San Joaquin Valley, and Melkon Markarian and Stephen Shahamirian, the first Armenian settlers in the Valley, that Armenians today have residence in Fresno and the surrounding valleys.

Not a day goes by in this Valley and in the city of Fresno, that one does not run into an Armenian. It is then that one begins to learn the history of each others'

See Display, Page 6

Further letters of congratulations to Dr. Kouymjian

Dear Dr. Kouymjian,

Congratulations on your many past accomplishments, particularly the Armenian Studies Program at my Alma mater. Best wishes for your continued successes in future years.

Sincerely,
Ruby Sanoian Kueffer
Belmont, CA

Dear Dickran,

My husband and I wish to add our sincere congratulations in recognition of your many contributions to Armenian studies and letters. Your leaderships has helped to show the way, so others may continue in your path. Bravo. Best wishes for many more productive years.

Sincerely,
Mr. & Mrs. W.J. Mesrobian
Syracus, NY

Dear Dr. Kouymjian:

It is a great pleasure to extend my sincere congratulations upon being selected the William Saroyan Professor of Armenian Studies at the University of California at Berkeley, for the fall 1996 semester.

This award signifies the great honor and respect for which you are held by your peers. I applaud your devotion and I am confident that whichever new endeavor you seek, will provide an even greater source of support and inspiration for those whose lives you touch. Congratulations again and thank you for your outstanding accomplishments. I send to you my best wishes for every continued success.

Sincerely,
George P. Radanovich
Member of Congress
19th District, California

Dear Dickran:

I have been out of the country for 7 months. This is to take a moment and to wish you a successful new year.

Eric Hamp
The University of Chicago

Professor Kouymjian:

I wanted to thank you for one of the best classes I have had at this school. This class was exactly what I wanted from the English Department, but have never really gotten. Your first hand experience and anecdotal support, has made the class very rewarding. Until this course, I had never read a single work by Saroyan. I am a senior at the University of California, Berkeley. Need I say more? I was amazed that in all of my study of literature, from grade school on, that not a single teacher taught a work

by Saroyan. After learning his significant role, I felt both amazed and ignorant.

So I have found another of life's little ironies; I had to wait for the visiting professor from Fresno who specializes in ancient art (if I remember correctly), to participate in one of the best literature courses at Berkeley. I have also appreciated the insight to the Armenian community. I have always grown up with Armenian friends, and I have a vague idea of the Armenian Church, but now I enjoy a better understanding of them. When I was going to New York on the plane, you may appreciate that one of the cross-word puzzle clues was "My Name is _ _ _ _ ; Saroyan" (November issue of "Hemispheres" magazine-United Airlines). Thank you again.

Joshua H. Smith
University of California, Berkeley

Dear Dickran:

Let me take a moment from revising my atlas (which has to be in the hands of the press by September 1), to offer, however belatedly, my congratulations on the honors and plaudits that were recently bestowed upon you at CSU Fresno. You have done an excellent job there as I hear from every side. Congratulations, once again, on your recent award.

Robert H. Hewsens
Rowan College of New Jersey

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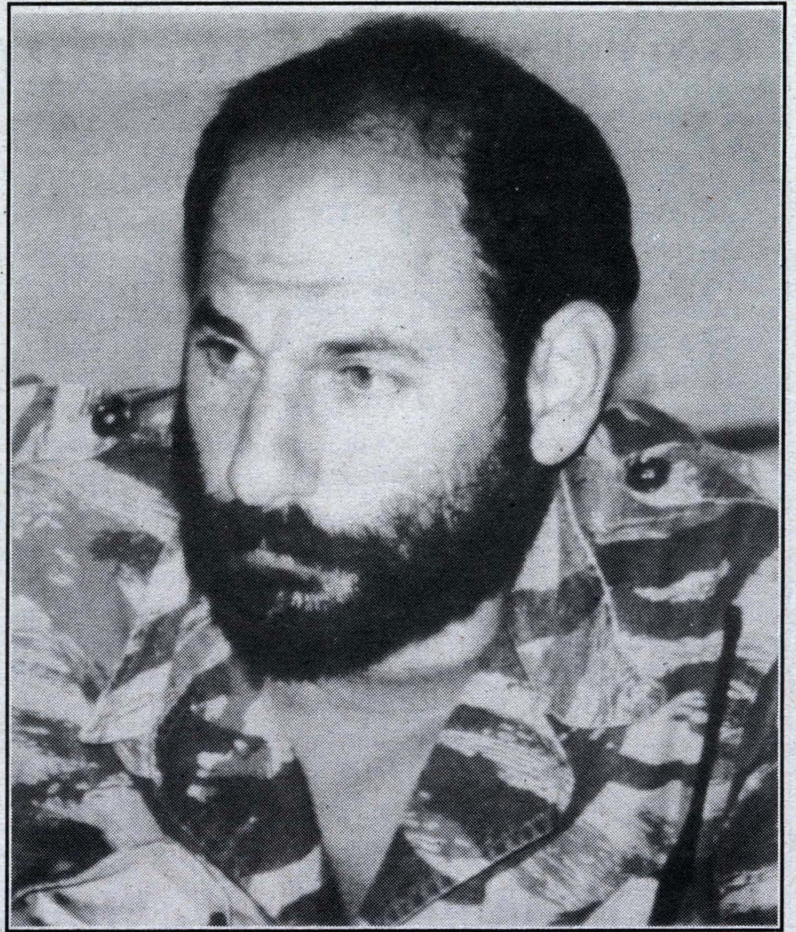
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• Arm S 120T Arm. Genocide	1810-2100	Wed	I Kaprielian
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For more information call the Armenian Studies Program at 278-2669 or visit our offices in the Peters Business Building, Room 384.



Monte Melkonian (1957-1993)

Armenian militant and martyred hero of the war between Karabagh and Azerbaijan, whose 1978 University of California, Berkeley thesis on Urartian rock-cut tombs has just been translated into Armenian and published in Erevan in the series "Armenological Monuments of Armenia." A new edition of Melkonian's essays, *The Right to Struggle*, has also just been issued. Monte was the son of Zabelle and Charles Melkonian of Visalia.

For more details on these volumes, see the Books and Gifts section.

Decade of Turmoil: Reflections on Armenia and the Armenians

A speech presented in Los Angeles on the second anniversary of the Consulate of the Republic of Armenia

By Dr. Dickran Kouymjian

Archbishop Vatche. Very Reverend Mushegh, Father Raphael, Reverend Minassian, Mr. Consul General and Mrs. Baibourtian, distinguished clergy and guests, ladies and gentlemen. What a wonderful occasion! Many of us have mixed memories of getting a visa for Armenia, arriving at the Soviet Consulate in San Francisco or another city to get a visa for Armenia, wondering if the FBI was photographing us from the building across the street, or if we would get in trouble with the American government for traveling there. Now it's a simple formality conducted between members of the same family. Surely this is part of today's celebration.

Today's banquet should inspire us to reflect on Armenia and the Armenians, homeland and diaspora, citizenship, responsibility, and above all history, the historical context of our lives, the lives of our parents and grandparents, and of future generations of Armenians. So much has happened to Armenians in recent years that even we, a people who have always respected history and interpreted our lives in historical terms, cannot assess fully the meaning of what has passed. It is at moments such as this, when we come together to commemorate and celebrate, that we offer ourselves the excuse to look at the past in larger terms.

I think back a decade ago to those relatively tranquil days of June 1987 in Armenia when I was finishing my term as a Fulbright professor in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures at Erevan State University. The call by Mikhail Gorbachev for restructuring and transparency, *perestroika* and *glasnost*, had already caused a stir in Armenia. A major petition had been circulating with hundreds of thousands of signatures asking



Consul General Armen Baibourtian, right, and Professor Dickran Kouymjian

for the union of Karabagh to Armenia; the ecology movement was expanding, reflecting the general concern in the population about the nuclear plant at Medsamour and the pollution from the large Naïrit chemical complex in Erevan itself; and growing nationalism in institutions like the Matenadaran, the Writers Union, and especially among university students were contributing to a major debate about Armenian leadership and the control of the country and various unions by a small elite.

The stagnation of the Brezhnev period, denounced in the Soviet Union, was still felt in Armenia through the First Secretary of the Communist Party, Garen Demijian and the crony system he supported, but open criticism was rampant and signs that

things were changing included the resignation of Vartkes Petrossian as head of the powerful Writers Union, caused in part by the protest against his most recent novel, *The Bloody Shirt*, by the students of the Polytechnic University, who were alarmed by its suggestion of dialogue with the Turks. But I emphasize, in Armenia during the summer of 1987 things were still calm, "normal" in the language of those days.

However, in the fall everything seemed to accelerate. The ecology and Karabagh movements got intertwined and in early 1988 engendered a series of ever larger, but peaceful, demonstrations, which confused Moscow, astonished the world, and even surprised Armenians by their solidarity, clarity of purpose, and determi-

nation. Who could have imagined the outcome would have been the barbarous pogroms of Sumgaït and Baku precipitating a mass exodus of populations and leading to war. Who can forget the betrayal of Armenian hopes by a Gorbachev who refused to accept the consequences of the very "transparency" and "restructuring" he so aggressively initiated, a leader who could not or would not take the necessary decisions to stop the killing and referee an honest settlement between Azerbaijan and the Armenians over Karabagh, and who finally tricked the Armenian people through its own intellectuals into stopping the protests, into putting an end to the greatest popular, anti-government movement in the history of the Soviet Union.

Martial law was declared and Soviet tanks occupied Armenia's capital. Then at the very end of that year 1988, the earthquake struck, unexpected and violent, merciless in its effect on the body and spirit of a nation just as it was collectively doing everything it could to show that through a united effort truth and justice could be made to prevail. Gorbachev himself, the architect of the future down-sizing of the Russian Empire, came from the UN in New York to Erevan. But Armenians greeted him shouting "Karabaghe mern é!" and the great Communist leader was taken aback by a people who, in the throes of tragedy and death, refused to forget that Karabagh was theirs. Working with local KGB agents, who had things carefully planned, Gorbachev quickly had all the members of the Karabagh Committee, Armenia's hope for a new future, arrested and imprisoned in Moscow in the worst manner of Soviet totalitarianism. Catastrophe, trauma, war, death — Armenia was devastated and occupied by Soviet tanks. There was war in Karabagh and a total blockade of the country. The nation's elected leadership was discredited, the people's leaders in prison. What difficult and uncertain days they were. But time never stopped.

Soon there were renewed proposals for a compromise on Karabagh; due to the pressure of western governments, the members of the Karabagh Committee were released and allowed to return to Armenia. There were parliamentary elections and Karabagh Committee representatives were swept into office. Levon Ter Petrossian was elected president of the Parliament. Finally, there was the dramatic dissolution of the Soviet Union

See Consulate, Page 8

Vardan Mamikonian

The Armenian pianist Vardan Mamikonian was born on August 27, 1970 in Yerevan, Armenia where he began to study music at age seven. A few years later he made his first recital tour in Russia and performed with orchestras in Moscow, Vilnius, Riga, Gorky, St. Petersburg, and Minsk, etc.

At sixteen, he went to Moscow to continue his studies, first at the Central Music School, and then at the Tchaikovsky Conservatory of Music. During that period, his career took on an international dimension when he appeared throughout Germany, England and Italy.

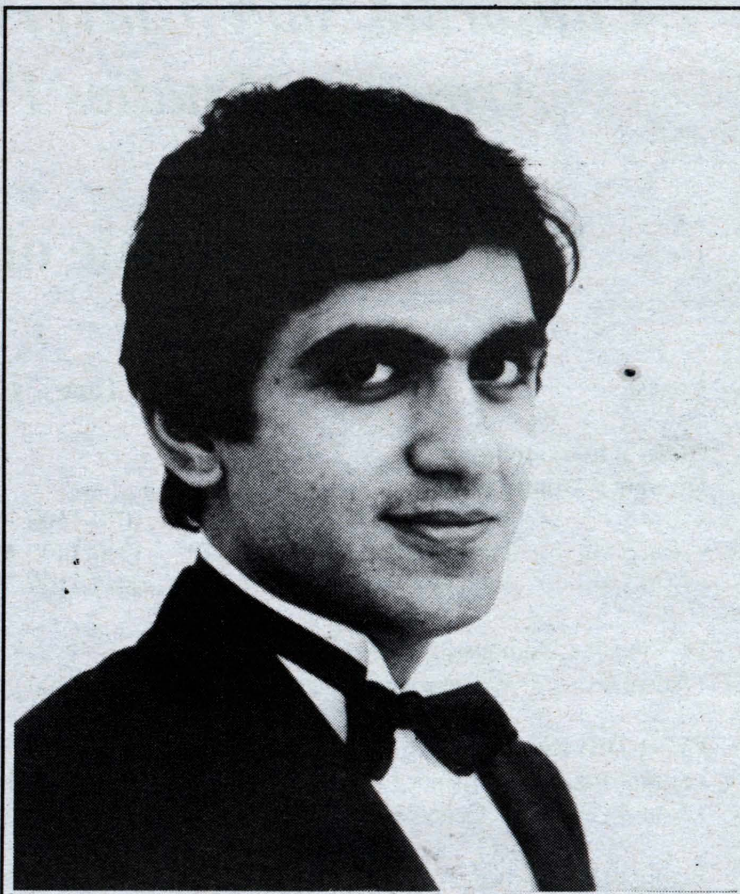
France has recently played a very important role in the development of Mr. Mamikonian's

artistry and career. Critically acclaimed performances at the Festival of Radio France and the Festival of Montpellier brought him in a program of works by Debussy, Ravel and Demus. Mr. Dutilleux has been coaching Mr. Mamikonian in the composer's work for piano. He also studies with Lazar Berman.

Although Vardan Mamikonian won the Armenian Piano Competition at the age of ten and the Piano Competition of the Soviet Republics at the age of eleven, it was his first prize at the International Piano Competition Yvonne Lefebure in Paris in 1990 followed by his first prize at the Third Monte Carlo "World Music Masters" Competition (open to top prize winners of major international competitions only) in 1992, that secured his repu-

tation as an artist of the highest caliber.

Vardan Mamikonian's first recording (on the French Solstice label) of works by Ravel (Gaspard de la Nuit), Babdjanian, Tchaikovsky, Stravinsky and Khachaturian has just been released. His traversal of the complete Chopin Etudes will be released in September. He has had a very busy 1992-93 season, performing in France, England, Portugal, Switzerland, and Luxembourg. Vardan Mamikonian consistently garners reviews which compare his playing to Horowitz and Perlemuter, especially for his interpretation of Ravel's Gaspard de la Nuit. He will make his New York debut at Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall on September 14.



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April 24 Commemoration

Sunday, April 20

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Wednesday, April 23

Candlelight Vigil
After the Mamikonian Concert
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Saroyan, from p. 1

of his contemporary to be experimental or avant-garde. He especially discussed Saroyan's battle with Ernest Hemingway.

Micah Jendian, San Diego State graduate student and Fresno native, in his paper "A Jungian Approach to 'My Name Is Aram'" provided an insightful reading of *My Name Is Aram*. Jendian utilized a standard generally applied to visual art, arguing that from an analysis of Jungian archetypes in Saroyan's work "the voice of all mankind resounds." The next speaker, Harry Keyishian, most recently the editor of *Critical Essays on William Saroyan*, is Professor of English at Fairleigh Dickinson University in Madison, New Jersey, and Director of its University Press. Discussing "Immigrant Themes in Saroyan's Fiction," Keyishian dealt with Saroyan's self imposed responsibilities regarding newly arrived immigrants and their children; he quoted from the introduction of Saroyan's first book, *The Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze*: "I want to lift [man] from the nightmare of history to the calm dream of his own soul."

Harold Aram Veesser, Associate Professor of English at Wichita State University, literary critic, author, and editor of numerous books and articles, in his paper "Performance Machine: Saroyan against Literature 'For all Time,'" acknowledged the energy and rapid on-the-spot composition of Saroyan, who often typed stand-

ing, without the aid of outlines or notes, and only the assistance of the burning desire rapid on the spot composition of Saroyan, who often typed standing, without the aid of outlines or notes, but with the assistance of the burning desire of the performance artist at his typewriter oblivious to the final forms of his works. According to Veesser, "Saroyan laid the foundations for the most important new art of the *fin de siècle*, [ranging from] rappers and hip hop DJ's to the stand-up monologues of Eric Bogosian."

The final panel, "Saroyan and the Beats," was chaired by Anthony Bliss, head of the Department of Rare Books at the Bancroft Library, and curator of the current exhibition "Ferlinghetti, City Lights, and the Beats in San Francisco." Professor and poet, Edward Halsey Foster, author of *Saroyan, a Study of the Short Fiction*, and *Understanding the Beats*, is also President of Talisman House, publishers of innovative and avant-garde writing in the United States, and the author of *All the Acts are Simple Acts* his selected poems. In "Saroyan and Kerouac: Joy Is the Way I Live," Foster pointed out that "The expressionist aesthetic gave Saroyan and Kerouac the permission to write a rapturous, lyrical prose that would have been out of place in the sober, mainstream world of the, and suggested that the two authors are the principal links in the core American tradition of placing joy over pragmatic necessity."

Next, David Stephen

Calonne, Associate Professor of English at Siena Heights College in Michigan and author of the groundbreaking study *William Saroyan: My Real Work is Being*, examined in "Two on the Trapeze" Saroyan's influence on beat-like writer Charles Bukowski, stating "Saroyan is one of a number of writers who are role models for Bukowski in the heroic, romantic, nonconformist tradition: the artist who bears stoically the ecstasy and burden of genius, and ultimately seeks a recovery of the sacred life."

UC Berkeley English major, Michael Kovacs, who along with Michael Kloster was a student in Professor Kouymjian's Saroyan course in the fall semester, presented "From Fresno to Lowell: Saroyan's Influence on Kerouac and the Beats." According to Kovacs, "Saroyan and Kerouac share some of the same aesthetic assumptions about literature: mainly, that as writers they would ignore conventions in order to convey the truth of their experiences." The next panelists, Michael Kloster, the conference's Logistical Coordinator and UC Berkeley English major, continuing on the Kerouacian theme of the panel, explained in his paper "Saroyan and Kerouac on a Quest for 'It'" that "Saroyan through his inherent humanity and the Beats through their New Vision sought to perpetuate positive societal change through their writings."

Finally, poet Ronald Loewinsohn, Professor of the Berkeley English Department, ended

the session with "Saroyan, Kerouac, and the Beats," which put forth the idea of the "common man" in both authors' work, contrasting Kerouac's almost forced identification against Saroyan's natural affinity with his fellow men.

Following the last panel, Professor Kouymjian hosted a roundtable discussion around the theme: "What Now? The Future of Saroyan Studies," during which the audience and all speakers exchanged questions and answers. Veesser reinforced his view that the current quest for cultural education should obviously include Saroyan who was years ahead of his contemporaries and critics in expressing and interpreting the interaction which makes the U.S. a cornucopia of cultures. Discussion later turned to the publishing of the conference papers, for which Kouymjian, the Conference Coordinator, had received several inquiries. These offers and City Light's interest coupled with valuable argumentative discussion by the community, scholars, and students may assure a healthy prognosis for Saroyan's future popularity and continued appreciation.

Virtually every serious scholar and writer involved in Saroyan studies was brought to Berkeley by Prof. Kouymjian for "Saroyan Plus Fifteen." When the full texts of the papers are published, the event will probably stand as a watershed in Saroyan scholarship with several new vistas of inquiry thrown open for future investigation.

A Semester at Berkeley

By Dr. Dickran Kouymjian

What was it like to teach at Berkeley? I have been asked that many times since returning to Fresno. Not much different than teaching at Fresno State. The best students in my classes at the University of California were about the same as the best students at Fresno State, except that there were proportionately more of them in an average class up there.

The teaching load is more merciful at Berkeley, usually two courses instead of the four at Fresno. But each course is four credits instead of the three here and meets four hours a week, so it is eight hours of lectures versus twelve at CSUF. Classes are on the whole bigger and so is the campus and the student body, twice the size. The greatest difference seems to be the general seriousness of purpose one feels at UCB, and I suppose at any UC campus, because they are universities which are considered research institutions awarding the doctorate in nearly every discipline. Thus, even on the undergraduate level the competition is clearly felt. Students want their money's worth (tuition is several times higher than at Fresno State) and insist on getting it.

At the beginning of the semester the average student shops around attending up to ten courses in the first two or three weeks or multiple sections of the same course before finally deciding which one offers the best instruction. I was warned by staff and faculty that class size in the first weeks can be inflated by as much as 50% and was even discouraged from taking attendance and reporting absences.

Student attitudes toward work and grading are both similar to Fresno State and different. There was the same complaining about grades. On the other hand written assignments were handed in remarkably promptly, with students demanding precision about due dates. Students also made much more use of office hours, to such a point that I had to schedule a sign up sheet some weeks. Some stu-

dents came back over and again setting up a barely disguised private tutorial.

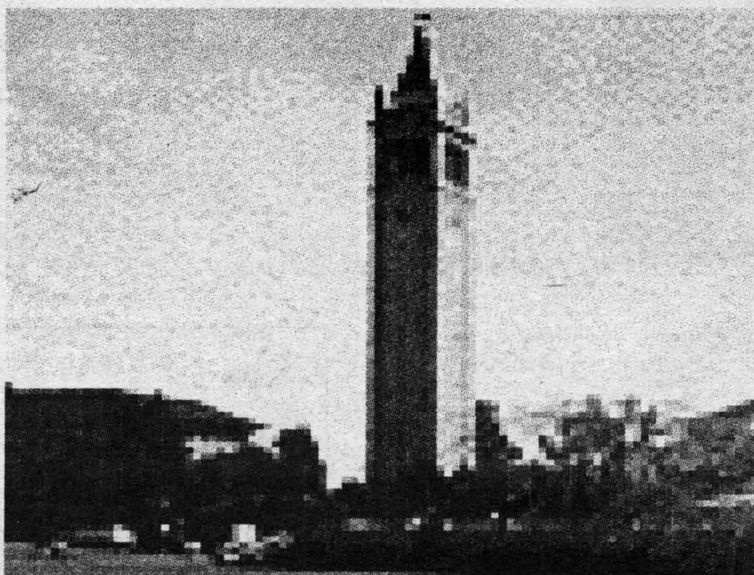
This seriousness seemed to be a reflection of students as interested in getting an education as getting their degrees. I was pleasantly surprised during my first weeks on campus in August and September to have been asked by secretarial and administrative staff, "Is there anything else we can do for you to make sure you are giving our students the best education they can get?" This is a literal quotation that was repeated three times to me from three different sectors of the campus and I wondered if it was in the policy manual, a kind of greeting like grocery store clerks who say hello to each customer at the cash register. I discovered it was a genuine concern.

Berkeley has its problems, for sure. I was told that it has the lowest graduation rate in the UC system and that probably many fewer freshmen finally end up with their degrees than Fresno State students.

My specific experiences involved my duties as the second William Saroyan Visiting Professor of Armenian Studies. This endowed chair program has been trying for a decade to raise sufficient private funds to establish a regular fulltime position at UC Berkeley, similar to the ones at UCLA and Fresno State. In 1995 they had enough of an endowment to invite a professor for one semester, thus creating a visiting position until such time as the endowment allowed for a regular professor. Administratively I was in four different sections of the university with four separate mailboxes! The Saroyan Chair is housed in the Slavic and East European Studies Program, which in turn is part of

International and Area Studies. I taught an upper division English Department course on William Saroyan (only appropriate concerning the clever naming of the chair) and a second course on Armenian Cinema in the Film Studies Program, part of the Department of Rhetoric. Each department integrated me wholly and offered me office space, a mailbox, an e-mail address, but unfortunately a computer only with great difficulty.

Among the rewards of the experience was teaching William Saroyan to English majors, a rare occurrence for the Saroyan course



which at Fresno State is listed only under Armenian Studies. I was not surprised that some English majors had never read Saroyan, but I was disturbed that several confessed that they had never heard of him. Of my 24 students, mostly English majors, only four were Armenian. Encouraged by their enthusiasm for the subject and the quality of their writing and thinking, I decided to organize a Saroyan conference to commemorate the 15th anniversary of the author's death. With class help, one student handled the publicity, another the conference program, we were able to invite the world's leading Saroyan scholars for a conference entitled "Saroyan Plus Fifteen" held on campus on November 15.

Since the conference has been widely reported on, even in *Hye Sharzhoom*, I wish only to relate that aspect of it that was the most

interesting to me. At first I thought, some of these students could present papers on Saroyan as good as those of the professors being invited so why not extend the conference one day to have a student session? Class participation was optional and extra credit. Five students (all upper division English majors) were willing to try it. Eventually, only two stuck it out, Michael Kovacs and Michael Kloster, but they were joined by a third student, Micah Jendian from San Diego State, who had taken my Saroyan course in Fresno. In the end, I judged it would be segregation to put the

three on a separate student panel and insisted that their papers be integrated into regular sessions of the conference.

Certainly this was one of the most positive experiences during my Berkeley stay. All the students were behind their classmates, who, apprehensive about being on the same platform with the very experts whose books they were quoting, wrote and rewrote their essays. They had a dry run in class with heavy questioning and criticism. I assured them continually that the work they were doing was as good as the experts and that the level of their own preparation would be on a par with that of the scholars present. In fact the three students, two undergraduates from Berkeley and one graduate from San Diego, gave what were recognized by everyone as three of the best papers in the conference. A member of Berkeley's own English Department also read a paper on Saroyan and the conference raised the conscience of English literature specialists, especially a new crop of them, toward the merits of Saroyan's craft.

The experience in the film

course was somewhat different, but equally surprising. A weekly showing and lecture in a large audio visual auditorium on Monday nights attracted 40 to 50 students, including in this course a large number of Armenian community auditors. The regular students were almost all film majors, 15 out of 25, only five of them Armenians. Obviously, film majors just look at movies differently than non-film majors. Thus, when discussing a film like *Queen Christina* directed by Rouben Mamoulian and starring Greta Garbo, they found Armenian connections that I never saw myself in the direction. Mamoulian never made a single film with Armenian content in it, yet the non-Armenian students especially continued to develop themes that turned around exile and Diaspora. This happened time and again with other films. On the other hand, some Armenian auditors always wanted to turn discussion of Armenian language films or even films by Atom Egoyan or William Saroyan toward its Armenian nationalist content; thus, on more than one occasion I was forced to move the post-film discussion toward the cinematographic qualities of a film. In a film course with determined film majors the quality of filming, scripting, acting, and overall cohesiveness is primary, and political or national messages secondary. The auditors hopefully learned something from the extraordinary input of young film specialists who had never previously seen a film by or about Armenians.

Ultimately the most valuable part of such a teaching experience is to once again leave your home institution, your own students, to see how things are done elsewhere. It affords new perspectives and fires one up with new energies.

In mid-December I discovered I had a fifth mailbox in the Program on undergraduate studies, and even though I found my first three pay vouchers two months late in my fourth mailbox, I just didn't have the courage to go across campus to empty one more. Who knows what I missed?

Two Major Supporters of Armenian Studies Pass Away

Within a week during the last days of February and the first days of March death came to Isabel Berberian and Meliné Kalfayan. Their names were familiar to hundreds of students and supporters of the Armenian Studies Program. The first endowed chair in Armenian Studies and the first chair to become operative on the campus of California State University, Fresno bears the name of Haig and Isabel Berberian. I have had the honor to be the first incumbent of that chair, named after the Berberians thanks to a most generous donation from Isabel and Haig's daughter Dianne and son-in-law Dr. Arnold Gazarian. Next year will mark the tenth anniversary of the Berberian endowment.

Mrs. Berberian had been in failing health for many months.

Her husband had passed away in 1987 and she continued her life in Modesto surrounded by the Gazarians and her four grandchildren: Janalee married to Brian Melikian, Michelle married to Dr. John Arakelian, Rena married to Wayne Rutledge, and Alyssa. The Berberians, both Isabel and Haig, were characterized by discretion and gentleness. Their attachment to the Fresno community, including Armenian institutions like the church and the Armenians Studies Program and their generosity to it, is reflected in the continuing public service of the Gazarians. Arnold Gazarian serves as the Chair of the Armenian Studies Program Advisory Board and together with Dianne have stood behind us at all times. I also had the good fortune to teach two of Isabel Berberian's

grandchildren, Rena and Alyssa.

In one of those unlucky coincidences that life seems to reserve for us, Meliné Kalfayan passed away the day of Mrs. Berberian's funeral. She had been in and out the hospital frequently these past months, but seemed each time to bounce back with her perennial optimism. She and her husband Sarkis (Sam) Kalfayan established a special endowment fund in 1991 for the support of the newly created Center for Armenian Studies on the CSU Fresno campus. The Sarkis and Meliné Kalfayan Center for Armenian Studies includes in it the John Garabedian Director's office, the Sahatdjian Library, and the Avedian Archives. As the first Director of the Kalfayan Center and the Armenian Studies Program it houses, I have felt assured of the

future of Armenian Studies at Fresno State due in part to the Kalfayan endowment which will continue to benefit in the years and decades to come through the Kalfayan's estate.

Sarkis Kalfayan served for six years as the first Chair of the Armenian Studies Program Advisory Board and he and Meliné have stood steadfast in their support of Armenia and Armenian Studies. More than once in difficult moments, whether it be the need for computers at our sister institution, Yerevan State University, or aid to bring over exchange students from Armenia, Sarkis and Meliné were ready to help.

Meliné was active in community affairs as member of the Eastern Star, Daughters of the Nile, and Daughters of the Vartan. I had the

pleasure of Meliné's gracious hospitality more than once. I also had met her father, the scholar Hovanness Babessian, at the Cilician Catholicosate in Antelias, Lebanon while he was doing research in the late 1950s.

On behalf of the Armenian Studies Program, its faculty, staff, and students, and in the name of the Advisory Board, I would like to extend our deepest condolences to Dianne and Arnold Gazarian and their family and to Sarkis Kalfayan, and to thank them for their constant support of our work.

Dickran Kouymjian

Haig & Isabel Berberian Professor of Armenian Studies
Director, The Sarkis and Meliné Kalfayan Center for Armenian Studies

Agricultural Exchange between Fresno and Armenia

Staff Report

CSU Fresno President Dr. John Welty hosted a reception for a group of academics and professors from Armenia at the University Home on Wednesday, January 22.

As part of the United States Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Marketing Assistance

CSU Fresno, a visit to the Kearney Agricultural Station, a visit to San Francisco State University, and a visit to the campus of UC Berkeley. The group of administrators will return to Armenia to continue the process back in Armenia.

The Strategic Planning Group included Samvel Avetisyan, Head of the Department of Science

versity, Fresno and leader of the Strategic Planning Group; Donald Pritchard, and David Nelson, consultant for strategic planning and curriculum development.

The "Train-the-Trainers Program" was designed for faculty from the Agricultural Academy. The goal of the program was to provide a general overview of important aspects of conducting agricultural business. Mini-courses in finance, management, marketing, and computer applications were presented over the two week period. The participants were able to take away from the course enough knowledge and material to enable them to incorporate all or parts of the course into their classes at the Agricultural Academy.

The "Train-the-Trainers" group included from Armenia: Gerasim Davtyan, Dean of the Department of Agricultural Economics at the Armenian Agricultural Academy; Sergey Meloyan, Deputy Dean, Department of Agricultural Economics at the Armenian Agricultural Academy; Varduhi Khachatryan, Assistant to the Rector for Foreign Relations at the Armenian Agricultural Academy; Youri Marmaryan, Deputy Rector of the Armenian Agricultural Academy; Tsolak Galstyan, Head, Department of Academic Methodol-



Visiting the Armenian Community School of Fresno



The Agricultural Marketing Assistance Project Team

Project, a fifteen person group from Armenia arrived January 16 for a two week program at California State University, Fresno. The group was divided into two: a Strategic Planning Group and a "Train-the-Trainers" Group.

The Strategic Planning Group was designed for administrators for the purpose of illustrating and applying the concepts of strategic planning at Armenia's Agricultural Academy (AAA). Activities for the group included lectures and laboratory exercises at

and Education of the Ministry of Agriculture; Vardan Haikazyan, Director of Extension Service; Armen Khachatryan, Rector, Armenian Agricultural Academy; Sergey Ghazaryan, President, Academy of Agricultural Sciences; Levon Aghamyan, Project Director, World Bank's Agricultural Reform and Restructuring Project and Gayane Mkrtchian, Assistant for Public Relations for the USDA. From the United States were John Shields, Professor of Agricultural Economics at California State Uni-

versity at the Armenian Agricultural Academy; Ashot Aghababyan, Head, Department of Scientifics at the Armenian Agricultural Academy; Armen Aivazyan, Assistant to the Rector at the Armenian Agricultural Academy of Armenia; Ashot Bayadyan, Professor and Chair of the Department of Accounting and Audit at the Arme-

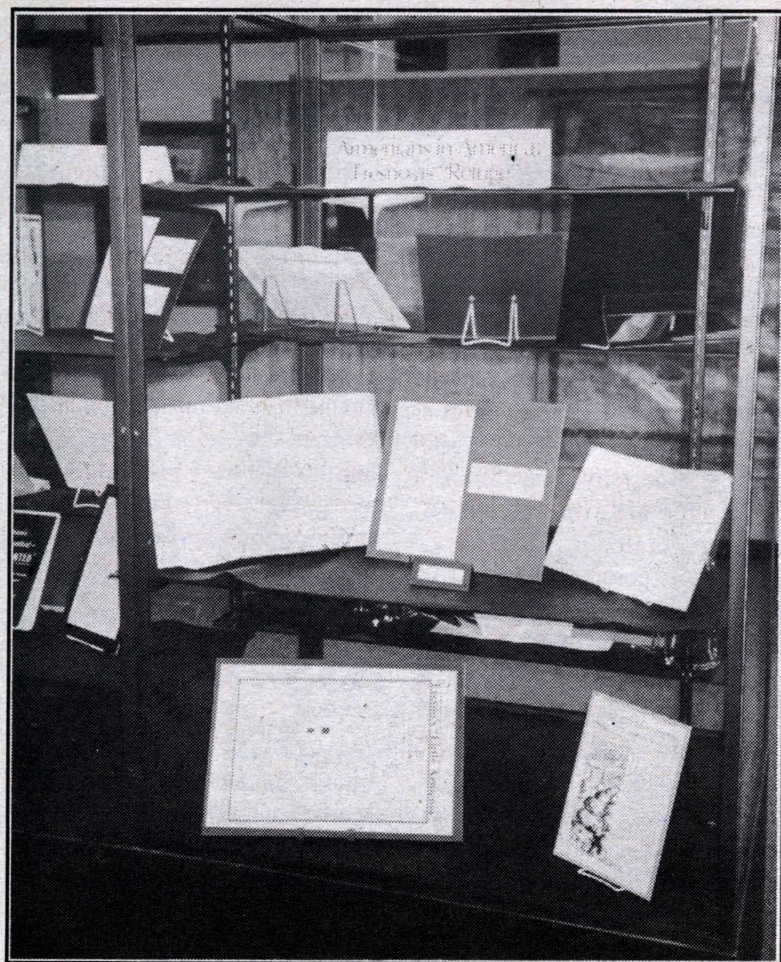
nian Agricultural Academy and Gayane Petrosyan, of the USDA.

Juan Batista, Professor of Agricultural Economics at California State University was the leader of the "Train-the-Trainers" group. Elizabeth Shields, Victor Panico, James Cothern, and William Rice, all of California State University, Fresno implemented the mini-

courses. Barlow Der Mugrdchian of the Armenian Studies Program coordinated translation services for the two-week program. Translators were Arevig Hagopian, Ashot Hagopian, and Viktoriya Yerkanyan.



In front of Valley Lahvosh.



Armenians in America display in the Special Collections Department at the Henry Madden Library, Fresno State.

Display, from p.2

family and discover the intertwining involvement of Armenians.

This eloquent display at Fresno State offers an insight into the interrelationships of one of Fresno's oldest communities.

Armenians in America: Fresno as "Refuge"

Special Collections of the
Henry Madden Library
CSU Fresno

M-F 10 AM - 4:30 PM

The exhibit will be open through the summer.

CD Review

By Barlow Der Mugrdchian

The Music of Armenia: Volume Five: Folk Music/Shoghaken Ensemble. Disk 1 (75'12") and Disk 2 (73'58") Celestial Harmonies, P.O. Box 30122, Tucson, Arizona 85751

Volume five of the six volume series *The Music of Armenia* has recently been released by Celestial Harmonies. Composer David Parsons has continued his exploration into the sacred and folk traditions of Eastern Armenians with this double CD devoted to the folk music of Armenia. In this latest production, listeners enjoy the traditional music of Armenia: rural work songs, urban folk songs, contemporary protest songs from the disputed Karabagh region, laments, songs of emigration, and the universal topic of love. Unlike the earlier volumes in this series, which have featured a single ensemble or soloist, the folk songs and dances in this collection are performed by no fewer than two ensembles and a number of vocal soloists.

Western Armenian music, from the region of Vaspourakan (Van), is also included on both CDs. Longing for the lost Western Armenian provinces runs deep



through the music on the CDs.

The music represent Armenia's unique geographical position as a crossroads between Asia and Europe. Many of the performers of these pieces also performed in the earlier CDs of the series. Again, such instruments as the *duduk*, *kanon*, *kamancha*, *dhol*, *zurna*, and *shevi* are used. The *duduk* and the *kamancha* have the most important role in the music since they are best suited to performing the intricately ornamented Armenian songs.

The Shoghaken Folk Ensemble and the Sasun Folk Group perform many of the pieces. The Shoghaken Folk Ensemble was founded in 1991

by Gevorg Dabaghian and uses only traditional instruments. Its aim is to recreate the authentic sound of Armenian music without outside influences.

The Sasun Folk Group was founded in 1988 in the village of Nerkin Bazmaberd by Andranik Manukian. The group specializes in the folk songs and dances of Mush and Sasun in Western Armenia.

Recorded in the Ardzakan Recording Studio in Yerevan, this CD set reveals the rich cultural history of Armenia through music. Volume is highly recommended for its authentic sound and highly evocative music.

Armenian Studies Donations and Books

The Armenian Studies Program, its Sahatdjian Library and Avedian Archives, would like to thank the following individuals for their generous donations.

Professor Alice K. Barter has donated copies of her book *Saroyan's Armenians, An Anthology* (1992) to the Armenian Studies Program for students and supporters.

Carl Mahakian of Palm Springs has once again offered archival clippings, brochures and books.

Samvel Avetissian of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food of the Republic of Armenia donated a portrait of William Saroyan etched on black obsidian stone.

The **Agavni Kazarian Family** of Fresno have donated a large collection of early photographs and Armenian language books, some from the collection of Vahan Daron.

Martin Tourigian of Drexel Hill, Pennsylvania, has once again generously donated his paintings and musical scores.

Julia Stephan Baily of San Francisco has donated a collection of some 25 books, mostly in Armenian by authors such as Vahé Haig, Vahram Dadrian and Terenig Demirjian.

Peggy and Sebouh Gunner (Tufenkjian) of Fresno have donated a collection of books, periodical and old photographs from the family of their father Avedis Tufenkjian. Included among the materials are bound volumes of the *Hairenik Daily* from 1900-1904 and the daily *Asbarez* from 1917-1921. Family photographs from the early 1920s show the Tufenkjian-Gunner clan with distinguished visitors.

Violet Mayian formerly of Chicago and now of Escondido, CA, has donated a number of photographs, posters, maps, books, and periodicals.

Former CSUF student **Sharon Torioian Esguerra** of Fresno has donated a collection of recent books in English on scholarly subjects.

The **Armenian National Committee** of Fresno donated the complete set of 4 volumes of Richard Hovannisian's *The Republic of Armenia*. Berkeley-Los Angeles-London: University of California Press, 1982-1996

Dr. Dickran Kouymjian, Director of the Armenian Studies Program, would like to thank the authors and publishers for the following books and periodicals.

Books, Monographs & Pamphlets

Agemian, Sylvia, *Manuscripts Arméniens Enluminés du Catholicosate de Cilicie*, with a Preface by Catholicos Karekin II, Antelias, 1991, xx, 127, with 14 color and 97 black and white plates. Gift of His Holiness Aram I.

Andreasian, Sargis Avag Kahana, *Taragirm ou Hayrenik'e dem dimats'* [Exile and Homeland Face to Face], Pasadena: Arak's Press, 1995, [ivb], 245 pages. A travel diary of a trip through Turkey and historic Armenia. Gift of Armen Aroian, Los Angeles.

Armenia & Karabagh Factbook, Rouben Adalian, editor, Joseph Masih, assoc. editor, Washington, D.C.: The Armenian Assembly of America, 1996, 118 pages plus a fold out map. Everything you might want to know about the present status of the Karabagh Republic.

Aslan, Yasin, *A Turning Point in the History of Armenia*, Ankara: Turkish Democracy Foundation, 1996, 54 pages, a polemic pamphlet.

Aznavourean, Bishop Zareh, *Kanon surb Miwroni orhnut'ean*, (Canon for the Blessing of the Holy Christ), rendered from the classical Armenian, Antelias, 1996, 109 pages.

Barsoumian-Dadoyan, Seta, *From the History of Armenian-Arabic Cultural Relations - XIIIth Century*. John of Erzenka's "Views from the writings of Islamic philosophers," and his philosophical treatises in the light of his Islamic Sources, Beirut, 1991, 228 pages. Armenian text throughout with English and Armenian title.

Barter, Alice K., editor, *Saroyan's Armenians, An Anthology*, Huntington, West Virginia: University Editions, 1992, 174 pages. A nice selection of Saroyan stories with an introduction and a section on the Armenians.

Beolchi, Andrea, Herman Vahramian, Milan, 1994, catalogue of exhibit of sculpture by artist Vahramian, 12 pages.

Bozoyan, A. A., *Hay-Byuzandakan ekeghets'akan banakts'ut'yunneri vaveragrere* (1165-1178 t't') [Documents of the Armenian-Byzantine Church Negotiations (1165 to 1178)], Erevan: Gitoutoun Press, 1965, 256 pages.

Chaillot, Christine, *The Malankara Orthodox Church of India*, Geneva: Inter-Orthodox Dialogue, 1996, 100 pages, illustrated.

Cox, Claude E., *The Armenian Bible*, New York: Krikor and Clara Zohrab Information Center, 1966, 20 pages. A fine introduction to the history of text of the Armenian Bible.

Dadour Armen, *Hamanwag* [Symphony], selected stories, essays, and other writing, Northridge, CA, 1996, IX, 627 pages.

Dadrian, Vahakn N., *Documentation of the Armenian Genocide in Turkish Sources, reprint from Genocide: A Critical Bibliographic Review*, ed. by Israel Charny, 1991, pp. 86-138, with a 28 page introduction and a three page index added. Gift of Garbis Baghdassarian, San Francisco.

Dadrian, Vahakn N., *German Responsibility in the Armenian Genocide. A Review of the Historical Evidence of German Complicity*, Watertown: Blue Crane Books, 1996, xvi, 304 pages. A pioneering study of the German role in the Turkish genocide against the Armenians which has already caused a considerable stir and provoked much rethinking on the part of German intellectuals. Gift of Garbis Baghdassarian of San Francisco.

Dadrian, Vahakn, *Haykakan Ts'egh aspatut'i wne Khorhddaranayin ev Patmagitakan Knmarkumnerov* [The Treatment of the Armenian Genocide by the Ottoman Parliament and Its Historical Analysis], Watertown: Baykar, 1995, 147 pages, Armenian text throughout except for four page bibliography in English. Gift of Garbis Baghdassarian, San Francisco.

Eghiaian, Biwzand, *Contemporary History of the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia, 1914-1972*, in Armenian, Antelias, 1975, 946 pages. A continuation of Babgen Gulesserian's history. Gift of His Holiness Catholicos Aram I.

Eghiaian, Biwzand, *The History of the Seljuk-T'at'ar-Ottoman Turks, XIth-XVth Centuries* (in Armenian), Antelias, 1989, 374 pages. Gift of His Holiness Catholicos Aram I.

Elbrecht, Richard A. and Barbara Griffith Elbrecht, *Armenian Churches in Eastern Turkey. A Legacy for Humanity*, an exhibition catalogue, Davis, CA, 1995, 60 pages.

"Etchmiadzin is Mission," Armenian Round Table, World Council of Churches, Etchmiadzin, March 1996, 19 pages with speech of His Holiness Catholicos Karekin I.

Halebian, Krikor, *The Armenian Church in Context*, text in Armenian and English, Los Angeles: Abril, 1996, 208 pages. A collection of miscellaneous essays.

Isaak Kechichian, translator, Eveque Assoghik, *Notre-Dame de l'Esperance*, Etchmiadzin, 1996, 38 pages, illus with colored painting of Virgin.

Kaprielian-Churchill, Isabel and Stacy Churchill, *The Pulse of the World: Refugees in Our Schools*, Toronto: The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1994, viii, 128 pages.

Karekin I, Catholicos, *In Search of Spiritual Life*, Holy Etchmiadzin, 1995, 285 pages, reprint of volume first issued in Antelias in 1991.

Karekin II Catholicos, *1700-ameake, nor Hoguegalust* [The 1700th Anniversary: A New Pentecost], Antelias, 1994, 64 pages.

Keshishian, Archbishop Aram (now Catholicos), *The Witness of the Armenian Church in a Diaspora Situation*, 2nd printing, Beirut, 1990, 75 pages. Gift of His Holiness Catholicos Aram I.

Keshishian, Archbishop Aram (now Catholicos), *Verakangnoui kamk'ov* [With the Will of Rebuilding], Beirut, 1983, 235 pages. Gift of His Holiness Catholicos Aram I.

Keshishian, Archbishop Aram (now Catholicos), *Zhoghovourdin het* [With the People], Beirut, 1989, 291 pages. Gift of His Holiness Catholicos Aram I.

Keshishian, Catholicos Aram I, Church and Ethnicity, Antelias, 1996, 38 pages, excerpts of His Holiness Catholicos Aram's report in Geneva in September 1996 as Moderator (i.e. President) of the Central and Executive Committees of the World Council of Churches. Gift of His Holiness Catholicos Aram I.

Keshishian, Catholicos Aram I, *Conciliar Fellowship. A Common Goal*, 2nd edition, Antelias, 1996, xvii, 124 pages. Gift of His Holiness Catholicos Aram I.

Keshishian, Catholicos Aram I, *Depi 1700-ameak Sourb T'adei Jambov* [Toward the 1700th Anniversary by Way of St. T'haddeus], Antelias, 1996, 61 pages. Gift of His Holiness Catholicos Aram I.

Keshishian, Catholicos Aram I, *Pontifical Message to the Armenian People of the Western Prelacy U.S.A.*, Antelias, 1996, text in Armenian and English, 32 pages. Gift of His Holiness Catholicos Aram I.

Keshishian, Catholicos Aram I, *The Christian Witness at the Crossroads in the Middle East*, 2nd impression, n.p.: Middle East Council of Churches, 1992, 77 pages, with a preface by Catholicos Karekin II. Gift of His Holiness Catholicos Aram I.

Keshishian, Catholicos Aram I, *The Incarnation of the Gospel in Cultures*. A Missionary Event, Beirut, 1995, 31 pages. Gift of His Holiness Catholicos Aram I.

Keshishian, Catholicos Aram I, *Toward an Ecumenical Ethic for a Responsible Society in a Sustainable Creation*, Beirut, 1994, 32 pages, report to the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches. Gift of His Holiness Catholicos Aram I.

Kevorkian, Aram J., *Un étranger pour mes petits-enfants*, Paris, 1996, 240 pages. The autobiography of an American-Armenian from Philadelphia who settled in Paris and was for many years the lawyer of William Saroyan.

Kévorkian, Raymond, editor, *L'Arménie entre Orient et Occident*, Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France, 1966. The sumptuous catalogue published in conjunction with the major exhibition of Armenian manuscripts and art at the BnF in Paris.

Khachikian, Levon, *Ashkhadut'iwnner* (Collected Works), vol. I, edited by Baruyr Muradian, Armenological Library, Erevan: Gandzasar Theological Center, 1995, 400 pages. Gift of Dr./Prof. Baruyr Muradian.

Kibritjian, Toros, *In Search of a God*, Sydney - Los Angeles: Parabol Publishing, 1990, 334 pages. An historical novel on the period of Armenia's conversion to Christianity. Gift of Cathy Shatafian, Los Angeles.

Krekorian, Michael, *Channel Zero*, Kaneohe, Hawaii: Plover Press, 1996, 121 pages. Winner of the 1995 Plover Nivola Contemporary novel contest.

Levin, Theodore, *The Hundred Thousand Fools of God*. Musical Travels in Central Asia (and Queens New York), with a 74 minute music CD, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996, xxiv, 318 pages.

Manoukian, Archbishop Artak, *Erkou Beverner*, Kronakan ew ashkharhik ishkhanout'iwnner [Two Poles: Religious and Secular Authorities], Tehran: Alik, 1996, 113 pages, Armenian text.

Manoukian, Archbishop Artak, *Shoghartsak*, vol. I, Tehran: Alik, 1996, 168 pages, Armenian text, a collection of essays related mostly to Armenian Church questions.

Manuelian, Jack, *Nostradamus: Predictions of World War III*, 2nd edition, New Brunswick, NJ: Inner Light, 1996, iv, 160 pages.

Melkonian, Markar, editor, *The Right to Struggle*, Selected Writings of Monte Melkonian on the Armenian National Question, 2nd edition, San Francisco: Sardarabad Collective, 1993, xxiv, 238 pages. A fine collection of the most famous contemporary Armenian hero and native of Visalia with an excellent introduction tracing Monte Melkonian's career as an Armenian militant. Gift of Zabelle and Charles Melkonian.

Melkonian, Monte, *Urartian Rock-Cut Tombs: A Description and Analysis*, Armenian translation in vol. 16 of *Archaeological Monuments and Specimens of Armenia*, vol. 16, Erevan: Haykakan Banak, 1995, pp. 5-54, illustrated, with a portrait of author and a biography. Originally a thesis prepared by militant Monte Melkonian while a student of archeology at the University of California, Berkeley, under the direction of Prof. Martin Schwartz. Gift of Zabelle and Charles Melkonian, Visalia.

Due to space constraints the remainder of the donations will be printed in the next issue

You are invited to learn the most often danced
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Arax Dance Group
of Fresno

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May 7, 14, 21, 28
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The Ballet Center
Opus 1 Shopping Center
Northwest corner of Palm and Bullard
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Consulate, from p. 3

undertaken fearlessly by a naive Gorbachov, and, in the following year, 1991, the declaration of Armenian independence. Levon Ter Petrossian was swept into office as the Republic of Armenia's first democratically and popularly elected president. Quickly the new Armenian Republic accepted the legacy of the old First Republic of 1918 and adopted its symbols: the Tricolor flag and the national anthem.

Armenian, however, continued to suffer war, a massive blockade, lack of power, fuel, food, even fear that together Azerbaijan and Turkey would overrun it while the Great Powers stood by. With Russian complicity, much of Karabagh fell to the Azeris. Finally, unexpectedly, the Armenians of Karabagh captured Shushi and the Lachin corridor: a clear victory by the embattled underdog and the turning of the tide. More conquests followed, leading to a cease-fire in May 1994. Armenians could at last settled down to the simple every day miseries of survival, penury, darkness and cold, unemployment, and inflation, but also attend to rebuilding and looking to the future of an impoverished, but independent and democratic, country.

Throughout all of this we contributed in our way to the transformation and stabilization of Armenia. Numerous aid organizations were established, many continue to provide humanitarian help; the American University of Armenia was founded with the help of the University of California and the vision and energy of American Armenians, particularly Mihran Aghababian and Louise Simone; joint ventures were started; and help was generously given to put the medical and health sector on a sound basis. We witnessed the proliferation of Armenian Embassies and Consulates around the world, like the one in Los Angeles whose second anniversary we are celebrating today. We rejoiced in the leadership and friendship of young and

competent Armenian diplomats: Shugarian, Arzoumanian, Nanagulian, Ter Ghevondian, Sarkissian, and our own Armen Baibourtian.

Today, as Armenians we must remain vigilant, mostly against our own complacency and arrogance. Nation building, as we have found out, is immensely difficult. For many new countries it has proved almost impossible. Even for Armenia we have all remarked at the regression in many sectors of life. But we have avoided civil war, when, during the same years other former Communist states, unfortunately could not: Yugoslavia for example, or closer to home, Armenia's neighbors, Georgia and Azerbaijan experienced disruption and devastation through internal conflict. Was Armenia saved from civil war because of good leadership? Surely in part, yes, though all of us can think of moments of poor leadership. Was it saved because of luck? In part, yes, even though Armenians think of themselves as a particularly unlucky people with massacre, genocide, and earthquake only part of the tragic side of their own twentieth century legacy.

Now at the end of the second year of the history of the Armenian Consulate in Southern California, the third year of cease-fire in the Karabagh, the six year of the Republic of Armenia, the seventh year of self-rule, and the tenth year of the transformation of the Armenian nation, we must look ahead with specific notions and ideas. What has been hardest for all of us, Armenians in Armenia and Armenians in the diaspora, is the giving up of our old dreams. How comfortable we were in our vision for the future when Armenia was still a "dependent" state, lacking the ability to decide for itself. How glorious the future independent and democratic Armenia would be, we thought, constructed in our minds in the most perfect manner we could imagine with our democratic notions of liberty, equality, fraternity. How sure we were that when self-determination

came, Armenians would be united in purpose and outlook, that the country would prosper through diligence and intelligence, and quickly become the Switzerland of the Caucasus. Little of this has yet to come true, and so many have become disillusioned. But such great ideals are seldom fully realized by any nation, at any time. Man, unlike any other species, is able to formulate plans and ideals, and is inspired by the struggle to achieve them. This is the human spirit and it is surely the Armenian spirit. In the midst of an imperfect reality we must still hold on to the idea of a perfectible one.

The recent elections in Armenia have taught the Armenians in the homeland, something that Armenians in the democratic west have known for a long time. Despite everything, through elections, that is through the peaceful exertion of constitutional rights, a country can change its leadership or put pressure on the leadership to respect its wishes. Armenia now has a political system that is the envy of most post-Soviet Republics precisely because of the hotly contested election. There is a strong opposition and the process of alternation that we are so used to in the United States, with Democrats following Republicans, is surely to follow in Armenia if Armenia is to develop into a normal democratic nation.

The experience has matured Armenians. Change can occur through non-violent means and though many of us fear change because we have gotten used to the system as it is, we have also learned how easy it is to adjust to change. Let us not forget that for many Armenians His Holiness Karekin I, Catholicos of All Armenians, was regarded not too long ago as an agent of a political party, and a threat to the Armenian nation, whereas now those same Armenians herald him as the champion of a revived spirituality in the church and nation. The lesson here is for Armenians to be careful and open to other Armenians who appear to have

a different vision than their own, because inevitably one day it will be the turn of others to administer. In a healthy nation, everyone must feel enfranchised and useful. In a democracy, opposition parties serve to control the excesses of those in power. We have seen this over and again in the United States, France, even young countries like Israel. Armenia has been fortunate in having a president, who, I believe despite everything, understands this very well. We, too, must constantly remind ourselves of this reality.

We have also seen in recent months a new flexibility in the attitude of Armenia toward the diaspora. As diasporan Armenians, we too have understood that what we thought should happen so easily and naturally in terms of diasporan-Armenian relations is in fact very complicated. Fear is a terrible thing and Armenians in the homeland have lived under fear. But as fear declines through accomplishment and empowerment, self-confidence rises. With self-confidence people feel less threatened; they become more open. This is precisely what is happening in Armenian-Diasporan relations. And at occasions such as this it is our duty to note that.

Ten years of momentous history are behind us. Have mistakes been made? Yes, by us and by Armenia's leadership. The more interesting question is: Who has not made a mistake? Have we learned from these mistakes? Yes. Have we corrected our errors? Only in part and slowly. Will we make the same mistakes again? Yes, as surely as we are human. Is this in part because of ignorance, selfishness, self interest, laziness, and fear of change? Most certainly!

Armenia has survived civil conflict. In Erevan there is a stable government. Dialogue has reopened. The people in Armenia now understand democracy better and see that through elections, parties can be voted out of power. There is an opposition that can rally close to half the vote,

creating something close to the party system in the United States. There is talk of compromise again. Furthermore, a change of government took place and new faces have appeared. The relationship with the diaspora is becoming one of closer ties and better understanding on both parts. The mistakes are becoming history and slowly Armenia and Armenians are trying to learn how not to repeat them.

In time others will be entrusted with the burden of caring for the country; new figures will come to the fore. New heroes will replace those of yesterday. Former enemies will become friends. New parties will try their turn at governing and with some luck Armenia will strengthen its democratic institutions step by step, with minimal conflict, and without blood shed.

We have come together today in secular communion with Armenia, distant geographically, but so close spiritually. It is not enough for us just to look back at history and record how it happened in these past two or six or ten years. Rather should we not also, each of us, ask and re-ask ourselves the question: What is my relationship to Armenia? What does the homeland expect of me? What do I expect from it?

And should not such questions lead immediately to the more creative ones: What should Armenia expect of me? What should I expect of it? And is not the answer to both questions simply that Armenians living on the land and we leaving with the spirit of the land want to know that "we" and "they" can speak to each other, that there exists a "we" and a "they" who listen to and understand each other.

Through such inquiry and reflection, I believe it is certain that the relationship between the diaspora and Armenia, the "we" and the "they," will evolve into a permanent dialogue between the "we" and the "we".

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Dr. Ludmila Haroutunian, bottom right, at Fresno State with members from ASO

Dr. Ludmila Haroutunian, Chair of the Department of Sociology at Yerevan State University was a guest of the Armenian Studies Program and International Studies Program at California State University, Fresno the week of February 10-15, 1997. Dr. Haroutunian had visited CSU Fresno last February to initiate a plan of activities between the two universities and returned this year to follow up on those plans.

Dr. Haroutunian met with Dr. Peter Klassen, Director of the International Programs Office and Dean of the School of Social Sciences and also with former CSU Fresno President Dr. Harold Haak who had helped to arrange her trip to Fresno.

Dr. Haroutunian spoke to two Armenian Studies courses during the week. On Wednesday she spoke to Barlow Der Mugrdchian's Introduction to Armenian Studies class and on Friday she spoke to Dr. Isabel Kaprielian's Armenian History class.

Dr. Haroutunian spoke to a Political Science class for Dr. Al Evans on the issue of Russian foreign policy. On Thursday she was a guest in Dr. Bob Fischer's course on Sociological Theory.

Dr. Haroutunian met with Dr. Elizabeth Nelson, Chair of the CSU Fresno Sociology Department and with other faculty in the department. They discussed arranging an electronic-mail (e-mail) conference involving faculty and students from both universities.

Thursday evening students of the Armenian Students Organization hosted Dr. Haroutunian for dinner and an informal discussion of issues facing students in Armenia and the United States.

After her visit to Fresno, Dr. Haroutunian continued to California State Polytechnic University, Pomona where she spent a week meeting with faculty and students and then returned to Armenia.

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