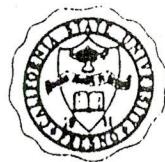


California State University, Fresno

CSU

ARMENIAN STUDIES PROGRAM
Fresno, California 93740



THE SHARZNOON NEWS SERVICE

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CSU Fresno Armenian Studies Program activities as reported in local, national, international media.

Release #34
January 1988

The ARMENIAN WEEKLY

FRESNO, CA—Nearly 50,000 has been donated toward an endowed chair for the Armenian Studies Program at Fresno State University, which would be just the sixth endowed chair nationwide in Armenian studies.

Barlow Der Mugrdechian, one of two teachers in the FSU program, said that \$300,000 is needed to establish the chair, which would be used to attract a top Armenian studies scholar as a professor in the program.

Richard Francois, director of development and community relations for FSU, said yearly interest from the \$300,000—which would be about \$200,000—would be used to supplement the endowed chair's FSU-paid salary and to cover expenses such as research.

The occupant of the endowed chair would be paid top FSU salary, about \$50,000 a year.

Der Mugrdechian said the goal is to collect the \$300,000 within three years.

There is also a fund for an endowed chair in the journalism department in the name of former FSU journalism professor Roger Tatarian. There has been about \$50,000 collected for the Tatarian chair.

The most recent donation to the Armenian studies chair came from Mesrob Mirigian, who gave \$20,000 in memory of his wife, Mary, parents,

Kohar and Krikor Mirigian.

A gallery adjacent to the Armenian Studies Program offices in the Leon S. Peters Business Building, which is under construction, will be dedicated to Mirigian and his family.

Mirigian has been a farmer in the valley.

Other donors are the Armenian Students Organization, the Armenian National Committee, the Armenian Alumni Association, the National Institute of Armenian Culture, and individuals.

Der Mugrdechian said the endowed chair will guarantee the permanency of Armenian studies at FSU. Currently, the only tenured professor in the program is Chairman Dickran Kouymjian.

The University of California at Los Angeles and Fresno State are the only public universities in the state to offer Armenian studies programs. Universities with endowed chairs in Armenian studies are UCLA, Columbia University, Harvard University and the University of Michigan.

There are about 40 students of Armenian ancestry attending FSU, Der Mugrdechian said. The 10-year-old program offers six to eight classes each semester.

"Once we have an endowed chair it will put emphasis on research as well," Der Mugrdechian said, adding that perhaps the program can expand to offer a full major in Armenian studies. Currently it offers only a minor.

Der Mugrdechian said the endowed chair should be a drawing card for FSU's Armenian Studies Program, as will the program's new offices in

the Peters building.

"I definitely think it will make us more competitive," he said.

- ARCHIVE -

SOURCE Armenian Life Weekly; Glendale, CA

DATE 1 January 1987

SUBJECT Armenian Studies Chair at CSU Fresno

PAGE 1 of 1

ARMENIAN LIFE Weekly

\$50,000 For Armenian Studies Chair At FSU

By Anne Dudley

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Fresno Bee

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SOCP: SUCCB, 07/07/8186-Volume LXXX, No 8186

Յարբ, 2 Յունիար 1988
Saturday, January 2, 1988
Salpi Mardirossian Armenian Center
418 W. Colorado St., Glendale, CA 91204

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Ամպիոն Մր Ես

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Ձրեզնոյի հայ գաղութը կ'ուզէ իր գաւակներուն եւ շրջանի օտար համբուրեան եւ ուսանողութեան առիրընձայել բարձրագոյն ուսմուն հաստատութեան մը միջոցներով՝ նաև շնալ հայ մշակոյթը:

Սյս առաջադրանիկով, գաղութը,
գլխաւորութեամբ Քալիֆորնիոյ Հա-
մալարանի Ֆրեզենյ Մասնանիւղի
մէջ գոյութիւն ունեցող Հայկական
Ծրագրի պատասխանառու փրոփ.
Տիգրան Գույումնեանին, համբայ-
նած է Հայագիտական մնացուն Սմ-
պինս մը հիմնելու այդ համալսա-
րանին մէջ:

Աւելի քան 400 հայ ուսանողներ
կը յանախեն Ֆրեզնոյի այս համա-
լսարանը: Հաս փրոփ. Գույումնեանի
օգնական դասախոս Պարլօ Տէր-
Մկրտչիչեանի, ամէն տարի շուրջ
250 հայ թէ օտար ուսանողներ կը
հետեւին հայկական ծրագրին կողմէ
տրուած հայերէն լեզուի ու հայ
մշակութի պատմութեան դասերուն:

Հայագիտական Ամպիոնի մը հաս-
տառումը լայն կարելիութիւններ
պիտի ստեղծէ: համալսարանին մէջ՝
հարստացնելով հայկական ծրագրի
դասացուցակը, նաև հետազոտական
եւ ուսումնասիրական աշխատանքներ-
ուն համար անհրաժեշտ պայմաններ
ստեղծելով:

Ամպիդն մը հաստատելու համար Քալիփորնիոյ Համալսարանի Ֆրեզենյի Մասնահիմուղեն ներս, անհրաժեշտ է գոյացնել 300,000 տոլարի հիմնադրամ մը, որու ապահոված տոկոսը կը տրամադրուի հետազոտական եւ ուսումնասիրական, ինչպէս եւ Ամպիդնի ծրագիրները ընդարձակելու նպատակներու: Ամպիդնի վարիչը կը վեարուի համայնքանի տօնութեանը:

Ցարդ, Ֆրեզնոյի համալսարանի մէջ Հայագիտական Ամպիռն մը հաստատելու ծրագրին համար հաւաքուած է 50,000 տոլար: Ի բացակայութիւն փրոֆ. Տիգրան Գույնումբեանին, որ այժմ Ֆրանսա կը գոտնուի, հանգանակային աշխատանքները յառաջ տանող Պարլօ Տէր Մկրտիչեանի համաձայն, նպատակադրուած է երեք տարիէն գոյացընել անհրաժեշտ գումարը եւ իրականացնել Ամպիռնի ծրագիրը:

Այս ազգօրուս ծրագիրը, որ իրականացման պարագային անպայման-օրենք՝ իր դրական դերը պիտի ունենայ Ֆրեզնոյի հայ գաղուրի աշխուժացման մէջ, կը վայելէ շըրջանի հայ համայնքի բոլոր հասուածներուն անվերապահ նեցուկը:

Ժամանակն է, որ այդ նեցուկը արտայայտուի նիրական շօշափելի յանձնառութիւններով:

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րու ցանցը ամրանայ ու զօրանայ
մէկ նոր օղակով՝ Ֆրեզնոյի Հայա-
գիտական Ամպիոնով:

- ARCHIVE -

SOURCE The Armenian Weekly; Watertown, MADATE 9 January 1988SUBJECT Papasian and Armani to Perform at CSUF
Annual BanquetPAGE 1 of 1

Papasian and Armani to Perform At CSU Fresno Annual Banquet

FRESNO, CA—Noted stage and film performers Gerald Papasian and Nora Armani of Los Angeles will perform a program of Armenian poems in translation at the annual banquet of the California State University, Fresno Armenian Studies Program on Sunday, December 6, 1987 in the St. Paul Armenian Church Haig Berberian Social Hall. The banquet will honor the donors and friends of the Armenian Studies Program.

Papasian and Armani are the stars of the recent production of "Sojourn at Ararat," a play based on translations of Armenian poetry throughout our history. The **Los Angeles Times** said about the play, "Gerald Papasian and Nora Armani offer an effusive, even ardent reading of a play in verse created from translations of Armenian poetry through the ages...Papasian and Armani gives us a labor of love."

Drama-League said, "Papasian and Armani are two gifted actors who are at once animate and energetic...'Sojourn to Ararat' is a powerful statement about the tenacity and endurance of the Armenian people."

The **L.A. Weekly** in its Theater Pick of the Week said, "the simple yet exquisite direction focuses our attention on two dynamic performers who know how to blend their gorgeous voices and expertly trained bodies to create theatrical magic..."

SOURCE The Armenian Reporter; Fresh Meadows, N.Y.
 DATE 21 January 1988
 SUBJECT CSUF Prof. Kouymjian Recalls Fulbright Visit

Teaching and Learning in Soviet Armenia . . . CSUF Prof. Kuyumjian Recalls Fulbright Visit

By Bill Morison

University students in Soviet Armenia are "little different" from American students and, indeed, from some CSUF students, according to the lament of Professor Dickran Kouymjian. "They read little, work little, lack intellectual curiosity and are attracted to the same leisure time activities as American students - that is, television, dressing, being together," Kouymjian said.

Kouymjian, CSU, Fresno's Outstanding Professor for 1986, traveled to the Armenian republic's capital last February to teach American literature as a Fulbright Senior Lecturer at Yerevan State University during the spring semester. The trip was Kouymjian's fifth to the Soviet Union and his fourth to Soviet Armenia.

Since he came to Fresno State in 1977, Kouymjian has been the head of the Armenian Studies Program. He is fluent in three languages and has traveled and taught throughout the world.

While Kouymjian was in the small republic located in the southern Caucasian area of the Soviet Union, he gave public lectures; met with writers, intellectuals and scholars; wrote articles for several Soviet journals; worked on a film and researched materials for several articles and "a possible future book on the filmmaker Sergei Paradjanov"; and, of course, taught six units at Yerevan State.

"I, perhaps pretentiously, expected to instruct students in the foreign literatures department [at Yerevan State] about the unpublished works of William Saroyan [a Fresnoan and national hero in Armenia]," Kouymjian said. "I was confronted with much curiosity and even fascination for biographical details of his life and relationships with his wife, family and the Armenians, but less interest in the literary analysis of his work or anything that required excessive thinking or reflection," he said.

In spite of this, Kouymjian said, the students that he had contact with were better versed in literature as a whole than students at CSUF.

"I found that there the students are, generally speaking, better informed about literature. That is, you can make references to Classical or Renaissance literature in a lecture and be understood," Kouymjian said.

Kouymjian said that Soviet universities are quite different from their American counterparts in how the curriculum is set up.

"Their undergraduate program is a five-year one in letters, and all courses are required for all students in each of the programs. There are no electives."

The program contains heavy doses of American and English literature, as well as Russian and, of course, Armenian. There are courses in French, German, other European literature, Indian, and Far Eastern literature, he said.

There is a striking difference on the part of Soviet students in the degree of openness displayed in class and in their attitudes toward authority.

"Students stand when you [the professor] walk into the room; they sit only when you motion for them to do so," Kouymjian said. "They are reluctant to ask questions in class," he said.

VERY ADAPTABLE

"The students are not as open as they are in America. But that is not a good indication of how curious they are. I noticed that as the semester continued and I tried to get them to open up, they adapted themselves to discussion and, at times, even argued with me in class," he said.

Kouymjian said that his colleagues in the foreign literatures department were "well-plugged-into the current intellectual movement outside, as well as inside, the Soviet Union." Most of them have received their higher education in Armenia. "One or two had gone to Moscow or Leningrad and received their advanced degrees in non-Armenian areas," he said.

"The group [within the faculty] that I had the most contact with were the farthest from the [Communist] Party atmosphere," Kouymjian said. "When I first got there, there were a few who were quick to make ideological statements to me, and with them my relations always remained formal," he said.

The 53-year-old scholar found that surprisingly little control was exercised over his activities and he said, in fact, that he "would have appreciated



PROF. KUYUMJIAN & SERGEI PARADJANOV
 more concern on the part of the local faculty over what I was doing."

"I never felt any controls over what I did, said or might have threatened to say," he said.

Apart from his direct involvement with teaching at Yerevan State, Kouymjian also gave public lectures on the life and works of William Saroyan.

"Once in April and again in May, I gave a formal lecture to the Armenian Writers Union . . . The first time, over 500 people crowded into a large auditorium for 400 before they were forced to lock the doors," Kouymjian said.

"These lectures were enthusiastically received and were reported in the local press," he said. Kouymjian also did research "on the Soviet-Armenian-Georgian film director, Sergei Paradjanov. I accumulated a vast archive of oral and written testimony and biographical and photographic documents on his life and works."

ASKED TO ADVISE

In addition to work on these projects, Kouymjian was asked by "a young Armenian film director to be the principal advisor on a short film [approximately 31 minutes] he was making based on William Saroyan's short story 'The Coldest Winter Since 1854,'" Kouymjian said.

Kouymjian ended up producing a script for the film, as well as assisting the director in finding people to dub the voices in English for it. "We first tried with students from a local English school [where English is the primary language of instruction], and then ended up using English-speaking American students at the university and members of their families," Kouymjian said.

Of the 15 republics that make up the USSR, Soviet Armenia has the highest percentage of its own ethnic population (about 90 percent) residing within its borders, Kouymjian said.

"All speak Armenian; it is the language of the marketplace and the street. But in other areas it is not. In the sciences and in medicine, for example, Russian is the main form of communication," Kouymjian said.

With the exception "of some older people and some living in remote villages, all Armenians are bilingual," and many others are multilingual, Kouymjian said.

"More parents are sending their children to Russian schools [where Russian is the main language used in instruction] as they perceive it as a way for greater opportunity for their children," Kouymjian said. "There are also some children that go to English school as well," he said.

Kouymjian said that even in Soviet Armenia many are concerned about the dangers of Armenians losing their heritage, especially the nearly two million ethnic Armenians living in other parts of the Soviet Union. "Armenians are very sensitive about losing themselves [their culture] through the 'white genocide' of intermarriage or through assimilation . . . We have already lost [historic] Armenia in a genocide," he said.

Kouymjian said that while there were signs of *glasnost* and *perestroika* (the new catchwords in Soviet politics that translate as *transparency* and *restructuring* of the Communist system), when he left the Soviet Union on June 1, "They were still making jokes about 'when *perestroika* and *glasnost* will make it over the Caucasian mountains to Armenia.'"

"While I was there, I saw papers carrying long articles critical of unions and officials; and intellectuals signed a petition having to do with the issues of chemical and nuclear wastes," Kouymjian said. "This summer there was a mass petition of over 75,000 for the annexation of ethnically Armenian territories in [the neighboring Soviet republic of] Azerbaijan," he said.

Kouymjian said that he also found that "everyone [in Soviet Armenia] is interested in America. There is a real desire to know about it; it is the thing they want to model. I never experienced any animosity towards the United States, none of that deep-seated animosity that exists in this country toward the Soviet Union."

"I loved my five months in Armenia [SSR]," said Kouymjian. "The people were very warm and hospitable; they seemed to devote much more time to family and personal relations [than people in the U.S.]. The tempo and concerns of life seem more human, even though their society is less open than our own," he said.

But Kouymjian expressed dismay at the degree of assimilation and the possible further loss of contact by Armenians with their history, literature and culture.

"Armenians, both inside and outside of Armenia, have a very strong sense of nation. But I also felt there was a certain blindness, a refusal to believe that the Armenian language could be just as threatened in the Armenian SSR as it is in the western Diaspora," Kouymjian said.

"There is a sense of complicity there that as long as there is Armenia, there will always be Armenian," Kouymjian said.

AGE 1 of 1

SOURCE The California Courier; Glendale, CADATE 20 January 1988SUBJECT Prof. Dickran Kouymjian Recalls
His Fulbright Visit to ArmeniaPAGE 1 of 2

The California COURIER

"The Newspaper For All Armenians" — Published weekly since 1958

Prof. Dickran Kouymjian Recalls His Fulbright Visit to Armenia

By BILL MORISON in Contact, CSUF Information, 1987-88

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"Students stand when you [the professor] walk into the room; they sit only when you motion for them to do so," Kouymjian said. "They are reluctant to ask questions in class," he said.

"The students are not as open as they are in America. But that is not a good indication of how curious they are. I noticed that as the semester continued and I tried to get them to open up they adapted themselves to discussion and, at times, even argued with me in class," he said.

Kouymjian said that his colleagues in the foreign literatures department were "well-plugged-into the current intellectual movements outside, as well as inside, the Soviet Union." Most of them had received their higher education in Armenia. "One or two had gone to Moscow or Leningrad and received their advanced degrees in non-Armenian areas," he said.

"The group [within the faculty] that I had the most contact with were the farthest from the [Communist] Party atmosphere," Kouymjian said. "When I first got there, there were a few who were quick to make ideological statements to me, and with them my relations always remained formal," he said.

The 53-year-old scholar found that surprisingly little control was exercised over his activities and he said, in fact, that he "would have appreciated more concern on the part of the local faculty over what I was doing."

"I never felt any controls over what I did, said or might have threatened to say," he said.

Apart from his direct involvement with teaching at Yerevan State, Kouymjian also gave public lectures on the life and works of William Saroyan:

"Once in April and again in May, I gave a formal lecture to the Armenian Writers Union.... The first time, over 500 people crowded into a large auditorium for 400 before they were forced to lock the doors," Kouymjian said.

"These lectures were enthusiastically received and were reported in the local press," he said.

Kouymjian also did research "on the Soviet-Armenian-Georgian film director, Sergei Paradjanov. I accumulated a vast archive of oral and written testimony and biographical and photographic documents on his life and works."

In addition to work on these projects, Kouymjian was asked by "a young Armenian film director to be the principal advisor on a short film [approximately 31 minutes] he was making based on William Saroyan's short story 'The Coldest Winter Since 1854,'" Kouymjian said.

Kouymjian ended up producing a script for the film, as well as assisting the director in finding people to dub the voices in English for it. "We first tried with students from a local English school (where English is the primary language of instruction), and then ended up using English-speaking American students at the university and members of their families," Kouymjian asserted.

Of the 15 republics that make up the USSR, Soviet Armenia has the highest percentage of its own ethnic population (about 90 percent) residing within its borders, Kouymjian said.

"All speak Armenian; it is the language of the marketplace and the street. But in other areas it is not. In the sciences and in medicine, for example, Russian is the main form of communication," Kouymjian said.

With the exception "of some older people and some living in remote villages, all Armenians are bilingual," and many others are multilingual, Kouymjian said.

"More parents are sending their children to Russian schools [where Russian is the main language used in instruction] as they perceive it as a way for greater opportunity for their children," Kouymjian said. "There are also some children that go to English schools as well," he said.

- ARCHIVE -

SOURCE The California Courier; Glendale, CADATE January 1988SUBJECT Prof. Dickran Kouymjian Recalls
His Fulbright Visit to ArmeniaPAGE 2 of 2

Teaching and Learning in Soviet Armenia

Kouymjian said that even in Soviet Armenia many are concerned about the dangers of Armenians losing their heritage, especially the nearly two million ethnic Armenians living in other parts of the Soviet Union. "Armenians are very sensitive about losing themselves [their culture] through 'the white genocide' of intermarriage or through assimilation We have already lost [historic] Armenia in a genocide," he said.

Kouymjian said that while there were signs of glasnost and perestroika (the new catchwords in Soviet politics that translate as transparency and restructuring of the Communist system), when he left the Soviet Union on June 1, "They were still making jokes about 'when perestroika and glasnost will make it over the Caucasian mountains to Armenia.'

"While I was there, I saw papers carrying long articles critical of unions and officials; and intellectuals signed a petition having to do with the issues of chemical and nuclear wastes," Kouymjian said. "This summer there was a mass petition of over 75,000 for the annexation of ethnically Armenian territories in [the neighboring Soviet Republic of] Azerbaijan," he said.

Kouymjian said that he also found that "everyone, [in Soviet Armenia] is interested in America. There is a real desire to know about it; it is the thing they want to model. I never experienced any animosity towards the United States, none of that deep-seated animosity that exists in this country toward the Soviet Union."

"I loved my five months in Armenia [SSR]," said Kouymjian. "The people were very warm and hospitable; they seemed to devote much more time to family and personal relations [than people in the U.S.]; The tempo and concerns of life seem more human, even though their society is less open than our own," he said.

But Kouymjian expressed dismay at the degree of assimilation and the possible further loss of contact by Armenians with their history, literature and culture.

"Armenians, both inside and outside of Armenia, have a very strong sense of nation. But also felt there was a certain blindness, a refusal to believe that the Armenian language could be just as threatened in the Armenian SSR as it is in the western Diaspora," Kouymjian said.

"There is a sense of complacency there that as long as there is Armenia, there will always be Armenian," Kouymjian said.

SOURCE The Armenian Mirror-Spectator; Watertown, MA
DATE 30 January 1988
SUBJECT Dr. Kouymjian Speaks on Five Month Stay in Armenia PAGE 1 of 1

The Armenian Mirror-Spectator

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

Dr. Dickran Kouymjian, in an article on his five-month stay in Armenia last year:
"Armenians are very sensitive about losing themselves [their culture] through the 'white genocide' of intermarriage or through assimilation. We have already lost historic Armenia in a Genocide."

"Armenians, both inside and outside of Armenia, have a very strong sense of nation. But I also felt there was [in Armenia] a certain blindness, a refusal to believe that the Armenian language could be just as threatened in Armenia as in the Diaspora."

"There is a sense of complacency there that as long as there is Armenia, there will always be Armenian."

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ARMENIAN STUDIES PROGRAM

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FRESNO

FRESNO, CALIFORNIA 93740

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SUBJECT Our Choice: Resistance or Assimilation

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Our Choice: Resistance Or Assimilation

By Taleen Marashian
Santa Clara University

The merger of Armenians and Americans into one entity, of "American" is feared by many Armenians to be the end of our identity as Armenians. It is this threat of "white massacre" which has us scrambling for answers to the complex question, "How do we resist assimilation?" Fortunately, the solution to this is not as complex, but that does not mean it is easy to act upon. It lies deep within us, and we have no reason to look for any mind-boggling theories to formulate or untangle. If we Armenians want to remain Armenians, it is up to each of us to make sure that we lead lives our parents and grandparents taught us to lead: full of respect for our culture - encompassing our heritage, church, language, and

past. *But, argue many, what good is the past? It is the future that we must worry about.* We must understand that without the past, we would not be where we are today, and tomorrow would have only been a dream. Without the courage and faith of our ancestors, we would not even have an Armenian issue to discuss. We would have become assimilated a long time ago. Since this is the case, then we must use the example of our ancestors to keep us going for future generations. We must use their perseverance and will to survive to pass on to our children and grandchildren. With the values that enabled our ancestors to develop, we can not only resist assimilation, but to thrive and to make tomorrow not a dream, but a vivid reality. We have such a rich history which can be utilized to our advantage. It would be a shame to slowly erase it from our memories.

A discussion of heritage and history is not complete without mention of the Church. With pride we tell everyone that ours was the first. We all know that the Armenians were the first to establish Christianity as a national religion. This is an impressive statement, but does this itself mean much? What good is it that our people accomplished so much, if we cannot act as Christians today? This is the importance of our role: to make Christ a part of our everyday life. We cannot

only to hang out in the courtyard and to chat with our friends, without even once stepping inside to say even a simple prayer. This hardly shows our devotion to our Father. Our ancestors risked their lives to keep the Armenian Church. We cannot even devote one morning a week to it. This is shameful. Our distance from Etchmiadzin, from Armenia, does not give us reason to distance ourselves from God.

If we have any hope at all for our future; if we have any chances at all of resisting total assimilation, it must be with the faith we have in God, the Church, and our complete devotion. Church is not a social place to gather. We do not congregate each week to chat. We congregate to worship our Creator together. We share fellowship, not gossip. At least, this is the way it should be.

Church is not a building. Church is something around which our lives revolve. We must make it a part of our daily lives. We must teach our children the importance of our faith. Without it, we cannot survive. Not only must we take our children to Sunday school every Sunday, but we must teach them to incorporate their faith in God into their lives during the week. We must teach them the importance of prayer and the Armenian Christian values. This is the backbone of our existence.

It is crucial that the Church be a part of our lives. Our history is built on it. These two intertwined elements are important to our existence, but they alone cannot prevent our assimilation. Another factor in this discussion is our language. Through wars and massacres our language has survived. Mere miles

on to our children. This is difficult to do in a country which promotes a lifestyle that contrasts with the Armenian way of life. With divorces, peer pressure, and drugs prevalent in society, it is difficult to raise children with the values we hold sacred. This is why we must insist on our children keeping their lives focused on the family. We must keep a cohesive family that stresses tradition, Church, and language.

Assimilation is a frightening topic. For this reason, we must strive to resist it at all cost. Our history is a rich one. It is enhanced by our Church and language. It is preserved through our family. This is what makes the Armenian identity unique. This is what makes Armenians feel proud to be Armenians. This is why apathy should be fought, and unity should be emphasized. Without the unified efforts of all of us, assimilation will be a reality, and our Armenian identity will be lost.

SOURCE Azbarez; Glendale, CADATE 30 January 1988SUBJECT Our Choice: Resistance or AssimilationPAGE 2 of 2

traditional family. Without each and every one of these elements, our history as Armenians will remain just that, history.

Our heritage is easy to talk about, but difficult to understand. Many of us say with sincere intent that we are going to aise our children with knowledge of our Armenian heritage, but it is questionable how many of us really will. First of all, we, ourselves, must understand our Armenian heritage well to sufficiently reach our children. Heritage is defined as tradition handed down from one's ancestors. How much of it is lost through each generation, especially in a foreign country such as the United States? Before we are capable of teaching our children our heritage, our tradition, we must learn and most importantly, practice it ourselves and incorporate it into our daily lives.

We are proud of our history, but when we sit down and think about how much of it we really know, it is scary. Most probably, our parents know about Armenians through the ages better than we do. And, it is just as likely that *their* parents know more than *they*. This has the frightening implication that our children will know a little less of our history than we. Is not this the very essence of assimilation? It is our duty as Armenians to have a thorough understanding of our history. This could mean taking courses, reading books, or even discussing it with our grandparents

Whichever method we choose, we must do it. For the sake of our children who depend on us for guidance, we must raise them in an environment that brings them up learning about their

This essay was one of two winning entries in the Hye Sharzhoor essay contest. The topic of the contest was: How to Resist Assimilation? Hye Sharzhoor is the publication of Cal State University, Fresno, Armenian Student Organization and Armenian Studies Program.

proclaim to all that our ancestors were great Christians and then turn around and forget what Christianity means. It is good that we succeeded at that in history, but it is even better if we practice it today.

One cannot accept our history without accepting our Church as well. Our history is the Church. The whole existence of Armenian Tradition revolves around it. It is crucial that we uphold it. Our ancestors would have never gotten as far as they did without the faith they had in God. In fact, at several points in history, they actually risked their lives to defend their religion. An example of this is Vartan Marnigonian and the battle against the Persians. What Vartanantz signifies is our strong bond with God and our faith in Him as our Father. Our trust was so great that we even went to war over it.

Although we should be proud that Armenians were the "first Christians," we should be even more proud of the fact that through time, our faith in God has enabled us to survive. And, when we were challenged by pagans, we fought hard to keep our religion - and succeeded. Do we have this same faith today?

With a history such as this, it is no wonder why the Church plays an important role in our lives. We must not underplay its significance. If our faith is tested, as was that of our people centuries ago, could we act as Vartan and his men did? Ideally, the answer is yes. Realistically, it is questionable.

Our great-grandparents would be apalled at the way many of us are living. We prefer to sleep in rather than go to church - or, we go to "catch the last half" and the coffee afterwards. Or, even worse, some of us go to church

from our motherland should not give us reason to forget her tongue. We must not allow our children to grow up without learning Armenian. Without our language, our Armenian identity is lost. Our language - used in our churches, our songs, our history, is a rich asset which must be kept alive.

There is no excuse for an Armenian to not know his or her native language. It is tragic not to. Whether we live in America or Hong Kong, it is the duty of each of us to keep our language. Even if one does not speak Armenian now, it is never too late to learn. To use such an excuse is not justified. An understanding of our history and Church can be enriched with a knowledge of the tongue in which they were created. In fact, one cannot adequately comprehend our history or church without speaking the language. With the exception of recent immigrants, it would be awkward for many of us to say, "I am American," but not know how to read, write, or speak English. Some of us have never stepped foot on Armenian soil, but we all wish to be called Armenian. What is an Armenian? To be of Armenian descent is one thing, but to live a life as an Armenian is another. This must include the tradition, the Church, and the language.



These elements are mutually exclusive. But, what binds these areas is the *family*. How can one be sure that our Armenian Tradition, our Church, and our language are preserved for future generations? The answer to this lies in the whole concept of the Armenian Family. This is the very link that keeps our Armenian identity alive in the diaspora. It is possible that we understand tradition, religion, and can speak Armenian. It is magnificent and crucial that we pass these traits

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SOURCE The Californian Courier; Glendale, CA DATE 4 February 1988SUBJECT Dr. Yengoyan to Lecture at CSUF
on Armenian SocietyPAGE 1 of 1

Dr. Yengoyan to Lecture at CSUF on Armenian Society

FRESNO — Dr. Aram A. Yengoyan, professor of Anthropology from the University of Michigan, will speak on "Cultural Perspectives on Armenian Society: An Anthropological Interpretation," on Feb. 8 in the CSUF College Union Room 309. His presentation is sponsored by the Armenian Students Organization and Armenian Studies Program of CSUF and funded by the Associated Students.

Dr. Yengoyan is currently on a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship at the University of California, Davis. He is a native of Fresno, having graduated from Fresno State College in 1956. He received his M.A. from UCLA and his Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of Chicago. He has taught at various universities, and since 1963 has been a professor at the University of Michigan.

Dr. Yengoyan is a member of the Association for Asian Studies.

and is a fellow of the American Anthropological Association and the Royal Anthropological Institute. In 1968 he was awarded the University of Michigan Distinguished Service Award for Teaching. During the past 25 years he traveled extensively in

the Phillipines and Australia conducting field investigations.

He is also the author of numerous scholarly articles.

Admission to the 12 noon Feb. 8 lecture is free and the public is invited.
