



**California State University, Fresno  
Armenian Studies Program  
5245 N. Backer Ave. M/S PB 4  
Fresno, California 93740-8001**

## **Armenian Studies Program News Service**

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

**Vol. 3 Release #37  
Spring & Summer 1988**

- ARCHIVE -

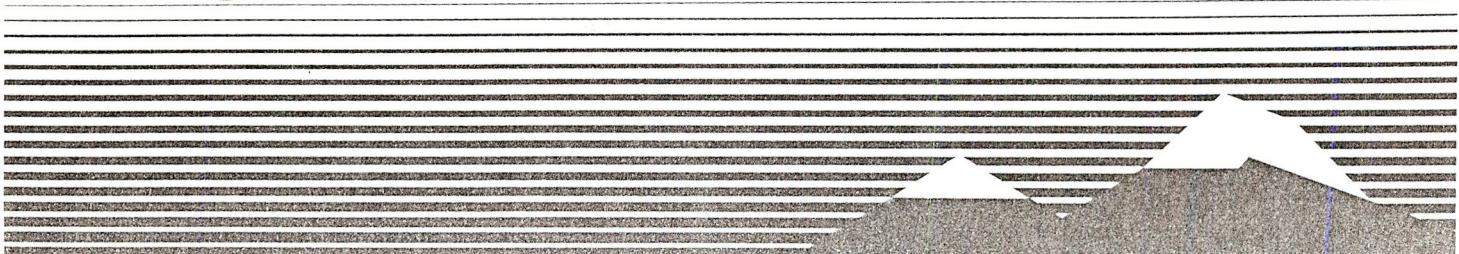
SOURCE NAASR News: Cambridge, Mass.

DATE Spring 1988

SUBJECT ASP Fall 1988 Courses

PAGE 1 of 1

# NAASR Newsletter



Spring 1988 (Vol. V, No. 1, Issue 15)

National Association for Armenian Studies and Research

## *Fresno Announces Fall 1988 Courses*

The Armenian Studies Program at California State University, Fresno, will offer a full complement of Armenian language, history, and art classes during the Fall 1988 semester. The program is directed by Prof. Dickran Kouymjian, assisted by lecturer Barlow Der Mugrdechian.

The courses include: Armenian IA (the first of a two-semester language sequence in Modern Western Armenian), Armenian 111A (Armenian Composition and Conversation), History 108A (Armenia from earliest times to the 13th century), Armenian 120T (Armenian Art through architecture and miniature painting), and Armenian Studies 10 (an introductory survey of Armenian history and culture). A Saturday class surveying Armenian literature in English translation will also be offered.

- ARCHIVE -

SOURCE The Armenian Observer: Hollywood, CA DATE May 11, 1988  
SUBJECT Zoryan Videotapes Shown in Fresno PAGE 1 of 1

## Zoryan Survivors' Videotapes to be Shown in Fresno

FRESNO — Segments of videotaped interviews with genocide survivors will be shown for the first time in Fresno, during a panel discussion on Armenian survivors in the San Joaquin Valley on Sunday, May 15. The presentation by the Zoryan Institute is sponsored and funded by the California Council for the Humanities.

The Council will be sponsoring its annual Public Humanities Conference in Fresno, during the weekend of May 13-15, during which the Zoryan Institute for Contemporary Armenian Research and Documentation will present a panel discussion on "Image and Memory: Armenian Survivors in the San Joaquin Valley."

The panel discussion will take place on Sunday afternoon, at 2:30 p.m. at the Holiday Inn in downtown Fresno. Panelists include Dr. Donald Miller, professor of Religion at USC, Dr. Margaret Bedrossian, lecturer in literature at UC Davis, and author Peter Najarian, lecturer in literature at San Francisco State University. The panel will be moderated by Barlow Der Mugrdechian, instructor in Armenian Studies at California State University, Fresno. Segments of videotaped interviews with survivors from the San Joaquin Valley will also be shown as part of the panel presentation.

The keynote speaker at the conference's opening session will be Chinese-American author Maxine Hong Kingston reading from her latest book.

Admission to the panel discussion is free. Coffee will be served following the presentations.

SUB

ARMENIAN STUDIES PROGRAM

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FRESNO  
FRESNO, CALIFORNIA 93740

- ARCHIVE -

SOURCE Armenian Life Weekly: Glendale, CA DATE May 1988  
SUBJECT ASP Co-Hosts Premiere of Films PAGE 1 of 1

**Arm. Studies  
Prog. Co-Hosts  
Premiere**

The benefit premiere showing of three documentaries produced by the Armenian Film Foundation was held for the Fresno community on Sunday, April 17, 1988 at 4:00 p.m. The event was held with the cooperation of the Armenian Studies Program of CSU Fresno and the local organizing committee was headed by Mrs. Sonia Keshishian.

Mr. Walter Karabian, Vice-President of the Armenian Film Foundation introduced the three films, produced by J. Michael Hagopian. **Mandate For Armenia**, is a rare documentary based on Army Signal Corps footage on the United States Mission to Armenia and Turkey, in 1919. **Cilicia...Rebirth** is a proud and positive film depicting the rich cultural heritage of the medieval Cilician Kingdom of Armenia. Finally **Excerpts From Legacy** was shown to an enthusiastic assembly of Fresno Armenians and friends. ■

- ARCHIVE -

SOURCE The California Courier: Glendale, CA DATE May 12, 1988  
SUBJECT Genocide/Oral History Panel PAGE 1 of 1  
moderated by Prof. Der Mugrdechian

## Council for the Humanities Funds Fresno May 15 Panel Discussion on Survivors

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"We are delighted that the Armenian community is included in our conference in Fresno," said Caitlin Croughan, associate director of the California Council. "The experiences of older and recent immigrant groups have more in common than sometimes we imagine. The courage and sense of dignity the immigrants bring to the transition they go through is to be admired."

The council will be sponsoring its annual Public Humanities Conference in Fresno, during the weekend of May 13-15, during which Zoryan Institute for Contemporary Armenian Research and Documentation will present a panel discussion on "Image and Memory: Armenian Survivors in the San Joaquin Valley."

The discussion will take place May 15 at 2:30 p.m. at the Holiday Inn in downtown Fresno. Panelists include Dr. Donald Miller, professor of Religion at USC. Dr. Margaret Bedrossian, lecturer in literature at UC Davis, and author Peter Najarian, lecturer in literature at San Francisco State University. The panel will be moderated by Barlow Der Mugrdichian, instructor in Armenian Studies at CSU, Fresno.

"Although the Armenian community is very aware of the oral history documentation process, it is not always aware of the values and uses of these 'documents,'" said Salpi Haroutunian Ghazarian, the West Coast coordinator of the Zoryan Institute. "The presentations that will be made May 15 in Fresno, as well as the videotapes

which will be shown can contribute significantly toward better mutual and self-understanding."

The annual public humanities conference consists of a series of exemplary events related to a theme of regional interest. This year's theme is "Cultures in Transition: Immigration in the Central Valley."

In addition to the panel on Armenian survivors, two other groups have received mini-grants for conferences. California Tomorrow will feature a panel discussion of the Southeast Asian immigrant community, and Arte Americas will present a demonstration and discussion of the songs and lore of the Mexican immigrant experience. The keynote speaker at the conference's opening session will be Chinese-American author Maxine Hong Kingston.

Admission to the panel discussion is free.

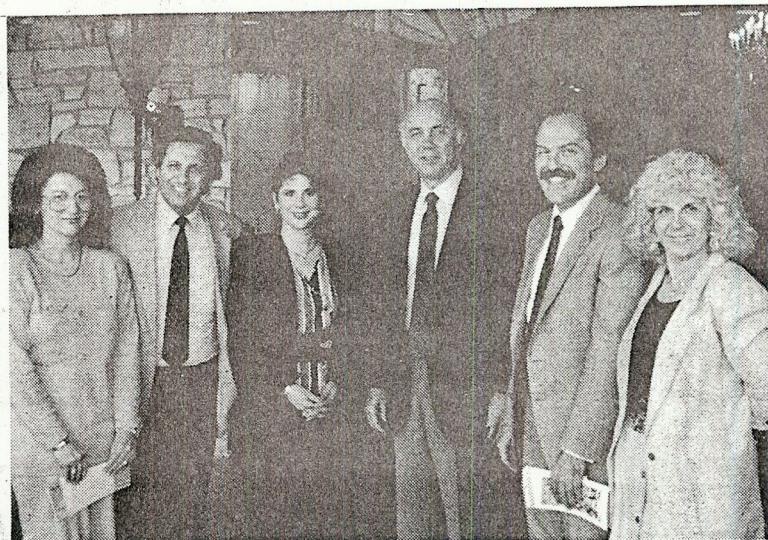
## Documentary Films Screened in Fresno

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The event was held with the cooperation of the Armenian Studies Program of CSU Fresno.

Walter Karabian, vice president of the AFF introduced the three films, "Mandate for Armenia," "Clicia... Rebirth," and "Excerpts from Legacy." The films were produced by Dr. J. Michael Hagopian.

Following the screenings, a reception was held at the Chamlian Stables, provided by Vahan and Anoush Chamlian of Fresno. A table displaying films produced by the AFF was available for viewing by guests who



MEMBERS OF THE FRESNO ORGANIZING COMMITTEE - From left to right, Melene Ouzounian, Allan Jendian, Sonia Keshishian, Walter Karabian, Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian and Mary Darakjian.

gathered that afternoon to support the work of continuing to accumulate and record oral histories on film.

The local organizing committee, headed by Sonia Keshishian,

included, Melene Ouzounian, Mary Darakjian, Allan Jendian, and Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian of the ASP. Zabel Dulgarian of Los Angeles assisted in the preparation of the reception.

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SOURCE Armenian Life Weekly: Glendale, CA DATE May 1988SUBJECT Zoryan's Public Humanities  
Conference in FresnoPAGE 1 of 1

## Zoryan's Public Humanities Conference In Fresno, May 13-15

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The annual public humanities conference consists of a series of exemplary events related to a theme of regional interest. This year's theme is "Cultures in Transition: Immigration in the Central Valley." In addition to the panel on Armenian survivors, two other groups have received mini-grants for conferences. California tomorrow will feature a panel discussion of the Southeast Asian immigrant community, and Arte Americas will present a demonstration and discussion of the songs and lore of the Mexican immigrant experience. The keynote speaker at the conference's opening session will be Chinese-American author Maxine Hong Kingston reading from her latest book.

Admission to the panel discussion is free. Coffee will be served following the presentations. For further information, please call (818) 784-0748 or (209) 294-2669. ■

## - ARCHIVE -

SOURCE The Armenian Reporter: Fresh Meadows, N.Y. DATE May 12, 1988  
SUBJECT Panel Discussion on "Image and Memory: Armenian Survivors in the San Joaquin Valley" PAGE 1 of 1

## Videotaped Survivor Interviews to Be Shown for the First Time

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## - ARCHIVE -

SOURCE The Armenian Reporter: Fresh Meadows, N.Y. DATE May 1988  
SUBJECT ASP Co-Hosts Premiere of New Documentaries PAGE 1 of 1

## Armenian Studies Program Co-Hosts Premiere of New Documentaries

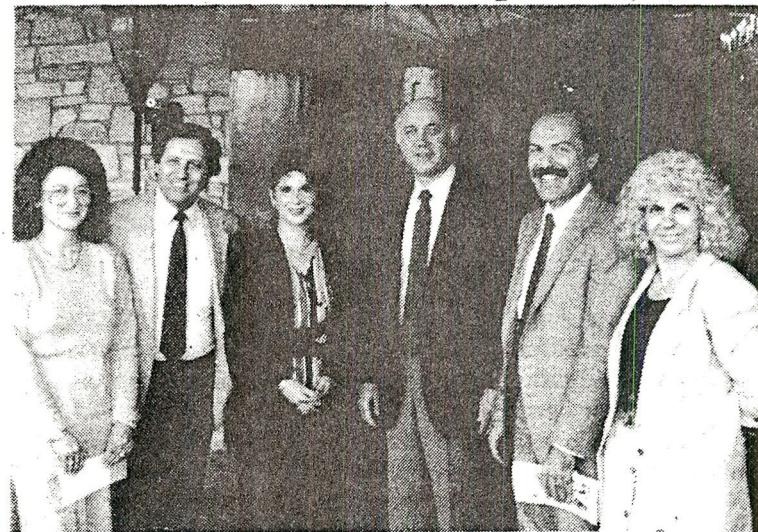
FRESNO, Calif. - The benefit premiere showing of three documentaries produced by the Armenian Film Foundation was held for the Fresno community on Sunday, April 17, 1988, at 4:00 p.m. The event was held with the cooperation of the Armenian Studies Program of CSU Fresno and the local organizing committee was headed by Mrs. Sonia Keshishian.

Mr. Walter Karabian, Vice President of the Armenian Film Foundation, introduced the three films, produced by J. Michael Hagopian. "Mandate for Armenia," is a rare documentary based on Army Signal Corps footage on the United States Mission to Armenia and Turkey, in 1919. "Cilicia . . . Rebirth" is a proud and positive film depicting the rich cultural heritage of the medieval Cilician Kingdom

of Armenia. Finally, "Excerpts From Legacy" was shown to an enthusiastic assembly of Fresno Armenians and Friends.

A lovely reception was held after the viewing in the spacious Chamlian Stables, which had been donated for use by Mr. and Mrs. Vahan and Anoush Chamlian of Fresno. A table displaying films produced by the Armenian Film Foundation greeted the special guests who had gathered on a Sunday afternoon to support the work of continuing to gather oral histories on film.

The local organizing committee included: Mrs. Melene Ouzounian, Mrs. Mary Darakjian, Mr. Allan Jendian, and Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian of the ASP. Mrs. Zabel Dulgarian of Los Angeles assisted in the preparation of the reception.



**PREMIERE.** From left to right, members of the Fresno organizing committee for the benefit showing of the documentary films: Mrs. Melene Ouzounian, Mr. Allan Jendian, Mrs. Sonia Keshishian, Mr. Walter Karabian of the Armenian Film Foundation, Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian of the Armenian Studies Program, and Mrs. Mary Darakjian.

SOURCE The Fresno Bee: Fresno, CA

DATE May 16, 1988

SUBJECT Genocide Still Alive, Painful for  
Armenians

PAGE 1 of 2

# Genocide still alive, painful for Armenians

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By PABLO LOPEZ  
Bee staff writer

There were stories of homes being ransacked, families being torn apart, innocent people being murdered, and a race being systematically massacred.

To the 200 people who attended "Image and Memory: Armenian Survivors in the San Joaquin Valley" on Sunday, the stories were a painful reminder of the Armenian heritage, a heritage that includes the killing of about 1.5 million people in Turkey 73 years ago.

The conference was sponsored by the Encino-based Zoryan Institute for Contemporary Armenian Research and Documentation Inc., and the California Council for the Humanities. Its purpose is to rekindle the effort — both politically and emotionally — to have the Armenian genocide recognized.

Salpi Ghazarian, who coordinated the conference, said a reawakening of the events leading to the geno-

cide and its aftermath is currently gripping Armenian communities.

She said for years Armenian survivors had no one to tell their stories to.

"It was too horrible to relive and have their children bear the burden," Ghazarian said.

Then the next generation, the children of the survivors, "couldn't deal with it," she said. "They were too busy trying to be accepted in their new home. They didn't want to feel alienated" being on a crusade to seek recognition of the genocide.

So the third generation, Ghazarian said, has been rekindling the spirit of the survivors, asking them questions about the old Armenian homeland, their traditions, their culture, and the circumstances that led to the genocide.

"It is up to us to ensure those memories don't die with the survivors of the genocide," she said.

The conference was moderated

See **Genocide**, Page B2

- ARCHIVE -

SOURCE The Fresno Bee: Fresno, CADATE May 16, 1988SUBJECT Genocide Still Alive, Painful for  
ArmeniansPAGE 2 of 2

## Genocide

Continued from Page B1

by Barlow Der Mugrdichian, Fresno State University professor of Armenian studies. The event included speeches by Dr. Margaret Bedrosian, lecturer in literature at the University of California at Davis; Peter Najarian, lecturer in literature at San Francisco State University; and Dr. Donald Miller, professor of religion at the University of Southern California.

Each speaker touched on the need to document stories by the survivors. The privately financed Zoryan Institute, founded in 1982, has conducted more than 450 interviews, Ghazarian said.

Narti Gerlitz, 79, was one of many survivors who recounted the nightmare of the Armenian genocide. The conference also had videotaped interviews of survivors.

Gerlitz said at least 40 members of her immediate family — including her father, two brothers and a sister — were killed by Turks.

"I've told this story so many times that it's like a rerun of an old movie," she said. "My husband doesn't like to hear it because he said, look what happened to the American Indians.

"But I will keep telling this story because we were slaughtered like cattle, thrown out into the streets and left to die. It's a memory you can't put away."

Gerlitz said a lot of the pain comes from the Turkish government's refusal to recognize the planned massacres conducted by the Ottoman empire beginning in 1915.

"I can never forgive them," she said, "because we were a peaceful, Christian family and the Turks destroyed it for no reason."

But she said most Armenians are just thankful to have found a safe haven in the United States. She said it does not bother her that the U.S. government has refused to declare a national day of remembrance.

"We can always remember our dead in church each April 24," Gerlitz said, referring to the official day of remembrance in California.

But for Berge Bulbulian, 62, who did not experience the genocide but did experience its aftermath, the conference allowed him to rekindle the heritage he once ignored.

He said it wasn't until he was 40 years old that he "really got interested in the genocide."

"It was a traumatic experience growing up Armenian," Bulbulian said. "We were so hell-bent on assimilation that we were forced into denying our heritage. And by the time we wanted to know a lot about the genocide, most of our parents had died."

"Now we're all trying to catch up, to know as much as possible, and to let others know, too."

- ARCHIVE -

SOURCE The Armenian Weekly

DATE May 21, 1988

SUBJECT CSUF and AFF Hold Premiere Showing  
of documents

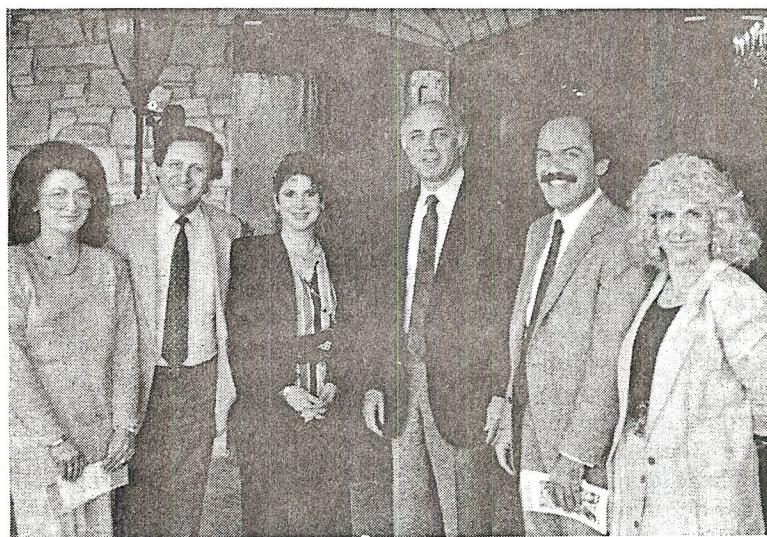
PAGE 1 of 1

## CSUF and AFF Hold Premiere Showing of Documentaries

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Mr. Walter Karabian, Vice-President of the Armenian Film Foundation introduced the three films, produced by J. Michael Hagopian. *Mandate for Armenia* is a rare documentary based on Army Signal Corps footage on the United States Mission to Armenia and Turkey in 1919. *Cilicia... Rebirth* is a proud and positive film depicting the rich cultural heritage of the medieval Cilician Kingdom of Armenia. Finally, excerpts from *Legacy* were shown to an enthusiastic assembly of Fresno Armenians and friends.

A reception was held after the viewing in the spacious



From l. to r., members of the Fresno-area committee: Mrs. Melene Ouzounian, Allan Y. Jeindian, Mrs. Sonia Keshishian, Walter Karabian of the Armenian Film Foundation, Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, and Mrs. Mary Darakjian.

Chamlian Stables, which had been donated for use by Mr. and Mrs. Vahan and Anoush Chamlian of Fresno. A table displaying films produced by

the Armenian Film Foundation greeted the special guests who had gathered to support the Foundation's continuing work in gathering oral histories on film.

- ARCHIVE -

SOURCE Armenian Mirror-Spectator: Watertown, Mass.  
DATE May 21, 1988

SUBJECT Documentaries Shown in Fresno

PAGE 1 of 1

## Premiere Showing Of Three Armenian Documentaries In Fresno

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medieval Cilician Kingdom of Armenia. The third film was *Excerpts from Legacy*.

A reception followed in the Chamlian Stables. A table displaying films produced by the Armenian Film Foundation



From the left: Members of the Fresno Organizing Committee: Mrs. Melene Ouzounian, Allan Jendian, Mrs. Sonia Keshishian, Walter Karabian of the Armenian Film Foundation, Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian and Mrs. Mary Darakjian.

Program of California State University/Fresno and the local organizing committee headed by Mrs. Sonia Keshishian.

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SOURCE The Armenian Observer: Hollywood, CA DATE May 25, 1988SUBJECT Armenian Documentaries Premiered in PAGE 1 of 1  
Fresno

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Sub

# ARMENIAN STUDIES PROGRAM

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FRESNO

FRESNO, CALIFORNIA 93740

- ARCHIVE -

SOURCE The Armenian Reporter: Fresh Meadows, N.Y. DATE June 2, 1988  
SUBJECT Fresno State Students go to Armenia PAGE 1 of 1

## Fresno State Students Leave for Armenia

FRESNO, Calif. - At a pivotal moment in Soviet and Armenian history, a group of Fresno State University students left Monday for Yerevan, Armenia, site of recent unprecedented protests.

Barlow Der Mugrdechian, acting coordinator of the Armenian Studies Program at the university, led the visit of eight students, who will be guests of the Committee for Cultural Relations with Armenians Abroad based in Yerevan. Mr. Der Mugrdechian said this was the first Fresno group of students who were to be guests of the Soviet Armenian government.

Mr. Der Mugrdechian also commented that he believed last week's changes in the Soviet Armenian and Soviet Azerbaijani leadership were more in line with Gorbachev's reformist campaign. He pointed out that

the principal purposes of his group's visit to Armenia will be to establish links with Armenian university students, and get a feel for life there.

One potential outcome is a summer travel course that might evolve from this first visit. Der Mugrdechian said Soviet Armenian students might visit Fresno as well.

Each student taking the 24-day trip will spend about \$1,300 on airfare, but the Yerevan Committee will pay for room and board. Mr. Mark Malkhasian, a former Fresno State University student who is currently doing advanced studies in Yerevan, helped arrange the tour's itinerary. This past March, Mr. Garlen Dallakian visited Fresno State and met with Mr. Der Mugrdechian. The visit laid the groundwork for the students' visit.

SUBJECT Panel Discussion on "Armenian  
Survivors in the San Joaquin Valley"  
Moderated By: Prof. Der Mugrdechian

PAGE 1 of 4

## Armenian Survivors in the San Joaquin Valley

*"Image and Memory: Armenian Survivors in the San Joaquin Valley," a panel discussion sponsored by the Zoryan Institute for Contemporary Armenian Research and Documentation, Inc. was presented at the Holiday Inn in Fresno on May 15 as part of the Public Humanities Conference. Excerpts from the presentations of the three panel members are presented here. The moderator, Barlow Der Mugrdechian, Instructor in Armenian Studies, CSU Fresno, opened the discussion with the following remarks.*

Immigration of Armenians to the Central Valley began in 1881 when the first permanent settlers arrived in Fresno. They so liked the weather and the environment that they persuaded many of their friends and relatives to come two years later. These early immigrants made their living by peddling fruit, working in the fields, and selling candy and tobacco and groceries. A much larger group of immigrants came after the 1894-96 massacres in Ottoman Turkey. They came for a different reason, that is, they were forced out of their historic homeland.

The first thing they wanted to do when they came to California was to re-establish life as they had known it in the old country, and the way to do that was to re-create familiar institutions. So we have the beginning of the first churches, the first compatriotic unions, and the beginning of an Armenian press. From the period of 1896 to 1915 the number of Armenians who came to California grew as the oppression in the Ottoman empire increased.

By 1920 large numbers of Armenian immigrants had come both to this Valley and to other parts of the country. The entire population of Fresno County was 45,000 people. Of this number, 10,000 were Armenians. Leaving a homeland, leaving a village was less easy in those times when people did not move around as much as we do today. People were forced to abandon their homes and family members with no hope of ever seeing them again. The memories of this first generation of immigrants are very traumatic. The second and third generation have different memories: they grew up in America and easily integrated into American life. Their first language was often English and their picture of the genocide has been filtered through the generations.

Members of the panel will explore the issues associated with memories of the genocide for several generations of Armenians—both the survivors and the children and grandchildren of the survivors.

### THE BURDEN OF MEMORY First Generation: Patterns of Remembering

**Dr. Donald Miller, Director of the School of Religion, USC**

*Ed note: Dr. Miller has conducted 100 interviews with Armenian survivors and describes here the pattern that emerges as survivors remembered their past.*

The pattern of remembering among the survivors of the 1915 genocide includes five distinctly different types of reflection.

First, survivors remember in a highly idealized manner their life before the deportation from their towns and villages. They remember that their family life was stable; they recount with fondness the everyday activities associated with going to church or school or participating in festive occasions such as weddings. Life is remembered in that pre-deportation stage as pleasant and good. Many speak of the prosperity of the Armenians; family relations were extremely tight knit. Compared to the devastation that followed, this was an idyllic period, perhaps idealized in the memories of survivors in ways that exceeded the actual reality. Nevertheless, this pre-deportation period is a benchmark against which they compared much of the rest of their lives.

The second type of survivor memory revealed in our interviews is one characterized by terror and trauma. The survivors we interviewed were children of five to fifteen years when the deportation orders came in the late spring of 1915. Families had only a few days to prepare for their departure. When they left, most took only what they could carry. A few days into their journey the men were separated out and shot. The women and children were left to fend for themselves on the long journey toward Syria. Many did not survive the journey. We speak today of the trauma of children in our society who are beaten or abused. We know that they are scarred for life, irreparably damaged. Yet we sometimes too quickly forget the impact of the deportation horrors on the consciousness of these elderly survivors in our own midst.

The third category of memories expressed by survivors in our interviews is characterized by images of

- ARCHIVE -

SOURCE Humanities Network: Los Angeles, CADATE Summer 1988SUBJECT Panel Discussion on "Armenian  
Survivors in the San Joaquin Valley"  
Moderated By: Prof. Der MugrdechianPAGE 2 of 4

reprieve. The orphanages that were set up were sanctuaries, a safe place removed from the horrors of the deportation experience. Some of the child survivors had forgotten their native language so education was resumed. Structure and order once again became a part of their experience. They were taught skills in sewing and weaving. The orphanage experience was a transition from disorder, trauma, and chaos into order, stability, and structure. Children re-learned the Armenian language and reconnected with their national heritage, however shattered it might be in the wake of the first genocide of the 20th century.

The fourth moment in survivors' memories is the longest as measured by the number of years. It is the period of reconstruction, of re-creating a life that had been fractured. To listen to accounts of the genocide itself is painful, but many of the stories of adult life relate a continuing odyssey of suffering. They worked as gardeners, domestics, and shopkeepers. The genocide did not happen only in 1915; it continues daily in the life experience of survivors who are now 80, 90 and 100 years old.

The last category of survivor recollection has to do with how the survivors think about the events of their childhood, whether they are more reconciled in their old age than in their youth. Surprisingly most survivors say they have grown more preoccupied with the genocide as they have gotten older. Why? We have come to believe that there is a fifth expression of survivor recollection. It is that stage when the survivors seek moral justification for the events of their past. Many survivors are consumed with the unjustness of their experience. They are outraged by the refusal of the Turkish government to acknowledge the sins of their forefathers. They mourn the memory of family members. They reflect on the life that might have been theirs. They live as Christians, yet they ponder a God who would allow a nation to be destroyed. They agonize over their grandchildren who have not learned the Armenian language and are marrying outside their Armenian heritage.

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*"Tucked away within the memories of survivors are a good many messages about what it means to be human and what it means to be heroic."*

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Finally, I want to reflect for a moment on the burden of this memory. Some survivors tell us that they have never told anyone their story, or at best only fragments have been shared. What does it mean to march through life with the burden of memory? Many of these survivors feel ignored and left behind. What should we do with their memories? This is the question facing the oral historian of the Armenian genocide. Life can never be the same once one witnesses the depth of human suffering or acknowledges the human capacity for evil. Beneath even the most light-hearted moments is a memory. The memory is that all is not well in the world, that pain and suffering lurk in the shadows of our own lives and those of the human community. So memory is a burden and yet it is also a privilege. It is memory that binds us together, to each other and to that community that transcends our own particularity and lends depth to our own individual lives. In the present age we are schooled to think more about the future than about our past. Yet I think we will be dangerous human beings if we break the connection with our memories.

Together, young and old, Armenian and non-Armenian, we need to hear the full story of the past of the human community. We need to challenge our stereotypes of the Turk by listening to the accounts of survivors about how some Turks who disagreed with the policies of their government gave shelter and food to their Armenian neighbors. We need to feel the agonized reflections of the survivors concerning a God who seemed indifferent to the majority of Armenians and yet is credited by others for their survival. Tucked away within the memories of survivors are a good many messages about what it means to be human and what it means to be heroic. And within these descriptions are prescriptions for those of us who have ears to hear them.

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*"Surprisingly most survivors say they have grown more preoccupied with the genocide as they have gotten older."*

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*"Many of these survivors feel ignored and left behind. What should we do with their memories?"*

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## THE BURDEN OF MEMORY Second & Third Generation: Developing a Sense of Continuity

**Margaret Bedrossian,  
Lecturer in literature, UC Davis**

I am in the position of a typical second-generation person in this country, trying to make contact with my past, trying to deepen my understanding, and in all of this trying to assess who I am. How am I related to this past?

I was born and raised in the Central Valley, and I think I understand some of the feelings which the Armenian immigrants must have about their old country. There is something about being close to the land, of having an understanding of where you are born and where you are raised which is very moving.

There was a well-developed life in the old country before 1915, and it is unfortunate that more people, especially those of the second and third generation, do not know more about the details of that life—the experiences in the villages, the communal values that these Armenians shared, the sense of belonging to the land. As we begin to place all of that in context, we can begin to appreciate our sources more and more. Those sources go beyond the genocide; they go back to a long, long past in the old country, almost three thousand years' worth. It is very important to understand that.

Much of the self-image that Armenians brought with them to the United States had been shaped by a set of values which had been in the making for thousands of years. One of the most important factors in that value system is the experience of family. For the Armenians the family was a fortress, the line of first defense. Every member of the family had a specific place and set of responsibilities. Different generations lived together, and there was a respect for the wisdom of the old, and children had a great respect for their parents. Of course this is true of many other cultures. But I think it is important—and I speak as a younger Armenian—to look at what the family meant for the Armenians. It was a very closely bonded unit. Children were treasured as though they were not only a great hope but something precious beyond understanding.

Morality comes from knowing our place in a larger totality. Morality means that we know what it means to relate to other members of the family. We know our place in that family, and we know our place within an ethnic group. We can place ourselves in larger and larger circles.

Watching these videotapes and entering into the memory of the Armenian immigrants is a wonderful way to educate our moral sense in very subtle ways. We begin to see there is a way in which people who have been fragmented can over a period of time begin to create new wholes out of these fragments.

As I listened to the videotapes, I remembered my father's stories and began to make connections between what I heard in my family and what I was seeing on the tapes. I began to see that that history was very real and that it was my history, mine in a way that went very deep, beyond anything I can talk about. There are affirmations that go beyond genocide. They have to do with cultivating a self image that is larger than one's own life.

A second quality that comes through when viewing the videotapes is the pragmatism of the Armenians. They lived close to the earth and many of their customs came out of the earth—their farming, their gardens, even the rocks are important.

How can these memories of first-generation survivors foster a sense of continuity and morality among second and third generations? Is there something that wants to be, needs to be created as we second and third generation Armenians listen to these stories of our parents and grandparents? As I watched these videotapes I had the sense that there is a very large and very grand story here and it is made up of many little stories, each of which wants to be told. What do I do with the past? It's so sad. I don't understand it. Let the past be past? No. There's something here that wants to continue, and how it is going to continue will depend on those of the second and third generation.

Continuity comes when we are willing to look at and try to understand our own history. And for young people of the United States, Armenian or non-Armenian, I think that is one of the great lacks. We don't have enough opportunity, especially if we come from an ethnic group, to really understand how that ethnic group came to this country, what their experiences were here and what they were like in the old country. And even if we do learn about our heritage, we don't usually share our responses to this history with those of our own generation.

SUBJECT Panel Discussion on "Armenian Survivors in the San Joaquin Valley"  
Moderated By: Prof. Der Mugrdechian

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## The Idea of Memory in Writing

**Peter Najarian, Lecturer in literature  
at San Francisco State University,  
author of *Daughters of Memory***

I have two personal connections to this topic of memory; one is my mother and one is my father. And I have cultural connections too which come from reading and from history—relics, churches, photographs. My mother would constantly tell me about her childhood—as much of it as she could remember. She liked to talk about her early days. Her parents, who were killed, were peasants. They were connected to the earth. My aunt, on the other hand, does not want to remember certain parts of her history. It is painful for her.

This issue, the importance of remembering, is important not only to Armenians but also to all people of genocide—Jewish, American Indians, others. Many of us say we have to remember what happened to our people. And there are others who say we don't want to remember. Let's forget about it. We want our kids to grow up American, not to be different, to live the good life. But on the other hand, what happens to being Armenian? What happens to the Armenian language? So there's a conflict.

I personally feel that it is very important to remember not only for my work but for all of us as a family. Because if we do not remember, then we have something inside us that is buried and is going to bother us. And it is also important for Turkey to remember. Turkey has to remember as a people that they did this thing. If they do not, then it is always going to be there in their life as a people. We know that from our own personal experiences.

The most important part of memory is remembering heaven and remembering hell. Like everyone else I want to remember my childhood, not only as a person but as a group—my childhood that goes all the way back to God, that leads to paradise. But on the other hand it seems that if I remember it all the way back, I don't just remember paradise and all the good things. I have to remember both sides. I have to remember not only that my grandmother was killed by the Turks, but that killing is going on all the time. It will go on tomorrow. And as a person, I am faced with this problem. Do I want to remember or do I not want to remember?

ARMENIAN STUDIES PROGRAM

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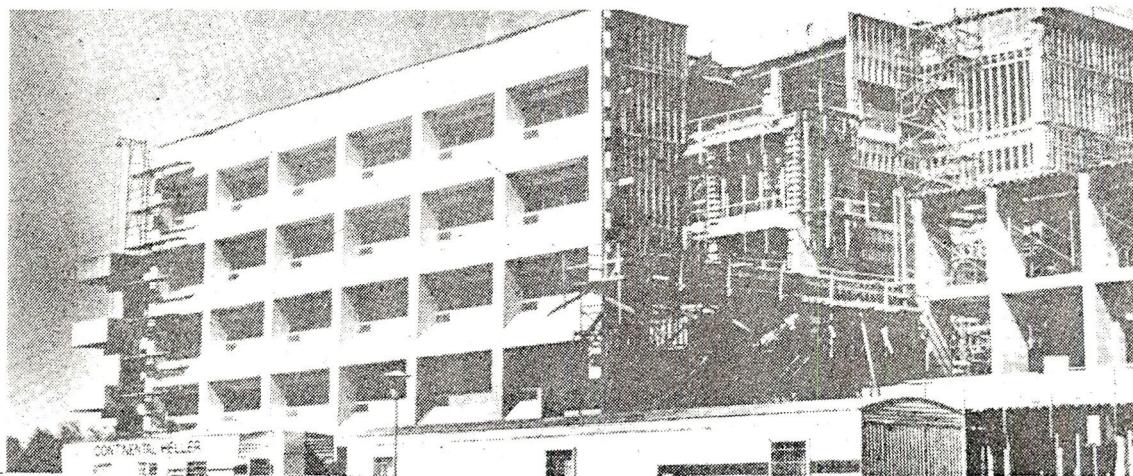
- ARCHIVE -

SOURCE The Armenian Reporter: Fresh Meadows DATE July 1988

N.Y.

SUBJECT Leon S. Peters Business Building

PAGE 1 of 1



**CAMPUS CONSTRUCTION.** A view of the Leon S. Peters Business Building now under construction on the California State University Fresno campus. Planned completion is in August of 1988. The Armenian Studies Program will have its new offices in the Peters Building as well as a suite of offices in the adjoining Valley Business Center. Mr. Peters, who was a community leader and active in Armenian American organizations, passed away a few years ago.

**CSU**

**ARMENIAN STUDIES PROGRAM**

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FRESNO

FRESNO, CALIFORNIA 93740

- ARCHIVE -

**SOURCE** The Armenian Observer: Hollywood, CA **DATE** July 20, 1988

**SUBJECT** Lecture on Karabagh

**PAGE** 1 of 1

## **Barlow Der Mugrdechian to Lecture on Karabagh in Fresno**

FRESNO — Professor Barlow Der Mugrdechian of the CSUF Armenian Studies Program will discuss the historic changes which have occurred in the last several months in Yerevan. Der Mugrdechian led a group of eight students to Armenia; June 1-25 of this year and has returned with slides from this very memorable moment in Armenian history.

The illustrated lecture will take place on Sunday, July 24 at 3:00 p.m. in the Industrial Arts Building, Room 101 on the CSUF campus. The IA building is on Barstow Ave. between Campus Ave. and Jackson Ave. Some of the students who accompanied Professor Der Mugr-

dechian will also be available to share their experiences.

The studies program was organized by the ASP and through the invitation of the Committee for Cultural Relations with Armenians Abroad. The lecture will focus on the change in Armenians before and after Feb. 20. While in Armenia the group was witness to large scale of these meetings and other events in Armenia will be shown. There will be a question and answer period which will follow the formal part of the presentation.

The public is welcome. For more information contact the ASP at 294-2669.

**CSU**

**ARMENIAN STUDIES PROGRAM**

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FRESNO  
FRESNO, CALIFORNIA 93740

**- ARCHIVE -**

**SOURCE** The Armenian Reporter: Fresh Meadows **DATE** July 21, 1988  
**SUBJECT** ASP explores Recent Changes in **PAGE** 1 of 1  
Yerevan, Armenia

## CSUF Armenian Studies Program Explores Recent Changes in Armenia's Capital

FRESNO, Calif. - Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian of the CSUF Armenian Studies Program will discuss the historic changes which have occurred in the last several months in Yerevan. Der Mugrdechian led a group of eight students to Armenia, June 1-25, of this year and has returned with slides from this very memorable moment in Armenian history. The illustrated lecture will take place this Sunday, July 24, at 3:00 p.m. in the Industrial Arts Building, Room 101 on the CSUF campus. Some of the students who accompanied Professor Der Mugrdechian will also be available to share their experiences.

The studies program was organized by the ASP and through the invitation of the Committee for Cultural Relations with Armenians Abroad. The lecture will focus on the change in Armenians before and after February 20. While in Armenia the group was witness to large scale meetings which took place in the Opera plaza. Slides of these meetings and other events in Armenia will be shown. There will be a question and answer period which will follow the formal part of the presentation.

The public is welcome and there is no admission. For more information, call 294-2669.

**SUB**

**ARMENIAN STUDIES PROGRAM**

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FRESNO  
FRESNO, CALIFORNIA 93740

- ARCHIVE -

SOURCE Nor Gyank: Glendale, Ca

DATE July 21, 1988

SUBJECT Armenians and Karabagh

PAGE 1 of 1

## **Armenians And Karabagh**

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The studies program was also organized by the ASP and through the invitation of the Committee for Cultural Relations with Armenians Abroad. The lecture will focus on the change in Armenians before and after February 20. While in Armenia the group was witness to large scale meetings which took place in Opera plaza. Slides of these meetings and other events in Armenia will be shown. There will be a question and answer period which will follow the formal part of the presentation.

The public is welcome and there is no admission. For more information contact the ASP at 294-2669.

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ARMENIAN STUDIES PROGRAM

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FRESNO  
FRESNO, CALIFORNIA 93740

- ARCHIVE -

SOURCE The California Courier: Glendale, CA DATE July 21, 1988  
SUBJECT Fresno Lecture shows Yerevan slides PAGE 1 of 1

## Fresno Lecture Will Show Slides of Yerevan Events

FRESNO - Professor Barlow Der Mugrdechian of the California State University (Fresno) Armenian Studies Program will discuss the historic changes which have occurred in the last several months in Yerevan at a campus lecture July 24. Der Mugrdechian led a group of eight students to Armenia, June 1-25, and has returned with slides of the tumultuous events in Armenia.

The illustrated lecture will begin at 3 p.m. in the Industrial Arts Building, Room 101 on the CSUF campus. The IA building is on Barstow Ave. between Campus Ave. and Jackson Ave.

Some of the students who accompanied Prof. Der Mugrdechian will also be available to share their experiences. The studies program was organized by the ASP and through the invitation of the Committee for Cultural Relations with Armenians Abroad.

The July 24 lecture will focus on the change in Armenians before and after February 20. While in Armenia the group was witness to large scale meetings which took place in the Opera plaza. Slides of these meetings and other events in Armenia will be shown. There will be a question and answer period which will follow the formal part of the presentation.

There is no admission. For more information contact, (209) 294-2669.