

California State University, Fresno



ARMENIAN STUDIES PROGRAM
Fresno, California 93740



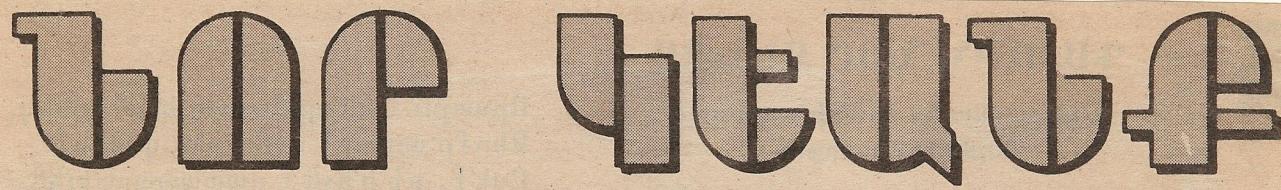
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CSU Fresno Armenian Studies Program activities as
reported in local, national, and international media.

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University Beat

COURSE ON ARMENIAN MILITANTS AT CSU FRESNO

FRESNO—“Armenian Political Violence” is the first of three one-credit Saturday courses offered by the Armenian Program in the Fall semester. The class will meet September 28 and October 5 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (with an hour for lunch) in Speech Arts room 153 on the California State University, Fresno campus.

Dr. Dickran Kouymjian introduced the controversial course three years ago. Because of its popularity then and since 1985 marks the tenth anniversary of the outbreak of organized Armenian militancy, the course will be offered again at a time convenient for both the university and the non-academic community.

In addition to discussing the history of the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Army (ASALA), the Justice Commandos of the Armenian Genocide, and the Armenian Revolutionary Army (ARA), Professor Kouymjian will assess the effect of Armenian political violence on Armenian-Turkish relations, on the western world and international bodies, and on the Armenian search for recognition of the 1915 Genocide. Guest speakers will be invited with varying viewpoints.

Two other one-credit courses will be offered later in the semester; the one on October 19 and 26 will be devoted to the rites and beliefs, the history, and the current problems of the Armenian Church. It will be taught jointly by the newly-appointed lecturer in Armenian Studies, Barlow Der Mugrdechian, and Dr. Kouymjian. There will be a series of guest speakers including Armenian clergymen.

The final Saturday course on the “Armenian Experience through Film” will meet December 7 and 14. Dr. Kouymjian will discuss the history of Armen-

ian film-making and show a select number of modern and historic Armenian films, or films by Armenian film-makers, including William Saroyan, Rouben Mamoulian and Henrik Malian. Dr. J. Michael Hagopian, the famous producer and director of Armenian documentary films, will be present on December 7 to introduce his latest films.

Enrollment for the Political Violence course, Armenia Studies 120T, as well as the other courses is open to all. To sign up, contact the Armenian Studies Program (209) 294-2669 or the University Division of Extended Education (209) 294-2524. The fee for on-university credit is \$54.00. Those who wish to attend without credit will be entitled to a special fee of only \$25.00; however, they must register formally as other students. Currently-enrolled students may add the courses free before the end of the fourth week of classes.

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Cal State, Fresno Will Offer Class On Armenian Militants

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The class will meet Sept. 28 and Oct. 5 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. in speech arts room 153 on the FSU campus.

Dr. Dickran Kouymjian introduced the controversial course three years ago. "Because of its popularity then and because 1985 marks the 10th anniversary of the outbreak of organized Armenian militancy, the course will again be offered at a time convenient for both the university and non-academic community," said Dr. Kouymjian.

In addition of discussing the history of the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA), the Justice Commandos of the Armenian Genocide, and the Armenian Revolutionary Army (ARA), Dr. Kouymjian will assess

the effect of Armenian political violence on Armenian-Turkish relations, on the western world and international bodies, and on the Armenian search for recognition of the 1915 Genocide. Guest speakers will be invited with varying viewpoints.

Harut Sassounian, editor of The California Courier, has accepted an invitation to speak during the Sept. 28th session. Sassounian, who

CSUF Class

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recently returned from Geneva, Switzerland, will discuss the historic decision by the United Nations to recognize the Armenian Genocide.

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The Current State Of Armenian Studies In America

A quick survey of the various programs of Armenian studies throughout the United States gives rise to a certain degree of optimism. Within a few decades Armenian communities and generous individual donors have set a movement in motion which has culminated in half a dozen major centers of Armenology. Beginning with the establishment of a chair in Armenian studies at Harvard University, the number of chairs and programs has multiplied to the present peak, with centers of study at Columbia University, UCLA, Fresno State University, the University of Pennsylvania, and the University of Michigan. Smaller programs exist at a number of other colleges and universities. With the contemporaneous development of Armenian elementary and secondary education it is now possible for a young Armenian in America to acquire a deep knowledge of the Armenian language, the history of the Armenian people, and an appreciation of Armenian literature and culture, something which has never before been possible in this country.

In 1957 Harvard University, responding to a campaign by the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research to raise funds for a chair in Armenian studies, appointed Dr. Avedis Sanjian, a graduate of the University of Michigan, as its first Research Fellow in Armenian Studies. This was the modest beginning of the revolution in Armenian studies. A few years later, in 1960, the Armenian Studies Program was initiated at the University of California in Los Angeles. The late Louise Nalbandian, the author of a major work on Armenian revolutionary par-

ties, taught briefly in the program, followed by A. D. Sarkissian of the Library of Congress and Dr. Kevork Sarafian. A fortunate choice was made in 1962 to engage a young graduate student, Richard Hovannisian, to continue the teaching of Armenian history. In 1965 Avedis Sanjian was appointed Associate Professor of Armenian, and four years later he became the first occupant of the chair in Armenian studies (now the Narekatsi Chair). Meanwhile, Harvard University had appointed Robert W. Thomson, a distinguished Scholar of medieval Armenian literature and the translator of major Armenian historical texts, to the Harvard chair. At about the same time Nina Garsoian, a noted historian of early medieval Armenia, began teaching at Columbia (1962). She was later appointed to a professorship (1965) and finally to hold the Centennial Chair in Armenian Studies. In 1972 the University of Pennsylvania established the Tarzian Chair in Armenian History and Culture and appointed Dr. Vartan Gregorian as its first holder.

Dickran Kouymjian, a graduate of the Columbia Program and an experienced teacher and scholar with many years at the American University of Beirut, joined the faculty at Fresno State University and with enormous energy built a large program in Armenian. Finally, in 1981, the Alex Manoogian Chair in Modern Armenian History was set up at the University of Michigan, and Ronald Grigor Suny was named as its first occupant.

Along with the establishment of endowed positions and state-supported programs. Armenian studies also created its own scholarly and public organiza-

tions. The first such association was NAASR, the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, guided by Mr. Manoog Young. NAASR was instrumental in the foundation of programs both at Harvard and UCLA and has continued to be active in promoting scholarly activities. Armenian scholars themselves organized a professional organization, the Society for Armenian Studies (SAS), in 1974. It now has nearly two hundred members around the world. SAS is affiliated with other major scholarly organizations, such as the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies (AAASS) and the Middle East Studies Association (MESA). It meets regularly at scholarly conferences and organizes panels and symposia on Armenian topics.

Early in the 1980s the Zoryan Institute for Armenian Research and Documentation was founded in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Inspired and led by the young scholar, Girair Libaridian, the Zoryan has engaged in publishing materials on the Armenian question, interviewing survivors of the Armenian Holocasut, collecting and filling all data on Armenian matters. Libaridian, who serves at the same time as editor of *The Armenian Review*, the longest running Armenological journal in America, has made the Institute an important presence between professional scholars and the wider public. A similar space is occupied by such efforts as Ruth Thomasian's Project SAVE, which collects and preserves photographs dealing with the Armenian experience; the Armenian Library and Museum Association (ALMA), which is planning a complex

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which will house Armenian books and treasures near Boston; and the American Armenian International College of La Verne, California, which trains undergraduates in a variety of fields and provides Armenians with education in their own language.

All these efforts have created an explosion of interest in Armenian studies. It is now a common occurrence in Armenian communities across the country to have public lectures by historians or literary critics, to hear discussions about the future of the Armenian people, to listen with renewed horror to the retelling of the tragedies of

the Armenian past. In the presence of a concerted effort by people hostile to the Armenians to obliterate the awareness of the Genocide of 1915 or the claims of Armenians to territories in eastern Anatolia, the efforts of Armenian scholars has much more than an academic relevance. Each new article or book, every lecture or symposium is a political act in the sense that it reaffirms the validity of the Armenian experience. It is not surprising, then, that Armenian scholars are not allowed to retire to their "ivory towers," but are repeatedly called into the public arena to defend the record of the Armenians. An Armenian scholar does not have the luxury of his American col-

leagues to stand apart from the wider cultural struggle; he or she through research and writing contributes to an affirmation that Armenians have been around for centuries, that they remain a presence in the world today, and that they are determined to survive, indeed to flourish in the future.