

California State University, Fresno



ARMENIAN STUDIES PROGRAM
Fresno, California 93740



HYE SHARZHOOH NEWS SERVICE

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

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

Vol. 4, Release #38

Summer and Fall 1988

Young Armenian-Americans Become Part of the History of the Armenian People

Eight students from California State University, Fresno were recently participants in what is viewed as one of the most critical events, in the history of Soviet Armenia.

The students were part of the CSUF Armenian Studies Program's first tour of Armenia, June 1-25. Under the leadership of Professor Barlow Der Mugerdechian, acting director of the ASP, and as guests of the Committee for Cultural Relations with Armenians Abroad, the group visited many of Armenia's most impressive churches and monuments, toured the most notable museums, and even lent a hand in aiding the ongoing excavation project at the ancient Armenian capital of Dvin. What most will remember, however, are the events which focused around the fate of Mountainous Karabagh.

Karlen Dallakian, President of the Committee, visited the ASP in March of 1988, where he met with the students who had signed up for the tour. The success of this year's studies program has prompted plans for an expanded program next year to include college students from throughout the United States. Interested students can contact the CSUF Armenian Studies Program (ASP, CSUF, Fresno, CA 93740) for plans for next year's program, tentatively scheduled for June 1989.

By BARLOW DER MUGRDECHIAN

What is clear from our trip is that Armenians in Armenia are undergoing a national spiritual revival, a rebirth, a rebirth of national identity and consciousness, starting with individuals, reaching to the family, and finally rippling out into mass society. The movement which began in February and which reached fruition in June is one that is unparalleled in recent Armenian history. We witnessed an opening of Armenian society toward the free discussion of issues directly affecting Armenian life. Among the topics are the environment, the Armenian Question, working conditions, democracy, corruption and finally

and not least the current efforts towards the reunification of the Autonomous Region of Karabagh with Armenia.

We in the diaspora have much to gain from this movement. The resulting unity of purpose and the unity of action in Armenia demonstrate one undeniable and fundamental idea — that Armenians must depend on themselves for the resolution of issues.

I had last been to Armenia in June of 1978 as part of the annual tour organized by the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America. After months of preparation and anticipation, my personal desire to see Ar-

menia again became a reality as I received confirmation of an invitation by the Committee for Cultural Relations to bring a group of eight students to spend twenty-five days in Armenia. I was aware, of course, of the events which has been unfolding in Armenia since February. I had anticipated further activity, but what this group was to see and experience in Armenia was to surpass all our expectations, as we became part of the history of our people.

My first evening in Armenia, June 1st, I went to the Opera square to see if indeed there was activity there. From the 1st of June until the 24th there were never less than a thousand people in the Opera square, gathering in "meetings." How can I explain the sight of thousands of fellow Armenians, thousands and thousands, filling the streets and boulevards, as far as I could see? They were animated, discussing the future and the decisions which were to follow. This was in stark contrast to the mood of the people only months before, before the openness that began February 20th. Such mass gatherings, peaceful yet electric, are unique in the history of the Soviet Union.

I want to relate the events of three days, June 12-14, immediately preceding the decision of the Supreme Soviet of Armenia concerning the issues of Karabagh and the Sumgait massacres. This is only fraction of the story that I have to tell but it will suffice to give a taste of those historic moments.

At 9:00 a.m., Sunday June 12th, I went to the Opera square with several of my students. A large crowd, estimated at over 200,000 had already gathered. We quickly asked those nearest us about what was going on. They explained that a decision was to be made that night whether to call a strike or not. The strike would serve to put pressure on the Supreme Soviet of Armenia, and the member deputies, to discuss the issue of Karabagh and to make sure that the results of the discussion would be positive, namely, that Armenia would accept the proposal to accept Karabagh into Soviet Armenia. We managed to move to the center of the mass of humanity, which seemed to have a life of its own contracting and expanding. Suddenly, the plaza was awash in light as twenty to thirty students holding burning torches marched to the steps of the Opera. They lined up at the front of the steps where hundreds of students and sympathizers had been conducting a sit-in for weeks. Some students were on a hunger strike at the monument of Hovhanness Toumanian in the Opera square.



Group members in front of the historic building which formerly housed the Government of the Republic of Armenia and now the headquarters of the Committee for Cultural Relation with Armenians Abroad.

Speakers addressed the crowd, but it was difficult to hear as the sound system was not working very well. Finally, the sound system was fixed and the question was put to the people. Strike or no strike? Should Yerevan be close until Wednesday or not? The chant of strike reverberated through the crowd, becoming a wave, a thunderous crest of emotion, which swept through the square. The city must be closed until the decision of the Supreme Soviet on June 15th. All factories, institutes, and centers of production were to be closed. Only essential services such as bakeries and hospitals would remain open. The answer was clear. Tomorrow a city-wide strike. The people were asked to gather the next day at 10:30 for another meeting. Meanwhile, it was expected that high-level government officials would address the crowds the next day.

Expectations were high these officials would announce their unstinting support for the people. It was a day for me of excitement and wonder at the determination of our people.

As the crowds began to disperse, the streets were filled with Armenians of all ages, mothers, fathers, children, youth, all united in their purpose, to make sure Karabagh would be reunited with Armenia. It was indeed a demonstration of the regeneration of the Armenian spirit, not possible before Gorbachev.

As I returned to the Hotel Armenia, we passed a militia building where a deputy to the Armenian Supreme Soviet had taken refuge. Outside a huge crowd was yelling amot (shame)! Why? The deputy had not signed his name to the list of deputies who supported the people's position with respect to Karabagh. The people were shouting for him to sign the document. This was an unprecedented scene in Armenia.



From Left to Right: Robert Gosdanian, Shant Avakian, Group leader Barlow Der Mugerdechian, Darlene Ouzounian, Jim Malkassian, Chairman of the Committee for Cultural Relations with Armenians Abroad, Jacqueline Sislian, Greg Eritzian, Yerevan Ohannessian, and Robert Mekjian.

THE CITY

WAS SHUT DOWN

June 13th, 10:30 a.m. I go again to the Opera, this time over 500,000 Armenians have gathered. Fortunately it was slightly overcast and not yet hot. There were people all the way to Abovian and Terian streets. My friend and I stood waiting for the first speaker. The city had been shut down, and groups of laborers or workers were marching in under banners announcing which factory they were from. After a while, they could not even forge an entrance into the tightly packed crowd. Cries of doctor! could be heard as weaker members of the crowd fainted. At 11 the meeting had still not begun, and the P.A. equipment was just being set up. Finally, at 11:30 a trumpet blared out one of the songs devoted to Karabagh and then people began to address the crowds. Representatives of

Continued from Page 2

the factories addressed the crowd exhorting the people to remain firm. There was no fear in the crowd although we could not move because of the number of people. Although the meeting has opened late, the strike appeared to be successful. Most factories were closed. We spent an hour listening to the speakers, who have not much new to say. Suren Harutyounian, First Secretary of the Communist Party of Armenia, addressed the people at 1:30, but after most of the people had left. That evening at 7:15, the people had reassembled at the Opera square but the square was filled to overflowing by the time we arrived. We edged up to the right side of the square under the trees at Spendiarian's statue. It was difficult to hear the speakers or even to see them.

As if in sympathy with the emotions of the day, the sky is full of thunder and lightning. Sylva Gaboutikian and Gevorg Emin, poets, addressed the restless crowd and even were booed at for some of their statements. How can I explain the solidarity of the people?

It is amazing. I can only repeat we were witness to history.

This was the first day I was aware of the closing of Yerevan to tourists. Our hotel is empty, the restaurant deserted. We lived on the ninth floor, but were the only residents for several weeks.

The 14th of June is much quieter, filled with anticipation



Armenians from Egypt and United States in Hotel Armenia

of the decision to come. There are fewer people at the Opera square, but thousands nevertheless. Our activities as a group have also slowed in anticipation of the events we are witness to.

The 15th of June is a day when all of Yerevan is raptly watching a live television broadcast of the session of the Armenian Supreme Soviet. Many deputies talk, and after a long break at lunch we hear the final decision. The Armenian Supreme Soviet accepted the resolution of Karabagh to reunite with Soviet Armenia. Celebration in Armenia, as thousands fill the streets, in joy that at last the government of Armenia has made a decision which the people can support wholeheartedly.

I realized then, as I witnessed those events, and I realize now even more strongly, that the Armenians are in a struggle whose results may not be apparent for a long time. But the clock cannot be turned back. Armenians will not willingly retreat again.

The intellectual ferment which now permeates Armenian society is a positive force, one which can be harnessed to allow a changed society. This lesson of positive criticism and a practical awareness of the needs of our people must be duplicated here in the Diaspora.

We must support Armenians in Armenia.

We must learn the lessons which in Armenia have now been learned and applied.

CSUF Students on Tour Witness History in the Making in Armenia

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Professor Barlow Der Murgdechian, of California State University, Fresno, recently returned from Soviet Armenia after a two-week tour along with eight students. Below, he reports on the events which took place in Armenia during that time.*

What is clear from our trip is that Armenians in Armenia are undergoing a national spiritual revival, a rebirth of national identity and consciousness, starting with individuals, reaching to the family, and finally rippling out into mass society. The movement which began in February and which reached fruition in June is one that is unparalleled in recent Armenian history. The group witnessed an opening of Armenian society toward the free discussion of issues directly affecting Armenian life. Among the topics are the environment, the Armenian Question, working conditions, democracy, corruption and finally, but not last, the current efforts towards the reunification of the Autonomous Region of Karabagh with Armenia.

The diaspora has much to gain from this movement. The resulting unity of purpose and the unity of action in Armenia demonstrate one undeniable and fundamental idea - that Armenians must depend on themselves for the resolution of issues.

I had last been to Armenia in June of 1978 as part of the annual tour organized by the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America. After months of preparation and anticipation, my personal desire to see Armenia again became a reality as I received confirmation of an invitation by the Committee for Cultural Relations to bring a group of eight students to spend twenty-five days in Armenia. I was aware, of course, of the events which had been unfolding in Armenia since February. I had anticipated further activity, but what this group was to see and experience in Armenia was to surpass all our expectations, as we became part of the history of our people.

My first evening in Armenia, June 1, I went to the Opera square, gathering in "meetings". How can I explain the sight of thousands of fellow Armenians,

thousands and thousands, filling the streets and boulevards, as far as I could see? They were animated, discussing the future and the decisions which were to follow. This was in stark contrast to the mood of the people only months before, before the openness that began February 20. Such mass gatherings, peaceful yet electric, are unique in the history of the Soviet Union.

I want to relate the events of the three days, June 12-14, immediately preceding the decision of the Supreme Soviet of Armenia concerning the issues of Karabagh and the Sumgait massacres.

June 12, at 9 p.m., I went to the Opera square with several of my students. A large crowd, estimated at over 200,000 had already gathered. We quickly asked those nearest us about what was going on. They explained that a decision was to be made that night whether to call a strike or not. The strike would serve to put pressure on the Supreme Soviet of Armenia, and the member deputies, to discuss the issue of Karabagh and to make sure that the results would be positive, namely, that Armenia would accept the proposal to accept Karabagh into Soviet Armenia. We managed to move to the center of the mass of humanity, which seemed to have a life of its own, contracting and expanding.

Suddenly, the plaza was awash in light as twenty to thirty students holding burning torches marched to the steps of the Opera. They lined up at the front of the steps where hundreds of students and sympathizers had been conducting a sit-in for weeks. Some students were on a hunger strike at the monument of Hovhanness Toumanian in the Opera square. Speakers addressed the crowd, but it was difficult to hear as the sound system was not working very well. Finally, the sound system was fixed and the question was put to the people. Strike or no strike? Should Yerevan be closed until Wednesday or not? The chant of "Kortzatoul" (strike) reverberated through the crowd, becoming a wave, a thunderous crest of emotion, which swept through the square. It was decided that the city must be closed until the decision of the Supreme Soviet on June 15. All factories, institutes, and centers of production were to be closed. Only essential services such as bakeries and hospitals would remain open. The answer was clear. The people were asked to gather the next day at 10:30 for another meeting. Meanwhile, it was expected that high-level government officials would address the crowds the next day. Expectations were high these officials would announce their unstinting support for the people. It was a day of excitement and wonder at the determination of our people.

As the crowds began to disperse, the streets were filled with Armenians of all ages, mothers, fathers, children, youth, all united in their purpose, to make sure Karabagh would be reunited with Armenia. It was indeed a demonstration of the regeneration of the Armenian spirit, not possible before Gorbachev.

As I returned to the Hotel Armenia, we passed a militia building where a deputy to the Armenian Supreme Soviet had taken refuge. Outside a huge crowd was yelling "amot" (shame)! Why? The deputy had not signed his name to the list of deputies who supported the people's position with respect to Karabagh. The people were shouting for him to sign the document. This was an unprecedented scene in Armenia.

Over 500,000 Armenians gathered June 13 at the Opera. There were people all the way to Abovian and Terian streets. My friend and I stood waiting for the first speaker. The city had been shut down, and groups of laborers or workers were marching in under banners announcing which factory they were from. After a while, they could not even forge an entrance into the tightly packed crowd. Cries of "doctor" could be heard as weaker members of the crowd fainted. At 11:00 the meeting had still not begun, and the P.A. equipment was just being set up. Finally, at 11:30, a trumpet blared out one of the songs devoted to Karabagh and then people began to address the crowds. Representatives of the factories addressed the crowd exhorting the people to remain firm. There was no fear in the crowd although we couldn't move because of the number of people.

June 14 is much quieter, filled with anticipation of the decision. There are fewer people at the Opera, but thousands nevertheless. Our activities as a group have also slowed in anticipation of the events we are witnessing.

This was the first day I was aware of the closing of Yerevan to tourists. Our hotel is empty, the restaurant deserted. We lived on the ninth floor, but were the only residents for a few weeks.

June 15 is a day when all of Yerevan is raptly watching a live television broadcast of the session of the Armenian Supreme Soviet. Many deputies talk, and after a long break at lunch, we hear the final decision. The Armenian Supreme Soviet accepted the resolution of Karabagh to reunite with Soviet Armenia. Celebration reigns in Armenia, as thousands fill the streets, joyful that at last the government of Armenia has made a decision which the people can support wholeheartedly.

CSU Students Watch & Participate in Yerevan Demonstrations for Karabagh

By Barlow Mgrdechian

FRESNO, Calif. - Eight students from California State University, Fresno, were recently participants in what is viewed as the most critical event in the history of Soviet Armenia.

The students were part of the CSUF Armenian Studies Program's first tour of Armenia, June 1-25. Under the leadership of this writer (who already visited Armenia), acting director of the ASP, and as guests of the Committee for Cultural Relations with Armenians Abroad, the group visited many of Armenia's most impressive churches and monuments, toured the most notable museums, and even lent a hand in aiding the ongoing excavation project at the ancient Armenian capital of Dvin. What most will remember, however, are the events which focused around the fate of Mountainous Karabagh.

Karlen Dallakian, President of the Committee, visited the ASP in March of 1988, where he met with the students who had signed up for the tour. The success of this year's studies program has prompted plans for an expanded program next year to include college students from throughout the United States. Interested students can contact the CSUF Armenian Studies Program (ASP, CSUF, Fresno, Ca 93740) for plans for next year's program, tentatively scheduled for June 1989.

What is clear from our trip is that Armenians in Armenia are undergoing a national spiritual revival, a rebirth of national identity and consciousness, starting with individuals, reaching to the family, and finally rippling out into mass society. The movement which began in February and which reached fruition in June is one that is unparalleled in recent Armenian history. We witnessed an opening of Armenian society toward the free discussion of issues directly affecting Armenian life. Among the topics are the environment, the Armenian Question, working conditions, democracy, corruption and finally and not least the current efforts towards the reunification of the Autonomous Region of Karabagh with Armenia.

We in the diaspora have much to gain from this movement. The resulting unity of purpose and the unity of action in Armenia demonstrate one undeniable and fundamental idea - that Armenians must depend on themselves for the resolution of issues.

I had last been to Armenia in June of 1978 as part of the annual tour organized by the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America. After months of preparation and anticipation, my personal desire to see Armenia again became a reality as I received confirmation of an invitation by the Committee for Cultural Relations to bring a group of eight students to spend twenty-five days in Armenia. I was aware, of course, of the events which had been unfolding in Armenia since February. I had anticipated further activity, but what this group was to see and experience in Armenia was

to surpass all our expectations, as we became part of the history of our people.

My first evening in Armenia, June 1, I went to the Opera square to see if indeed there was activity there. From the 1st of June until the 24th there were never less than a thousand people in the Opera square, gathering in "meetings." How can I explain the sight of thousands of fellow Armenians, thousands and thousands, filling the streets and boulevards, as far as I could see? They were animated, discussing the future and the decisions which were to follow. This was in stark contrast to the mood of the people only months before, before the openness that began February 20th. Such mass gatherings, peaceful yet electric, are unique in the history of the Soviet Union.

JUNE 12-14

I want to relate the events of the three days, June 12-14, immediately preceding the decision of the Supreme Soviet of Armenia concerning the issues of Karabagh and the Sumgait massacres. This is only a fraction of the story that I have to tell but it will suffice to give a taste of those historic moments.

At 9:00 p.m., Sunday, June 12th, I went to the Opera square with several of my students. A large crowd, estimated at over 200,000 had already gathered. We quickly asked those nearest us about what was going on. They explained that a decision was to be made that night whether to call a strike or not.

The strike would serve to put pressure on the Supreme Soviet of Armenia, and the member deputies, to discuss the issue of Karabagh and to make sure that the results of the discussion would be positive, namely, that Armenia would accept the proposal to accept Karabagh into Soviet Armenia. We managed to move to the center of the mass of humanity, which seemed to have a life of its own, contracting and expanding. Suddenly, the plaza was awash in light as twenty to thirty students holding burning torches marched to the steps of the Opera. They lined up at the front of the steps where hundreds of students and sympathizers had been conducting a sit-in for weeks. Some students were on a hunger strike at the monument of Hovhanness Toumanian in the Opera square. Speakers addressed the crowd,

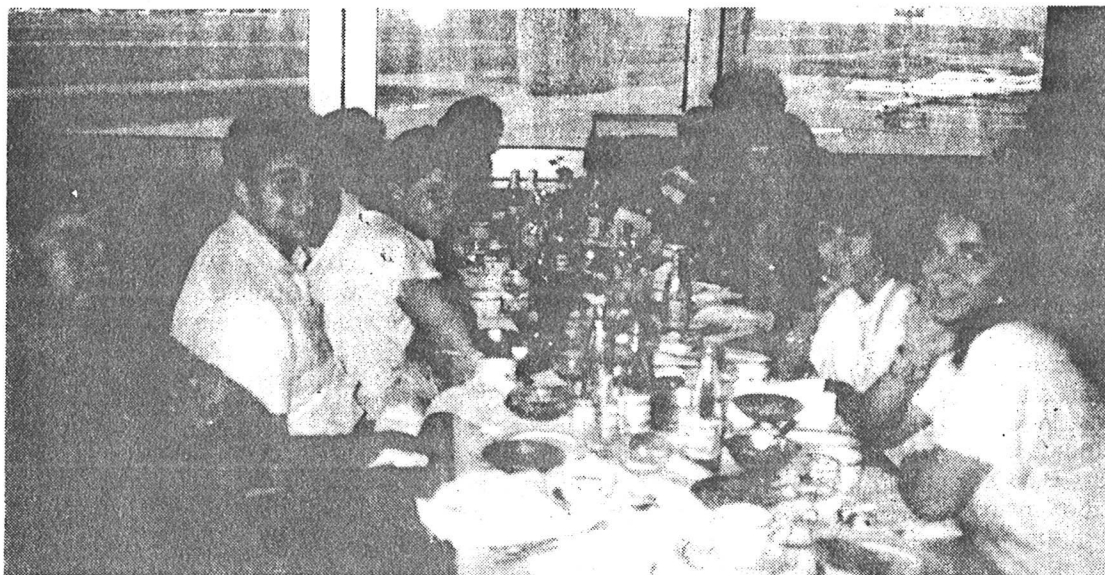
but it was difficult to hear as the sound system was not working very well. Finally, the sound system was fixed and the question was put to the people. Strike or no strike? Should Yerevan be closed until Wednesday or not? The chant of "strike" reverberated through the crowd, becoming a wave, a thunderous crest of emotion, which swept through the square. The city must be closed until the decision of the Supreme Soviet on June 15th. All factories, institutes, and centers of production were to be closed. Only essential services such as bakeries and hospitals would remain open. The answer was clear. Tomorrow a city-wide strike. The people were asked to gather the next day at 10:30 for another meeting. Meanwhile, it was expected that high-level government officials would address the crowds the next day. Expectations were high these officials would announce their unstinting support for the people. It was a day for me of excitement and wonder at the determination of our people.

As the crowds began to disperse, the streets were filled with Armenians of all ages, mothers, fathers, children, youth, all united in their purpose, to make sure Karabagh would be reunited with Armenia. It was indeed a demonstration of the regeneration of the Armenian spirit, not possible before Gorbachev.

As I returned to the Hotel Armenia, we passed a militia building where a deputy to the Armenian Supreme Soviet had taken refuge. Outside a huge crowd was yelling "shame!" Why? The deputy had not signed his name to the list of deputies who supported the people's position with respect to Karabagh. The people were shouting for him to sign the document. This was an unprecedented scene in Armenia.

JUNE 13

June 13th, 10:30 a.m. I go again to the Opera, this time over 500,000 Armenians have gathered. Fortunately it was slightly overcast and not yet hot. There were people all the way to Abovian and Teran streets. My friend and I stood waiting for the first speaker. The city had been shut down, and groups of laborers or workers were marching in under banners announcing which factory they were from. After a while, they could not even forge an entrance into the



The young travelers relax at Yerevan's International Airport.

tightly packed crowd. Cries of "doctor" could be heard as weaker members of the crowd fainted. At 11:00 the meeting had still not begun, and the P.A. equipment was just being set up. Finally at 11:30 a trumpet blared out one of the songs devoted to Karabagh and then people began to address the crowds. Representatives of the factories addressed the crowd exhorting the people to remain firm. There was no fear in the crowd although we couldn't move because of the number of people. Although the meeting has opened late, the strike appeared to be successful. Most factories were closed. We spent an hour listening to the speakers, who have not much new to say. Sooren Harootunian, First Secretary of the Communist Party of Armenia, addressed the people at 1:30, but after most of the people had left. That evening at 7:15, the people had reassembled at the Opera square but the square was filled to overflowing by the time we arrived. We edged up to the right side of the square under the trees at Spendiarian's statue. It was difficult to hear the speakers or even to see them.

As if in sympathy with the emotions of the day, the sky is full of thunder and lightning. Sylva Gaboudikian and Gevorg Emin addressed the restless crowd and even were booed at for some of their statements. How can I explain the solidarity of the people? It is amazing. I can only repeat we were witness to history.

This was the first day I was aware of the closing of Yerevan to tourists. Our hotel is empty, the restaurant deserted. We lived on the ninth floor, but were the only residents for several weeks.

SOURCE The Armenian Reporter: Fresh Meadows, N.Y. DATE July 28, 1988

SUBJECT ASP Trip to Armenia PAGE 4 of 4

QUIETER DAY

The 14th of June is much quieter, filled with anticipation of the decision to come. There are fewer people at the Opera but thousands nevertheless. Our activities as a group have also slowed in anticipation of the events we are witness to.

The 15th is a day when all of Yerevan is raptly watching a live television broadcast of the session of the Armenian Supreme Soviet. Many deputies talk, and after a long break at lunch we hear the final decision. The Armenian Supreme Soviet accepted the resolution of Karabagh to reunite with Soviet Armenia. Celebration in Armenia, as thousands fill the streets, in joy that at last the government of Armenia has made a decision which the people can support wholeheartedly.

I realized then, as I witnessed those events, and I realize now even more strongly, that the Armenians are in a struggle whose results may not be apparent for a long time. But the clock cannot be turned back. Armenians will not willingly retreat again. The intellectual ferment which now permeates Armenian society is a positive force, one which can be harnessed to allow a changed society. This lesson of positive criticism and a practical awareness of the needs of our people must be duplicated here in the Diaspora. We must support Armenians in Armenia. We must learn the lessons which in Armenia have now been learned and applied.

CSUF Armenian Students Visit Armenia, Witness Protest Movement



From left to right: Robert Gosdanian, Shant Avakian, Group leader Barlow Der Muqrdechian, Darlene Ouzounian, Jim Malkasian; Spiurk Gomide President

Karlen Dallakian, Jacqueline Sislian, Greg Eritzian, Yerevan Ohannessian, and Robert Mekjian.

What is clear from our trip is that Armenians in Armenia are undergoing a national spiritual revival, a rebirth of national identity and consciousness, starting with individuals, reaching to the family, and finally rippling out into mass society. The movement which began in February and which reached fruition in June is one that is unparalleled in recent Armenian history. We witnessed an opening of Armenian society toward the free discussion of issues directly affecting Armenian life. Among the topics are the environment, the Armenian Question, working conditions, democracy, corruption and finally and not least the current efforts towards the reunification of the Autonomous Region of Karabagh with Armenia.

We in the diaspora have much to gain from this movement. The resulting unity of purpose and the unity of action in Armenia demonstrate one undeniable and fundamental idea—that Armenians must depend on themselves for the resolution of issues.

Eight students from California State University, Fresno, were recently participants in what is viewed as the most critical event in the history of Soviet Armenia.

The students were part of the CSUF Armenian Studies Program's first tour of Armenia, June 1-25. Under the leadership of Professor Barlow Der Muqrdechian, acting director of the ASP, and as guests of the Committee for Cultural Relations with Armenians Abroad, the group visited many of Armenia's most impressive churches and monuments, toured the most notable museums, and even lent a hand in aiding the ongoing excavation project at the ancient Armenian capital of Dvin. What most will remember, however, are the events which focused around the fate of Mountainous Karabagh.

Karlen Dallakian, President of the Committee, visited the ASP in March of 1988, where he met with the students who had signed up for the tour. The success of this year's studies program has prompted plans for an expanded program next year to include college students from throughout the United States. Interested students can contact the CSUF Armenian Studies Program (ASP, CSUF, Fresno, CA 93740) for plans for next year's program, tentatively scheduled for June 1989.

I had last been to Armenia in June of 1978 as part of the annual tour organized by the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America. After months of preparation and anticipation, my personal desire to see Armenia again became a reality as I received confirmation of an invitation by the Committee for Cultural Relations to bring a group of eight students to spend twenty-five days in Armenia. I was aware, of course, of the events which had been unfolding in Armenia since February. I had anticipated further activity, but what this group was to see and experience in Armenia was to surpass all our expectations, as we became part of the history of our people.

My first evening in Armenia, June 1st, I went to the Opera square to see if indeed there was activity there. From the first of June until the 24th there were never less than a thousand people in the Opera square, gathering in "meetings". How can I explain the sight of thousands of fellow Armenians, thousands and thousands, filling the streets and boulevards, as far as I could see? They were animated, discussing the future and the decisions which were to follow. This was in stark contrast to the mood of the people only months before, before the openness that began February 20th. Such mass gatherings, peaceful yet electric, are unique in the history of the Soviet Union.

I want to relate the events of the three days, June 12-14, immediately preceding the decision of the Supreme Soviet of Armenia concerning the issues of Karabagh and the Sumgait massacres. This is only fraction of the story that I have to tell but it will suffice to give a taste of those historic moments.

At 9:00 p.m., Sunday June 12th, I went to the Opera square with several of my students. A large crowd, estimated at over 200,000 had already gathered. We quickly asked those nearest us about what was going on. They explained that a decision was to be made that night whether to call a strike or not. The strike would serve to put pressure on the Supreme Soviet of Armenia, and the member deputies, to discuss the issue of Karabagh and to make sure that the results of the discussion would be positive, namely, that Armenia would accept the proposal to accept Karabagh into Soviet Armenia. We managed to move to the center of the mass of humanity, which seemed to have a life of its own, contracting and expanding. Suddenly, the plaza was awash in light as twenty to thirty students holding burning torches marched to the steps of the Opera. They lined up at the front of the steps where hundreds of students and sympathizers had been conducting a sit-in for weeks. Some students were on a hunger strike at the monument of Hovhanness Toumanian in the Opera square.

Speakers addressed the crowd, but it was difficult to hear as the sound system was not working very well. Finally, the sound system was fixed and the question was put to the people. Strike or no strike? Should Yerevan be closed until Wednesday or not? The chant of "strike" reverberated through the crowd, becoming a wave, a thunderous crest of emotion, which swept through the square. The city must be closed until the decision of the Supreme Soviet on June 15th. All factories, institutes, and centers of production were to be closed. Only essential services such as bakeries and hospitals would remain open. The answer was clear. Tomorrow a city-wide strike. The people were asked to gather the next day at 10:30 for another meeting. Meanwhile, it was expected that high-level government officials would address the crowds the next day. Expectations were high these officials would announce their unstinting support for the people. It was a day for me of excitement and wonder at the determination of our people.

As the crowds began to disperse, the streets were filled with Armenians of all ages, mothers, fathers, children, youth, all united in their purpose, to make sure Karabagh would be reunited with Armenia. It was indeed a demonstration of the regeneration of the Armenian spirit, not possible before Gorbachev.

As I returned to the Hotel Armenia, we passed a militia building where a deputy to the Armenian Supreme Soviet had taken refuge. Outside a huge crowd was yelling amoj (shame)! Why? The deputy had not signed his name to the list of deputies who supported the people's position with respect to Karabagh. The people were shouting for him to sign the document. This was an unprecedented scene in Armenia.

June 13th, 10:30 a.m. I go again to the Opera, this time over 500,000 Armenians have gathered.

Fortunately it was slightly overcast and not yet hot. There were people all the way to Abovian and Terian streets. My friend and I stood waiting for the first speaker. The city had been shut down, and groups of laborers or workers were marching in under banners announcing which factory they were from. After a while, they could not even forge an entrance into the tightly packed crowd. Cries of "doctor" could be heard as weaker members of the crowd fainted. At 11:00 the meeting had still not begun, and the P.A. equipment was just being set up. Finally at 11:30 a trumpet blared out one of the songs devoted to Karabagh and then people began to address the crowds. Representatives of the factories addressed the crowd exhorting the people to remain firm. There was no fear in the crowd although we couldn't move because of the number of people. Although the meeting has opened late, the strike appeared to be successful. Most factories were closed. We spent an hour listening to the speakers, who have not much new to say. Sooren Harutunyan, First Secretary of the Communist Party of Armenia, addressed the people at 1:30, but after most of the people had left. That evening at 7:15, the people had reassembled at the Opera square but the square was filled to overflowing by the time we arrived. We edged up to the right side of the square under the trees at Spendiarian's statue. It was difficult to hear the speakers or even to see them.

As if in sympathy with the emotions of the day, the sky is full of thunder and lightning. Sylva Gaboudikian and Geveorg Emin addressed the restless crowd and even were booed at for some of their statements. How can I explain the solidarity of the people? It is amazing. I can only repeat we were witness to history.

This was the first day I was aware of the closing of Yerevan to tourists. Our hotel is empty, the restaurant deserted. We lived on the ninth floor, but were the only residents for several weeks.

The 14th of June is much quieter, filled with anticipation of the decision to come. There are fewer people at the Opera but thousands nevertheless. Our activities as a group have also slowed in anticipation of the events we are witness to.

The 15th is a day when all of Yerevan is raptly watching a live television broadcast of the session of the Armenian Supreme Soviet. Many deputies talk, and after a long break at lunch we hear the final decision. The Armenian Supreme Soviet accepted the resolution of Karabagh to reunite with Soviet Armenia. Celebration in Armenia, as thousands fill the streets, in joy that at last the government of Armenia has made a decision which the people can support wholeheartedly.

I realized then, as I witnessed those events, and I realize now even more strongly, that the Armenians are in a struggle whose results may not be apparent for a long time. But the clock cannot be turned back. Armenians will not willingly retreat again. The intellectual ferment which now permeates Armenian society is a positive force, one which can be harnessed to allow a changed society. This lesson of positive criticism and a practical awareness of the needs of our people must be duplicated here in the Diaspora. We must support Armenians in Armenia. We must learn the lessons which in Armenia have now been learned and applied.



CSUF STUDENTS IN ARMENIA - From left to right: Robert Fosdanian, Shant Avakian, Group leader Barlow Der Mugrdechian, Darlene Ouzounian, Jim Malkasian; SPIURK Committee President Karlen Dallakian, Jacqueline sislian, Greg Eritzian, Yerevan Ohannessian, and Robert Mekjian.

CSUF, ASP Students Return from Tour of Soviet Armenia

FRESNO - Eight students from California State University, Fresno were recent participants in what is viewed as the most critical event in the history of Soviet Armenia.

The students were part of the CSUF Armenian Studies Program's first tour of Armenia, June 1-25. Led by Professor Barlow Der Mugrdechian, acting director of the ASP, and guests of the Committee for Cultural Relations with Armenians Abroad, the group visited many of Armenia's most impressive churches and monuments, toured notable museums, and even lent a hand in aiding the ongoing excavation project at the ancient Armenian capital of Dvin. What most will remember, however, are the events focused around the fate of Mountainous Karabagh. (*See separate story*).

Karlen Dallakian, President of the Committee, visited the ASP in March of 1988, where he met with the students who had signed up for the tour. The success of this year's studies program has prompted plans for an expanded program next year to include college students from throughout the United States. Interested students can contact the CSUF Armenian Studies Program (ASP, CSUF, Fresno, CA 93740) for plans for next year's program, tentatively scheduled for June 1989.

CSUF Armenian Students Visit Armenia, Witness History

Eight students from California State University, Fresno were recently participants in what is viewed as the most critical event in the history of Soviet Armenia.

The students were part of the CSUF Armenian Studies Program's first tour of Armenia, June 1-25. Under the leadership of professor Barlow Der Mugrdchian, acting director of the ASP, and as guests of the Committee for Cultural Relations with Armenians Abroad, the group visited many of Armenia's most impressive churches and monuments, toured the most notable museums, and even lent a hand in aiding the ongoing excavation project at the ancient Armenian capital of Dvin. What most will remember, however, are the events which focused

around the fate of Mountainous Karabakh.

Karlen Dallakian, President of the Committee, visited the ASP in March of 1988, where he met with the students who had signed up for the tour. The success of this year's studies program has prompted plans for an expanded program next year to include college students from throughout the United States. Interested students can contact the CSUF ASP (ASP, CSUF, Fresno, Ca 93740) for plans for next year's program, tentatively scheduled for June 1989.

What is clear from our trip is that Armenians in Armenia are undergoing a national spiritual revival, a rebirth of national identity and consciousness, starting with individuals, reaching to the family, and finally rippling out into mass society. The movement which began in February and which reached fruition in June is one that is unparalleled in recent Armenian history. We witnessed an opening of Armenian society toward free discussion of issues directly affecting Armenian life. Among the topics are the environment, the Armenian Question, working conditions, democracy, corruption, and finally and not least the current efforts towards the reunification of the Autonomous Region of Karabakh with Armenia.

We in the diaspora have much to gain from this movement. The resulting unity of purpose and the unity of action in Armenia demonstrate one undeniable and fundamental idea — that Armenians must depend on

themselves for the resolution of issues.

I had last been in Armenia in June of 1978 as part of the annual tour organized by the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America. After months of preparation and anticipation, my personal desire to see Armenia again became a reality after I received confirmation of an invitation by the Committee for Cultural Relations to bring a group of eight students to spend twenty-five days in Armenia. I was aware, of course, of the events which had been unfolding in Armenia since February. I had anticipated further activity, but what this group was to see and experience in Armenia was to surpass all our expectations, as we became part of the history of our people.

My first evening in Armenia, June 1st, I went to the Opera Square to see if indeed there was activity there. From the 1st of June until the 24th of there were never less than a thousand people, gathering in "meetings". How can I explain the sight of thousands of fellow Armenians, thousands and thousands, filling the streets and boulevards, as far as I could see? They were animated, discussing the future and the decisions which were to follow. This was in stark contrast to the mood of the people only months before, before the openness that began February 20th. Such mass gatherings, peaceful yet electric, are unique in the history of the Soviet Union.

I want to relate the events of the three days, June 12-14, immediately preceding the decision of the Supreme Soviet of Armenia concerning the issues of Karabakh and the Sumgait massacres. This is only fraction of the story that I have to tell but it will suffice to give a taste of those historic moments.

At 9:00 p.m., Sunday June 12, I went to the Opera Square with several of my students. A large crowd, estimated at over 200,000 had already gathered. We quickly asked those nearest us about what was going on. They explained that a decision was to be made that night whether to call a strike or not. The strike would serve to put pressure on the Supreme Soviet of Armenia, and the member deputies, to discuss the issue of Karabakh and to make sure that the results of the discussion would be positive, namely, that

Armenia would accept the proposal to accept Karabakh into Soviet Armenia. We managed to move to the center of the mass of humanity, which seemed to have a life of its own, contracting and expanding. Suddenly, the plaza was awash in light as twenty to thirty students holding burning torches marched to the steps of the Opera. They lined up at the front of the steps where hundreds of students and sympathizers had been conducting sit-in for weeks. Some students were on a hunger strike at the monument of Hovhannes Toumanian in the Opera Square. Speakers addressed the crowd, but it was difficult to hear as the sound system was not working very well. Finally, the sound system was fixed and the question was put to the people? Should Yerevan be closed until Wednesday or not? The chant of *kort-zatoul* (strike) reverberated through the crowd, becoming a wave, a thunderous crest of emotion, which swept through the square. The city must be closed until the decision of the Supreme Soviet

on June 15th. All factories, institutes, and centers of production were to be closed. Only essential services such as

bakeries and hospitals would remain open. The answer was clear. Tomorrow a city-wide strike. The people were asked to gather the next day at 10:30 for another meeting. Meanwhile, it was expected that high-level government officials would address the crowds the next day. Expectations were high these officials would announce their unflinching support for the people. It was a day for me of excitement and wonder at the determination of our people.



Group members in front of the historic building which formerly housed the Government of the Republic of Armenia

As the crowds began to disperse, the streets were filled with Armenians of all ages, mothers, fathers, children, youth, all united in their purpose, to make sure Karabakh would be reunited with Armenia. It was indeed a demonstration of the regeneration of the Armenian spirit, not possible before Gorbachev.

As I returned to the Hotel Armenia, we passed a militia building where a deputy of the Armenian Supreme Soviet had taken refuge. Outside a huge crowd was yelling *amot* (shame)! Why? The deputy had not signed his name to the list of deputies who support the people's position with respect to Karabakh. The people

were shouting for him to sign the document. This was an unprecedented scene in Armenia.

June 13th, 10:30 a.m. I go again to the Opera, this time over 500,000 Armenians have gathered. Fortunately it was slightly overcast and not yet hot. There were people all the way to Abovian and Terian streets. My friend and I stood waiting for the first speaker. The city had been shut down, and group of laborers or workers were marching in under banners announcing which factory they were from. After a while, they could not even forge an entrance into the tightly packed crowd.

Cries of *pejishk* (doctor)! could be heard as weaker members of the crowd fainted. At 11:00 the meeting had still not begun, and the P.A. equipment was just set up. Finally at 11:30 a trumpet blared out one of the songs devoted to Karabakh and then people began to address the crowds. Representatives of the factories addressed the crowd exhorting the people to remain firm. There was no fear in the crowd although we couldn't move because of the number of people. Although the meeting has opened late, the strike appeared to be successful. Most factories

were closed. Sooren Harootiunian, First Secretary of the Communist Party of Armenia, addressed the people at 1:30, but after most of the people had left. That evening at 7:15, the people had reassembled at the Opera Square but the square was filled to overflowing by the time we arrived. We edged up to the right side of the square under the trees at Spendirian statue. It was difficult to hear the speakers or even to see them.

As if in sympathy with the emotions of the day, the sky is full of thunder and lightening. Sylva Gaboudikian and Gevorg Emin addressed the restless crowd and even were booed at for some of their statements. How can I explain the solidarity of the people? It is amazing. I can only repeat we were witness to history.

This was the first day I was aware of the closing of Yerevan to tourists. Our hotel is empty, the restaurants deserted. We lived on the ninth floor, but were the only residents for several weeks.

The 14th of June is much quieter, filled with anticipation of the decision to come. There are fewer people at the Opera but thousands nevertheless. Our activities as a group have also slowed in anticipation of the events we are witness to.

The 15th is a day when all of Yerevan is raptly watching a live television broadcast of the session of the Armenian Supreme Soviet. Many deputies talk, and after a long break at lunch we hear the final decision. The Armenian Supreme Soviet accepted the resolution of Karabakh to reunite with Soviet Armenia. Celebration in Armenia, as thousands fill the streets, in joy that at last the government has made a decision which the people can support wholeheartedly.

I realized then, as I witnessed those events, and I realize now even more strongly, that the Armenians are in a struggle whose results may not be apparent for a long time. But the clock cannot be turned back. Armenians will not willingly retreat again. The intellectual ferment which now permeates Armenian society is a positive force, one which can be harnessed to allow a changed society. This lesson of positive criticism and a practical awareness of the needs of our people must be duplicated here in the Diaspora. We must support Armenians in Armenia. We must learn the lessons which in Armenia have now been learned and applied. ■

Witnesses to History: Fresno students at Opera Square

By Barlow Der Mugrdechian

Eight students from California State University, Fresno were recently participants in what is viewed as the most critical event in the history of Soviet Armenia.

The students were part of the CSUF Armenian Studies Program's first tour of Armenia, June 1-25. Under the leadership of Professor Barlow Der Mugrdechian, acting director of the ASP, and as guests of the Committee for Cultural Relations with Armenians Abroad, the group visited many of Armenia's most impressive churches and monuments, toured the most notable museums, and even lent a hand in aiding the ongoing excavation project at the ancient Armenian capital of Dvin. What most will remember, however, are the events which focused around the fate of Mountainous Karabagh.

Karlen Dallakian, President of the Committee, visited the ASP in March of 1988, where he met with the students who had signed up for the tour. The success of this year's studies program has prompted plans for an expanded program next year to include college students from throughout the United States. Interested students can contact the CSUF Armenian Studies Program (ASP, CSUF, Fresno, CA 93740) for plans for next year's program, tentatively scheduled for June 1989.

What was clear from our trip is that Armenians in Armenia are undergoing a national spiritual revival, a rebirth of national identity and consciousness, starting with individuals, reaching to the family, and finally rippling out into mass society. The movement which began in February and which reached fruition in June is one that is unparalleled in recent Armenian history. We witnessed an opening of Armenian society toward the free discussion of issues directly affecting Armenian life. Among the topics are the environment, the Armenian Question, working conditions, democracy, corruption and finally and not least the current efforts towards the reunification of the Autonomous Region of Karabagh with Armenia.

We in the diaspora have much to gain from this movement. The resulting unity of purpose and the unity of action in Armenia demonstrate one undeniable and fundamental idea — that Armenians must depend on themselves for the resolution of issues.

My first evening in Armenia, June 1st, I went to the Opera Square to see if indeed there was activity there. From the 1st of June until the 24th there were never less than a thousand people in the Opera Square, gathering in "meetings".

I want to relate the events of only three days, June 12-14, immediately

preceding the decision of the Supreme Soviet of Armenia concerning the issues of Karabagh and the Sumgait massacres to give a taste of those historic moments.

At 9:00 p.m., Sunday, June 12, I went to the Opera Square with several of my students. A large crowd, estimated at over 200,000 had already gathered. We quickly asked those nearest us about what was going on. They explained that a decision was to be made that night whether to call a strike or not. The strike would serve to put pressure on the Supreme Soviet of

Armenia, and the member deputies, to discuss the issue of Karabagh and to make sure that the results of the discussion would be positive, namely, that Armenia would agree to the proposal to accept Karabagh into Soviet Armenia. We managed to move to the center of the mass of humanity, which seemed to have a life of its own, contracting and expanding. Suddenly, the plaza was awash in light as twenty to thirty students holding burning torches marched to the steps of the opera building. They lined up at the front of the steps where hundreds of students and sympathizers had been conducting a sit-in for weeks. Some students were on a hunger strike at the monument of Hovhannes Toumanian in the Opera Square. Speakers addressed the crowd, but it was difficult to hear as the sound system was not working very well. Finally, the sound system was fixed and the question was put to the people. Strike

or no strike? Should Yerevan be closed until Wednesday or not? The chant of "գործադուլ" (strike) reverberated through the crowd, becoming a wave, a thunderous crest of emotion, which swept through the square. The city must be closed until the decision of the Supreme Soviet on June 15. All factories, institutes, and centers of production were to be closed. Only essential services such as bakeries and hospitals would remain open. The answer was clear. Tomorrow a city-wide strike. The people were asked to gather the next day at 10:30 for another meeting. Meanwhile, it was expected that high-level government officials would address the crowds the next day. Expectations were high that these officials would announce their unstinting support for the people.

As the crowds began to disperse, the streets were filled with Armenians of all ages, mothers, fathers, children, youth, all united in their purpose, to make sure Karabagh would be reunited with Armenia. It was indeed a demonstration of the regeneration of the Armenian spirit, not possible before Gorbachev.

As I returned to Hotel Armenia, we passed a militia building where a deputy to the Armenian Supreme Soviet had taken refuge. Outside a huge crowd was yelling *amot* (shame)! Why? The deputy had not signed his name to the list of deputies who supported the people's position with respect to Karabagh. The people were shouting for him to sign the document. This was an unprecedented scene in Armenia.

June 13, 10:30 p.m. I go again to the Opera Square; this time over 500,000 Armenians have gathered. Fortunately, it was slightly overcast and not yet hot. There were people all the way to Abovian and Terian streets. The city had been shut down, and groups of laborers or workers were marching in under banners announcing which factory they



Group members in front of the historic building which formerly housed the Government of the Republic of Armenia and now the headquarters of the Committee for Cultural Relations with Armenians Abroad.

were from. After a while, they could not even forge an entrance into the tightly packed crowd. Cries of "բժիշկ" (doctor) could be heard as weaker members of the crowd fainted. At 11:00 the meeting had still not begun, and the P.A. equipment was just being set up. Finally at 11:30 p.m. a trumpet blared out one of the songs devoted to Karabagh and then people began to address the crowds. Representatives of the factories addressed the crowd exhorting the people to remain firm. Although the meeting has opened late, the strike appeared to be successful. Most factories were closed. We spent an hour listening to the speakers, who had not much new to say. Suren Harutunyan, First Secretary of the Communist Party of Armenia, addressed the people at 1:30, but after most of the people had left. That evening at 7:15, the people had reassembled at the Opera Square but the square was filled

to overflowing by the time we arrived.

As if in sympathy with the emotions of the day, the sky was full of thunder and lightning. Sylva Kaputikyan and Gevorg Emin addressed the restless crowd and even were booed at for some of their statements.

This was the first day I was aware of the closing of Yerevan to tourists. Our hotel was empty, the restaurant deserted. We stayed on the ninth floor, but were the only guests for several weeks.

The 14th of June was much quieter, filled with anticipation of the decision to come. There were fewer people at the square but thousands nevertheless. Our activities as a group had also slowed in anticipation of the events we were witness to.

The 15th was a day when all of Yerevan was raptly watching a live television broadcast of the session of the Armenian Supreme Soviet. Many deputies talked, and after a long break at lunch we heard the final decision. The Armenian Supreme Soviet accepted the resolution of Karabakh to reunite with Soviet Armenia. Celebration in Armenia, as thousands filled the streets, in joy that at last the government of Armenia had made a decision which the people can support wholeheartedly.

I realized then, as I witnessed those events, and I realize now even more strongly, that Armenians are in a struggle whose results may not be apparent for a long time. But the clock cannot be turned back. Armenians will not willingly retreat again. The intellectual ferment which now permeates Armenian society is a positive force, one which can be harnessed to allow a changed society. This lesson of positive criticism and a practical awareness of the needs of our people must be duplicated here in the Diaspora. We must support Armenians in Armenia. We must learn the lessons which in Armenia have now been learned and applied. □

NUOVOCINEMA

gust'ok'au

Pubblicato per la XXIV Mostra Internazionale del Nuovo Cinema

Numero 4 Pesaro, 14 giugno 1988

SAROYAN GIRA UN FILM

William Saroyan scrisse, produsse e diresse un unico film, *The Good Job* per la Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer nel 1942. Il titolo rimase un riferimento oscuro nei cataloghi del cinema - Katz, nella sua *Film Encyclopedia* del 1979, lo definisce un documentario - fino a che non fu ripresentato nel 1980, in occasione di un festival del cinema armeno alla Columbia University di New York. Da allora è stato proiettato ai festival di Fresno, California (1981), Los Angeles (1982), Lyon (1983) e alla Cineteca Francese di Parigi (1984). Esistono delle copie in 35 e 16 mm.; una copia di quest'ultimo formato è conservata presso gli Archivi del Cinema della California State University, a Fresno. La genesi di questa "M-G-M-Miniature", come fu definito dal produttore a suo tempo, si intreccia con quella del film *The Human Comedy*, basato su una sceneggiatura scritta da Saroyan proprio per Louis B. Mayer nel 1942.

Saroyan, autore già famoso per le sue commedie, aveva incontrato il capo della M-G-M nel 1941 e si era accordato per un soggetto da realizzare in seguito.

Saroyan scrisse la sceneggiatura nel giro di un mese e la consegnò alla Metro: erano tre-quattrocento pagine dal titolo *The Human Comedy*. L'11 febbraio successivo firmò un contratto per dirigere il film.

Ma Mayer era titubante. Quindi disse a Saroyan: «Tutto quello che vuoi, Bill, ma prima fai una prova. Scrivi un copione, lavoraci sopra, ti lascio carta bianca. Puoi usare lo studio, fare il diavolo che ti pare... Assumi la gente, produci il film, sei il padrone».

Secondo una testimonianza di Saroyan 40 anni dopo, Meyer gli aveva detto: «Bill, come puoi fare la regia di *The Human Comedy*, se non hai mai girato un film?». E Saroyan aveva risposto: «Datemi solo tre giorni e proverò che sono in grado di fare la regia e portare a termine un film secondo il piano di lavoro».

Mayer aveva replicato: «Bene, prima scrivi la sceneggiatura».

Cominciò a girare il 19 marzo 1942: per la sceneggiatura la scelta di Saroyan era caduta su un breve racconto, *A Number of Poor*, tratto dal suo libro del 1939, *Peace, It's a Wonderful!*; il titolo del film fu dapprima *Jazz*, poi *The Corner Store*, infine *The Good Job*.

«Un'estate ho lavorato per due mesi in un negozio di generi alimentari» - così comin-

Ginger Rogers, e un bambino di quattro anni, Callaghan, esperto in dolciumi.

Il film comprende tutti e quattro gli episodi, nella stessa sequenza del racconto, a cominciare dalla signora per finire con Callaghan. Ma Saroyan aggiunse almeno tre episodi, "almeno" perché, quando i personaggi sfilano davanti alla macchina da presa, mentre scorrono i titoli di testa e di coda, si vedono attori che non compaiono nella versione finale, presumibilmente montata dalla M-G-M. Nella nuova sequenza ci sono Mike, l'insoddisfatto venditore di popcorn e un bambino a cui il popcorn non piace; questo episodio si trova fra quello della signora e la storia di Casal. Poi, dopo Maggie Testarossa, c'è una scenetta con dei monelli per la strada che si spartiscono dei biscotti. Questa scena tratta del potere latente, del materialismo sui bambini, ma è anche una forte presa di posizione contro il razzismo. Segue un uomo che parla delle strane lingue e che, con un forte accento, chiede in inglese di voler comprare dei fichi di Smirne. Di tanto in tanto parla e fa conti nella sua lingua, l'armeno. Dopo aver acquistato e accarezzato un'intera scatola di fichi neri della California, dice: «*Iskapes kaghtzer en, erkar jamanak koutem* (Sono proprio dolci, mi dureranno a lungo)». L'episodio di Casal, il più lungo del film e anche il più commovente, è l'unico di cui ne

conosciamo la fonte.

Nel suo ultimo libro di memorie, *Birth*, scritto nel 1979 e pubblicato postumo nel 1983, Saroyan spiega l'origine della storia. «Mio cugino Kirk Minasian, trenta o quarant'anni fa, mi parlò dei suoi clienti in un piccolo negozio di generi alimentari, frequentato soprattutto da ubriacconi di Grove Street, vicino alla Laguna. Ricordo con chiarezza dell'ometto che aveva raccontato a Kirk che non appena tornato a casa dal lavoro, suo figlio, grande e grosso, si metteva a carponi e domandava al padre di montargli in groppa; dopo di che il giovanotto portava solennemente a spasso suo padre dentro e fuori da tutte le stanze di casa. Si trattava di un rito d'amore, il piccolo padre adorava suo figlio, quanto il figlio onorava il padre. Amavo quella storia, ma non le ho mai reso giustizia, anche se ne ho fatto un rapido cenno in un racconto intitolato *The Good Job*, da cui ho tratto anche un film.

Condensato da: Saroyan gira un film, di Dikran Kouymjian, in William Saroyan, ricordo dell'uomo e dello scrittore, a cura di Leo Hamalian, London and Toronto, Associated University Press, 1987

Nella foto: Alberto Seixas Santos e Victor Gonçalves allo Stadio Olimpico di Lisbona.



403

ARMENIAN STUDIES PROGRAM

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FRESNO

FRESNO, CALIFORNIA 93740

- ARCHIVE -

SOURCE NEWS-Fresno Metropolitan MuseumDATE September 9, 1988SUBJECT Presentation of an Illustrated
Lecture on ArmeniaPAGE 1 of 1

FRESNO METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, HISTORY AND SCIENCE

1515 VAN NESS AVENUE, FRESNO, CALIFORNIA 93721 (209) 441-1444

NEWS

FRESNO METROPOLITAN MUSEUM WILL PRESENT
ILLUSTRATED LECTURE ON ARMENIA

(FRESNO, CALIF.)--On Sunday, September 18, the Fresno Metropolitan Museum will present a special lecture in conjunction with the "Armenian Rugs from the Gregorian Collection" exhibition, now on display in the museum's Leon and Alice Peters Gallery through November 27.

Professor Barlow Der Mugredechian of the C.S.U.F. Armenian Studies Program will present an illustrated lecture on Armenia at 2:00 p.m. in the museum's galleries. The program will include slides from Der Mugredechian's recently completed trip to Armenia. Admission to the lecture is free with regular museum admission.

The Fresno Metropolitan Museum is located at 1555 Van Ness Avenue in downtown Fresno. The museum is open Wednesday through Sunday, from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Admission fees are \$2 for adults, \$1 for senior citizens and students, and \$.75 for children ages three to 12. Children under three and museum members are free.

43

ARMENIAN STUDIES PROGRAM

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FRESNO

FRESNO, CALIFORNIA 93740

- ARCHIVE -

SOURCE Fresno Met Museum Calendar: Fresno, CA DATE September 1988

SUBJECT Lecture on Armenia by: Prof. Der PAGE 1 of 1
Mugredechian



FRESNO METROPOLITAN MUSEUM

1555 Van Ness Avenue
Fresno, California 93721
(209) 441-1444

C A L E N D A R

September

LOOKING
AHEAD

18 Program
Lecture by Barlow Der
Mugredechian on his
recent trip to Armenia
2:00 p.m.
Peters Court

SOURCE The Armenian Observer: Hollywood, CA DATE September 14, 1988

SUBJECT Illustrated Lecture of Armenia PAGE 1 of 1

Der Mugrdechian to Speak in Fresno Sept. 18

FRESNO — Barlow Der Mugrdechian who visited Armenia in June of 1988, will present an illustrated lecture on his trip at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, September 18, 1988 in the Peters Court of the Fresno Metropolitan Museum.

Der Mugrdechian is a lecturer in the Armenian Studies Program of California State University, Fresno and led a group of eight students on a one month studies program to Yerevan this summer.

The lecture is the first in a series of programs which are being held in conjunction with the opening of the "Armenian Rugs from the Gregorian Collection" exhibit which opened Sept. 7.

Admission to the museum and the program is \$2.00 for adults and free for Museum members.

Zoryan Institute Panel Is Written Up in Newsletter

ENCINO, Calif. - **Humanities Network**, the quarterly newsletter of the California Council for the Humanities, has devoted two full pages of its Summer, 1988 issue to the Zoryan Institute panel discussion "Image and Memory: Armenian Survivors in the San Joaquin Valley." The panel discussion took place during the Council's annual Public Humanities conference, this year held in Fresno, on May 13-15.

Entitled "Armenian Survivors in the San Joaquin Valley," the two-page coverage centers on presentations made by moderator Barlow Der Mugrdichian, Instructor in Armenian Studies at CSU Fresno, Dr. Donald Miller, professor of Religion at USC, Dr. Margaret Bedrossian, lecturer in Literature at UC Davis, and Peter Najarian, author of the book **Daughters of Memory**. The presentations dealt with patterns of remembering by the first generation, the burden and responsibility of memory on the second and third generations, and the idea of memory in writing.

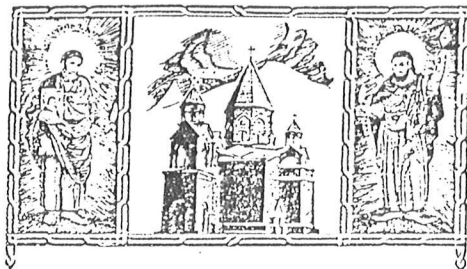
The presentations also included segments of videotaped interviews with survivors conducted by the Zoryan Institute. The six survivors were all

from the San Joaquin Valley, and some were present at the program.

The Sunday afternoon conference was held at the downtown Holiday Inn in Fresno, before an audience which numbered over 200. Members of the audience participated in a question-answer session with the panelists. The entire proceedings were taped by Radio Bilingue of Fresno and broadcast live.

The three-day conference also featured panels and presentations on the Southeast Asian immigrant community, the

Chinese in California, the songs and lore of the Mexican immigrant experience, as well as a screening of a new film entitled "American Chinatown." The panel on the image and memory of Armenian survivors were sponsored by the Zoryan Institute for Contemporary Armenian Research and Documentation, based in Cambridge, Mass., with offices in Encino, Calif., and Toronto, Ontario. The Institute's participation in the conference was made possible by partial funding from the California Council for the Humanities.

SOURCE Etchmiadzin: Yerevan, ArmeniaDATE September 1988SUBJECT Hye Sharzhoom Subject of ArticlePAGE 1 of 1

Ֆրեզնոյի Կաթոլիկոսի Գահանգի քաղաքներից է և գյուղատնտեսական կարևոր կենտրոն: Քաղաքը իր արվարձաններով ունի ավելի քան կես միլիոն բնակչություն: Հիմնադրվել է 1872 թ.:

Ֆրեզնոն եղել է Միացյալ Նահանգների արևմտյան շրջանները գաղթած հայերի առաջին հանգրվանը: Հայերը Ֆրեզնոյում և նրա շրջակայքում բնակություն են հաստատել 19-րդ դարի երկրորդ կեսին: Մինչև 1900-ական թվականները Միացյալ Նահանգների հայ գաղթականությունը առավելաբար կենտրոնացած էր այնտեղ: Ֆրեզնոյում հաստատված առաջին հայերի կյանքը լի է եղել դժվարություններով: 20-րդ դարի սկզբներից համայնքն սկսում է ստվարանալ և կազմակերպվել: 1900 թ. հիմնվում է Ֆրեզնոյի հայ առաջին առաքելական եկեղեցին: Աստիճանաբար աշխուժանում է գաղութի ազգային կյանքը: Քաղաքում այժմ գործում են տասնյակ հայկական կազմակերպություններ՝ հայրենակցական, բարեգործական, մշակութային, երիտասարդական և այլն: Ներկայումս Ֆրեզնոյի հայ ազգաբնակչության թիվը անցնում է 50 հազարից: Հայերն այստեղ գլխավորաբար զբաղվում են երկրագործությամբ, խաղողի և այլ մրգատու այգիների ու բանջարեղենի մշակությամբ: 1943 թ. կառուցվում և սկսում է գործել Ս. Պողոս հայ առաքելական եկեղեցին: 1978 թվականից գործում են նաև հայկական ամենօրյա վարժարաններ: Աշխույժ գործունեություն են ծավալում Հ. Բ. Ը. Միության տիկնանց, երիտասարդական և թատերական հանձնախմբերը: 1981 թվականից Ֆրեզնոյում գործում է «Հայք» հայկական ուղիորդամբ:

Ֆրեզնոյի Գահանգային համալսարանում իրականացվում է հայագիտական ուսումնասիրությունների ծրագիրը, որը տեղի հայ ուսանողների միության հետ 1979 թվականից հրատարակում է «Հայ շարժում» թերթը:

Ֆրեզնոն ծննդավայրն է հայազգի աշխարհամոլ զորող Վիլյամ Սարյանի, որի անունն է կրում Ֆրեզնոյի քաղաքային թատրոնը: