

NAASR Newsletter

Summer 2003 (Vol. X, No. 1, Issue 31)

National Association for Armenian Studies and Research

Successful Launch of NAASR Adult Education Series in 2002-2003

In 2002-2003 NAASR launched an Adult Education series with three highly successful courses: "The Near East in the Mind of America: Cultural Connections Between American Literature and the Civilizations of Armenia and Her Neighbors" and "Philosophers, Mystics, and Poets: Ancient Armenian Intellectual Life," by Prof. James R. Russell, and "The Long Twentieth Century in Armenian History," by Prof. Simon Payaslian.

The Adult Education program is a logical extension of NAASR's ongoing and highly successful lecture series which, through the years, has featured most of the leading figures in the scholarly world of Armenian Studies as well as popular authors and other notable personalities.

There are times, however, when a topic is too large to fit within the confines of a single lecture, and the Adult Education series provides an opportunity for the general public to experience in-depth coverage by top scholars over the course of several sessions.

Harvard University professor and holder of the Mashtots Chair in Armenian Studies James Russell inaugurated the series with the four-week "Near East in the Mind of America" in May 2002, jointly sponsored by the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, the Armenian Cul-

tural Foundation, and the Mashtots Chair.

More than 70 people registered for the course, during which Prof. Russell covered a remarkably diverse array of material and explored the many connections, most of which are almost unknown or little discussed, between the civilizations of the Near East (primarily Armenia, Iran, India, and Israel) and the literature of nineteenth century America. The course represented an almost unprecedented meeting of diverse cultures that is a tribute both to the vitality of Armenian Studies and the broadly humanistic approach to history and literature that seeks connections between cultures rather than divisions.

In laying the groundwork for the class, Prof. Russell declared that "We need to go back to the sources [of American culture] to rediscover what is of worth and how it was made; how we can use it again, to re-awaken ourselves, to stimulate conviction and use the freedom we have in worthwhile ways." The method of this exploration would be "to consider some of the great works of philosophy and literature that shaped American democracy," those of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Edgar Allen Poe, Herman Melville, Henry David Thoreau, and Walt Whitman. The art of these writers, who were foremost among the first generation of

-- continued on page 8

Ambassador Ordway Among Distinguished Visitors to NAASR in 2003

His Excellency John Ordway, appointed in 2002 as ambassador to Armenia from the U.S., visited the NAASR Headquarters on January 14 to meet with members of the NAASR Board and staff and Armenian Studies professionals from the Boston area.

During his hour-long stop at NAASR Ordway expressed his eagerness to help facilitate better communication and scholarly exchanges between Armenia and the U.S. He listened while scholars such as Prof. Ina Baghdiantz McCabe and Prof. Lucy Der Manuelian of Tufts, Prof. James Russell of Harvard, and Dr. Barbara Merguerian voiced some of their concerns over the sometimes difficult relationship between scholars in Armenia and those in the U.S.

Everyone present agreed that the one certainty about the situation is that more open communication and the

-- continued on page 5



U.S. Ambassador to Armenia John Ordway with NAASR Chairman Nancy R. Kolligian and Chairman Emeritus Manoog S. Young.

48th Annual Assembly Features Talk by Prof. Simon Payaslian, Elections

Prof. Simon Payaslian, first holder of the Kaloosdian-Mugar Chair of Armenian Genocide Studies and Modern Armenian History at Clark University in Worcester, MA, spoke at the luncheon program preceding the 48th Annual Assembly of the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research on the goals and outlook for the newly formed Armenian Studies Program at Clark. The Assembly was held on Saturday afternoon, November 16, 2002, at the NAASR Center and Headquarters.

Payaslian began by noting that the Kaloosdian-Mugar Chair has one foot in the Department of History at Clark and one in the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies – literally so, in that the Chair maintains offices in both places. This is emblematic of the multidisciplinary perspective that Payaslian plans to bring to the position. “Being the holder of such a chair at Clark University thus provides one of the rare opportunities for a scholar to integrate various – tested and untested – perspectives into his classroom, campus, and community activities,” Payaslian said.

He then proceeded to discuss the Kaloosdian-Mugar Chair from three points of view: that of the community, the chairholder, and the students. He stressed that these three perspectives “must be discussed within the wider context of the nature and role of higher education in society – which in turn inevitably requires an explicit statement of one’s philosophy of higher education.” Payaslian stated his version of the “functional theory of education ... where the purpose of higher education is defined as conducting positive changes in human behavior, in institutional behavior, and changes in policy and priorities.”

Payaslian stated that the chair will work “in close cooperation with the community” to become “a regional, national, and international center for education on the Armenian Genocide and Armenian history” while also situating itself “in the wider intellectual, national, and international configuration of other disciplines – political science, economics, sociology, anthropology, psychology, theology, and so forth.”

Praising the massive efforts of such scholars as Richard Hovannisian and

Vahakn Dadrian in documenting the Armenian Genocide, Payaslian pointed out “the need to expand our approach to the study of the Genocide beyond this documentation paradigm – beyond the conceptual framework thus far delineated by the need to prove that there was a genocide.” The next generation of scholars of the Armenian Genocide must of course be familiar with the documentary work, but they also “should be able to integrate what they learn in their genocide courses, history courses, in political science,” and other courses. “Based on such a multidisciplinary training, the next generation of students should be able to develop various and new theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of genocide ... and ultimately to develop concrete and – one hopes – practical models for the prevention of genocide.”

25-Year Members Honored

Following Prof. Payaslian’s talk, NAASR Board Chairman Nancy R. Kolligian announced that two members were eligible for 25-year membership certificates: Vivian Portner of Silver Springs, MD, and Sylvia Agabian of East Walpole, MA.

Committee Reports and Chairman’s Address

After the announcement of 25-year members, reports were given by the chairmen of the Assembly’s special committees: Anna Bedirian of Watertown, Nominating; Mary Terzian Killelea of Cambridge, Constitution and Rules; Charles S. Sahagian of Needham, New Business and Resolutions; and Edward Der Kazarian of Watertown, Auditing. The Assembly was chaired by NAASR Board Chairman Nancy R. Kolligian of Watertown, and Van M. Aroian of Worcester served as Secretary of the Assembly.

Following the presentation of nominees to the NAASR Board of Directors, Board Chairman Kolligian reported on organizational highlights of the past year. She paid tribute to Chairman Emeritus Manoog S. Young of Belmont for his years of service and his assistance during the challenging period of transition and also expressed her appreciation to the Board members for their

support and commitment of both time and money.

She emphasized the importance of energetically seeking funds to allow NAASR to continue and expand its programs for the advancement of Armenian Studies. One of the most basic and fundamental ways of doing this is to increase NAASR’s membership base.

Thanking the NAASR staff and volunteers for their ongoing efforts, Kolligian cited such 2002 highpoints as the successful four-week course taught by Prof. James R. Russell of Harvard, “The Near East in the Mind of America: Cultural Relations Between American Literature and the Civilizations of Armenia and Its Neighbors”; the landmark October conference “Rethinking Armenian Studies: Past, Present, and Future”; and the continued success of NAASR’s lecture series. She announced the upcoming course on “The Long Twentieth Century in Armenian History” to be taught by Prof. Payaslian at NAASR in March-April 2003, and the intention to expand NAASR’s lectures beyond the Boston area.

Financial Report and Results of Election

Following Chairman Kolligian’s address, Chairman Emeritus Young delivered the financial report, and the results of the election of new officers were announced. Two new Directors were elected to the NAASR Board. The new Directors are: Stephen Kurkjian of Brookline, longtime reporter and current City Desk editor with *The Boston Globe*; and Dr. Suzanne Moranian of Winchester, Wellesley College historian and former Assistant Editor of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*.

Re-elected as Directors were Robert D. Bejoian of Cambridge; Anton Boghossian of Belmont; Dr. Vartkes L. Broussalian of Granada Hills, CA; Yervant Chekijian of Boston; Prof. Aram Karakashian of Waltham; Karen Kazariosian of Watertown; and Michael Kilijian of Fresno, CA.

The NAASR Board of Directors consists of 27 members who serve 3-year terms. There are Directors from the following states: California (4), Florida (1), Illinois (1), Massachusetts (16), Michi-

-- continued on page 3

Official Notice

49th Annual Assembly of Members

The 49th Annual Assembly of Members of the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, Inc., will be held on Saturday, Nov. 15, at 12 noon at the NAASR Center, for the following purposes:

(1) To receive and discuss reports from the Board of Directors; (2) to act on new business and resolutions presented for the consideration of the assembled members; (3) to elect Directors of the Association; and (4) to transact any other business which may properly come before the assembly.

All members in good standing, with dues paid for the current year, have the right to attend, be heard, and vote.

Prof. Paul Zimansky of Boston University will speak at the luncheon program prior to the Assembly on "Urartu and Armenian Origins." He is an expert on Urartu and the history and archeology of ancient Eastern Asia Minor.

48th Assembly (continued)

gan (1), New Jersey (1), New York (1), Rhode Island (1), and Virginia (1). There are also regional representatives appointed to represent NAASR in over 15 other sections of the country with major Armenian communities.

The Executive Committee of the Board of Directors, elected in a meeting subsequent to the Assembly, are Nancy R. Kolligian, Chairman; Raffi P. Yeghiayan of Lexington, First Vice-Chairman; Karen Kazarosian, Second Vice-Chairman; Van M. Aroian, Secretary; Robert D. Bejoian, Treasurer; Manoog S. Young and Anton Boghossian, Advisors.

The continuing Directors are Dr. Gregory H. Adamian of Medford; Dr. Joan Bamberger of Watertown; Berjoohy Hai-gazian of Mt. Laurel, NJ; Rev. Nersess Jebejian of Pinellas Park, FL; James Kalustian of Arlington; M. Hrair Karamanoukian of Hollywood, CA; Dr. Seda Keshishian of Lincoln; Mrs. Helen Mardigian of Bloomfield Village, MI; Jack M. Medzorian of Winchester; Armand K. Mirijanian of Morton Grove, IL; Dr. Moorad Mooradian of Providence Forge, VA; Bertha Mugurdichian of Providence, RI; Joyce Sulahian of New York, NY; and Charles J. Tateosian of Walnut Creek, CA.

Retiring from the Board of Directors this year were Dr. Vatche Ghazarian, now of Rhode Island, and Mrs. Debra Saryan of Andover.

News from the NAASR Headquarters

Valuable Paintings Donated

Dr. Samuel J. Andonian of Lincoln, MA, has generously donated fourteen original artworks to NAASR. The donation of these paintings, etchings, and drawings, with a value of over \$25,000, was arranged by Dr. Haig Nalbandian of Arlington. Most of the works are now on display in NAASR's lecture and meeting hall, where they have been enjoyed by visitors to NAASR and the staff. These works, which date from the 1930s to the 1990s, are all the work of leading Armenian artists, many of whom are little known in the United States but who have international standing.

Two of the artworks are shown here.



Haroutiun Hovannisian: "Arevod Or (Sunny Day)," 1958



Ruslan Sharbatian: "Two Women at a Table," 1979

NAASR Obtains Office Materials

NAASR member Houry Youssoufian facilitated the purchase at very substantial discounts of a high-speed laser printer, slide projector, overhead transparency projector, bookcase, vertical and horizontal file cabinets, stackable office chairs, and other useful office materials when her employer, BioTransplant Incorporated, liquidated office supplies before moving to new quarters. The chairs are in use for NAASR lectures and replace older, less comfortable ones.

Panel Discussion on *Ararat* Highlights NAASR Lecture Series

NAASR's popular lecture series continued to attract top-notch speakers and draw large audiences in late-2002-2003 with an interesting and varied array of programs.

Unquestionably the highlight was the December 12 panel discussion "Atom Egoyan's *Ararat*: The Film and Its Politics," which included Prof. James R. Russell, Mashtots Professor of Armenian Studies at Harvard University; Wesley Morris, film critic with the *Boston Globe*; independent film producers Paul Boghosian and Alexis Alexanian; Prof. Sharon Rivo, Director of the National Center for Jewish Film at Brandeis University; and Lara Setrakian, President of the Harvard University Armenian Society. Marc A. Mamigonian, Publications Director of NAASR, served as moderator for the evening. The event was co-sponsored by NAASR and the Armenian Assembly of America's New England Regional Council.

An audience of some 250 people crowded into the First Armenian Church assembly hall, across the street from NAASR, for a memorable evening that shed light on many aspects of the film, from its historical background to observations on the movie industry and *Ararat*'s chances for commercial success.

Each member of the panel brought unique insight to the discussion: Paul Boghosian had recently interviewed Egoyan and his wife Arsine Khanjian; Alexis Alexanian has enjoyed success and heartbreak as a producer of films that have struggled to reach a mainstream audience; Sharon Rivo provided illuminating contrasts and comparisons to films dealing with the Holocaust; Wesley Morris brought his vast knowledge of contemporary films to bear in his comments; Lara Setrakian spoke movingly from the perspective of a young person seeing the lost world of pre-1915 Armenia on screen for the first time; and James Russell mixed his incomparable knowledge of Armenian life and cul-

ture with powerful personal reflections on how the film affected him.

In addition to the questions posed to the panelists by the moderator, the audience had a virtually endless number of questions and comments that reflected how deeply the community has been touched by this extraordinary film - even those who did not like the film had much to say about it.

The appearance of *Ararat* - the first commercial film to deal with Armenian Genocide - is a major historical event in the Armenian diaspora. It is rare that the opportunity arises to summon a group of experts to discuss a phenomenon as it is unfolding, but



Participants in the *Ararat* panel. From left: Lara Setrakian, James Russell, Wesley Morris, Paul Boghosian, Sharon Rivo, Marc Mamigonian, and Alexis Alexanian. Photo by Bob Pushkar.

the *Ararat* panel discussion was just such an occasion. After the discussion had ended, Prof. Russell commented that it was one of the best events he had ever participated in, and there was no one to contradict him.

Old Love and New Art: Nahapet Kuchak in St. Petersburg

On Thursday, February 13, Prof. James Russell and Khachatur Haroutiunyan celebrated in words and images the poetry of Nahapet Kuchak. The lecture began with a brief overview by Russell of the longstanding and significant presence of Armenians in St. Petersburg, Russia. He spoke with deep affection of his personal connections with the Armenian community of St.

Petersburg, which he visits and lectures before frequently.

Noting that Kuchak's work is both stylistically and linguistically diverse, Russell read and analyzed about half of the 25 poems for which he had supplied printouts of his translations alongside the Armenian text. In addition to exploring the themes and imagery of the poems, Russell delved into the details of the language - i.e., the Armenian language - employed by Kuchak and found echoes from ancient "Birth of Vahagn," the epic of Sasun, Persian and Turkish poetry, and countless other sources.

Following Prof. Russell's presentation he turned the microphone over to Khachatur Haroutiunyan who, with Russell serving as interpreter, spoke about their collaboration and the challenges of creating artworks that match the spirit of the poetry. He discussed the improvisatory nature of his paintings as well as the challenges of verbalizing his feelings about both poetry and visual arts, both of which engender emotional as well as intellectual responses.

Armenian Artists of Constantinople: Late 19th to Early 20th Centuries

The late 19th - early 20th century was a period of enormous creative energy in Armenian culture, and nowhere was this more apparent than in the world of Armenian painters active in Constantinople. Prof. Levon Chookaszian' illustrated lecture on February 27, provided a window into this vital time and place. Chookaszian is the UNESCO Professor of Armenian Art History at Yerevan State University and a frequent lecturer at NAASR.

This era was brought to an abrupt and tragic conclusion by the Armenian Genocide in 1915, and many of the

-- continued on page 5

Lecture Series (continued)

names and works of these masters have been forgotten in the diaspora; yet even today their paintings are sold in auctions in Istanbul.

Chookaszian showed slides of some of the remarkable works by Arshag Fetvajian, Zakare Zakarian, Tigran Yesayan, and Zareh Galfaian, among others.

The biographies and legacy of these artists are ripe for exploration and re-discovery, and Chookaszian's lecture provided an all-too-rare opportunity to experience a great period in Armenian art with a guide who is well-versed in the milieu and with the spectrum of Armenian artistic achievements.

Images of the Armenian Spirit

Award-winning documentary filmmaker Andrew Goldberg spoke about his newest work, *Images of the Armenian Spirit*, on Tuesday, April 22, in a program in commemoration of the Armenian Genocide. Goldberg's earlier two films on Armenian subjects, *The Armenian Americans* and *The Armenians: A Story of Survival*, have been broadcast throughout the U.S. on PBS and around the world, bringing the Armenian story to an audience of unprecedented size.

Goldberg discussed the challenges of creating his films, the positive response they have received from their nationwide broadcasts, and the opposition he received from the Turkish embassy.

He also showed remarkable footage of Armenian refugees in Greece, Palestine, and Lebanon shot shortly after the Genocide for use in a German documentary that has not been seen in 80 years or more. Portions of this footage will be used in *Images of the Armenian Spirit*. Goldberg stated that his ultimate goal is to create a lengthy documentary on the Armenian Genocide that will reach a similarly large audience as his previous films.

Dreams of Bread and Fire

Nancy Kricorian, author of the best-selling novel *Zabelle*, discussed the creation of her second book, *Dreams of Bread and Fire*, on Tuesday evening, June 3. She was in Boston as part of a multi-city book tour on the East Coast to promote her new novel, but her appearance at NAASR was her only one at an Armenian organization in the area.

As both an author and someone who has worked in the publishing business, Kricorian was able to provide insights into the business of marketing a book to a mainstream audience. With book sales down dramatically in recent years, it is "near miracle" that after five years *Zabelle* is still in print in paperback, "and it's in print because of Armenians" buying it, she said. She is hoping, of course, to enjoy similar success with *Dreams of Bread and Fire* "to convince my publisher that it is worthwhile to buy my next book."

Her next book "will be a novel about the Armenian community of Paris during the Nazi occupation." She is currently doing research - taking notes, creating backgrounds for the characters, etc. - and the writing of the plot comes last. "The best part of being a writer is writing," she says, and readers are the beneficiaries of her talent.



Author Nancy Kricorian.

Distinguished Visitors (continued from page 1)

potential for increased and ongoing exchanges was a key to improving the situation. Ordway was optimistic that meetings with interested and involved parties would help him gain a better understanding of the issues and pledged to do everything in his power to create strong working relationships between the Republic and the diaspora.

On June 10 a delegation of members of Armenia's Nationwide Cultural and Historic Preservation Group visited NAASR, touring the library and bookstore and meeting with Director of Publications Marc A. Mamigonian before enjoying lunch.

The group was in the U.S. for a 3-week visit as part of the Cambridge-Yerevan Sister City Association's

Community Connections project. Dr. Ara Ghazarian served as project manager and accompanied the group to NAASR and served as translator. NAASR and CYSCA board member Jack Medzorian also took part in the discussion as the group talked about their work and the challenges they face and eagerly asked questions about NAASR's ongoing work.

Researchers in NAASR Library

In the summer of 2003 a pair of Ph.D. candidates spent a number of days conducting research in NAASR's Library. Asbed Kotchikian of Boston University, a specialist in Armenian and Georgian foreign policy, in addition to his own research was doing fieldwork for Prof. Gerard Libaridian who is in the process of finishing a new book on modern Armenian history.

Ben Alexander, who is a Ph.D. candidate in American History at the City University of New York made two trips to NAASR in July to explore its holdings of personal papers, books, and periodicals relevant to his work on Armenian immigrant life from circa 1915 to 1950. Of special interest to Alexander were NAASR's collections of the papers of Avedis Derounian and Charles Vertanes. He is currently writing a dissertation on Armenian immigrant life in America from after the Genocide to the 1950s.

First-Time Visitors Leave a Mark

Visiting NAASR for the first time in May was Maida G. Domenie of Naples, Florida, who is on the board of directors of the Armenian-American Cultural Society of Southwest Florida. Domeni was so pleased with her visit to NAASR, especially the Armenian Book Clearing House, that she not only became a NAASR member but also arranged for the Cultural Society to make a monetary contribution to NAASR.

Mr. Aftab B. Butt, owner of Fatima's Rug Gallery in Wellesley, had heard about NAASR and called to say that he wished to come visit and make a financial contribution. He was sufficiently impressed with his experience at NAASR that he made a contribution of nearly \$10,000. Such generosity may be unexpected, but it is warmly appreciated!

Book Donations and Ongoing Work in Armenian Research and Reference Library

The ongoing reorganization of the Edward and Helen Mardigian Reference and Research Library continues to make this important collection of primarily Armenian and English language books, pamphlets, periodicals, and personal papers available to scholars and the public.

For example, an up-to-date listing of both Armenian and English-language periodicals, as well as an improved arrangement of the periodicals themselves, now allows much easier access than has been possible heretofore.

A similar undertaking is under way for the library's books and papers. To that end, the NAASR Board recently approved the allocation of funds for the Winnebago library cataloging system currently being used by the Armenian Library and Museum of America and the Armenian Cultural Foundation, which will ultimately allow for the linking of these important libraries.

In addition NAASR is actively seeking library science interns who will perform the vital task of generating a computerized catalogue of the library's holdings.

Donations List

Since the last listing of donations received, the following members and friends have helped to add to the depth and breadth of the NAASR Library's collection (* = additional donation; + = major collection).

Gregory H. Adamian, Medford
 Seta Buchter+, Winchester
 Prof. Clive Foss, Georgetown Univ., Washington, D.C.
 Alice Najarian Foley, Worcester
 Arshag Gechijian [in memory of mother Nartoohy Gechijian], Belmont
 Izmirlian Foundation, Switzerland
 Sandra L. Jurigian, Waltham
 Nazely (Nancy) Kalayjian, Belmont
 Levon Karageuzian, Watertown
 Araksi Keoroglian, Belmont
 Gayane Makhmourian, Yerevan, Armenia
 Patriarch Torkom Manoogian, Jerusalem, Israel
 Joanne Peterson, Brookline
 Arthur Sahagian, Skokie, IL
 Sahag Sahagian, Salem
 * Helen Sahagian, Arlington
 St. Gregory the Enlightener Armenian Church (Rev. Karin Kasparian), White Plains, NY
 Harry Sogigian, Worcester
 Prof. Albert Stepanyan, Yerevan, Armenia
 Loucine Szentendrey, Binghamton, NY

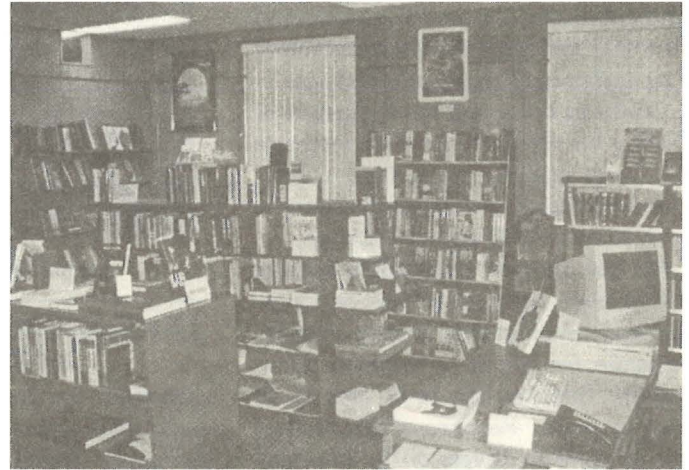
NAASR Bookstore Has New Look, New Technology

Thanks to a generous donation by longtime NAASR member and former board member Shushan Teager of Belmont and the efforts of NAASR staff member Lana Jurigian, the Armenian Book Clearing House has a new, improved look. Teager gave NAASR a free-standing bookshelf unit handmade by her late husband, Dr. Herbert Teager, which had been in her home for several decades.

Because of the remarkable number of titles on Armenian and related subjects that come out year after year, it had become increasingly difficult to display properly the books and other items in the store. With the new unit, however, which allows for the display of the maximum number of books in a relatively small amount of space, the situation has been rectified considerably.

"This is something we have been wanting to do for a long time," said NAASR Board Chairman Nancy R. Kolligian, "only we weren't sure how to make it happen. Shushan Teager's generosity came at an opportune time." NAASR still hopes to expand the Armenian Book Clearing House in the not-too-distant future, but by maximizing the current space this step has been forestalled. Visitors to the bookstore have been quick to note the dramatic improvement.

At the same time, the NAASR bookstore has taken a much-needed step forward and now accepts Mastercard and Visa, both in the bookstore and for over-the-phone orders. (Credit card orders cannot be placed through the NAASR website, although customers can get price and catalog information through www.naasr.org.)



The newly reconfigured NAASR bookstore.

If you or someone you know has books in Armenian, English, or other languages on Armenian or related subjects that you are thinking of discarding, please donate them to NAASR's Armenian Reference and Research Library.

The core of the library's collection has come from donors like you who have helped make it one of the finest and largest of its kind in America.

No collection is too big or too small - contact NAASR if you have any questions.

All gifts to NAASR are tax deductible. Keep the Armenian Heritage alive - give to NAASR.

NAASR Co-Founder Arra Avakian Publishes First Novel

Dr. Arra S. Avakian, one of the original three founders of NAASR, has published his first novel, *The Eaglet*, a work of historical fiction set in the turbulent fifth century A.D.

The Armenian nation, a feudal state in the midst of its second century of state-sanctioned Christianity, is under the political domination of the neighboring Persian Empire. The Persian monarch, a zealous Zoroastrian, seeks to tear the nation away from its Christian faith to worship the pagan god of the monarch.

Armenia is a loose alliance of about twenty principalities, each led by a princely house with its own militia. A semblance of unity exists through the presence of a central Church led by a Catholicos who gives strong spiritual leadership. That loose alliance is held together politically by the nominal authority of one of the princes who has been designated by the Persian monarch as marzpan or governor of the nation.

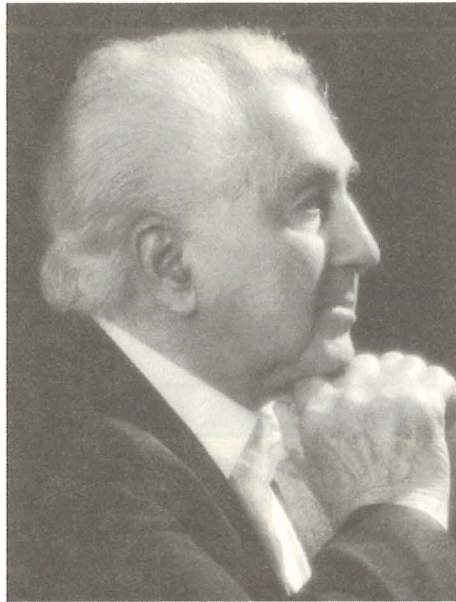
The Persian monarch issues an ultimatum to the nation, but the Church, with the strong support of the princes, spurns the demand. However, a few of the princes, led by the marzpan, are weak in their faith. Fearing the monarch's threat of death and destruction over the lands of the nation, they urge compliance, though nominal, with the monarch's demands.

The nation is thus torn into two.

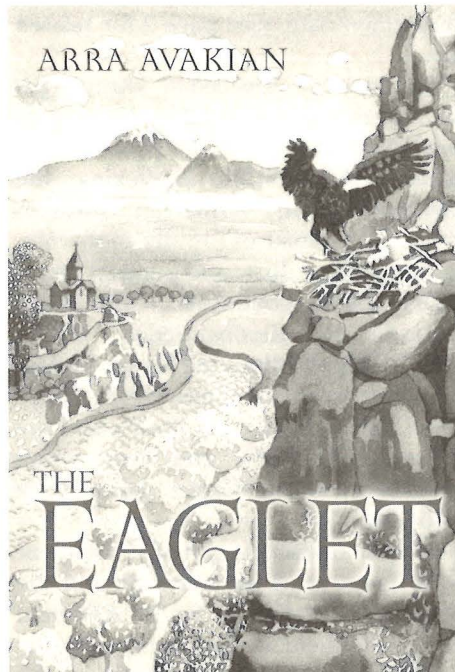
The Arzuni princely house, strong in faith, visits the influential Paluni princely house that favors compliance, hoping to seek a strong national unity of defiance of the Persian monarch's demands. But the aging prince Paluni is unwilling to support defiance. However, his wife and his beautiful young daughter Anait are troubled by his weakened faith.

During the visit of the two princely houses the young prince Arev, of the Arzuni house, falls in love with the charming Anait. They recognize that the conflict between their families is a thorn in their relationship.

The national crisis leads to direct confrontations between the princes of the nation and the Persian king of



Dr. Arra S. Avakian (above) and the cover of *The Eaglet* (below).



kings, to conflicts of principles, to disruptive misunderstandings, to political and romantic personal clashes, to a definitive battle between the hastily mobilized national army and the superior Persian army; to heroic actions, and to a final resolution of the national and personal issues.

Dr. Dennis R. Papazian, Professor of History and Director of the Armenian

Research Center at the University of Michigan at Dearborn, says of *The Eaglet* that "while the book is presented as a novel, and it certainly is a good one, it also illuminates a place, an era, and a people rich in lore and historicity. It is a must-read for those who want a mental picture of fifth-century Armenia."

Arra Avakian has been deeply involved in Armenian community life and in the study of the Armenian culture for most of his life.

He graduated from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and on completing graduate studies there in 1935, was awarded the degree of Doctor of Science in mathematics. For many years he served with distinction in scientific research and engineering, and technical management, especially in the area of aerospace technology.

In 1940, he entered military service in the development of special weapons. He attained the rank of Colonel.

Dr. Avakian was appointed Professor of Armenian Studies at California State University, Fresno, in 1970. Several years later, he took a similar position at the newly formed American Armenian International College in LaVerne, California. He continues to maintain a highly visible profile in the dissemination of knowledge of the Armenian cultural heritage through his authorship of newspaper and magazine articles and his public lectures on Armenian subjects. His book *The Armenians in America* is used as a reference text in public schools. He has made a specialty of translating Armenian works, books, and articles into English. His most recent published work is his book, *Armenia: A Journey Through History*.

In addition to his vital role in NAASR, Dr. Avakian has held national leadership positions in such organizations as the Armenian Students' Association of America, the Armenian Assembly, the Knights of Vartan, and the Armenian Church at parish, diocesan, and worldwide levels.

Dr. Avakian is married to the former Georgia Keosaian of New York. They now make their home in Fresno, California.

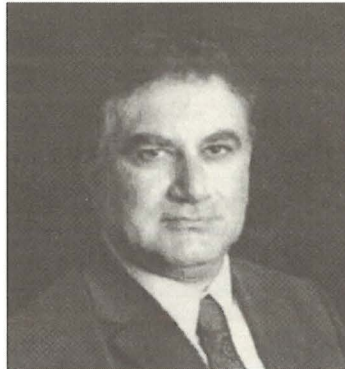
Adult Education (continued)

uniquely American writers, was deeply influenced by "the visionary and philosophical traditions" of the ancient Near East.

In four weeks Russell covered the impact of Near Eastern Gnosticism and Hermeticism and other early Christian movements that flourished in Armenia, the influence of Manicheism and Mithraism on dissident Protestant groups and Freemasonry – which helped shape the works of Emerson, Thoreau, and through them the course of 19th century reformism, the legend of the Wandering Jew – who is actually Armenian or from Armenia in some accounts – and its influence on Melville and Poe, and a wealth of other topics.

In his 2003 course, Russell examined three of the most influential forces on Armenian culture in the ancient world: the Syrian, which shaped the development of Armenian belief systems and brought Gnostic philosophy to Armenia; the Hellenic, primarily through the early Classical Armenian translations of Hermetic and Neoplatonic texts whose modes of thought profoundly affected Armenian culture; and the Persian, primarily through the image of the hero projected in oral poetry.

The texts of both of Prof. Russell's courses are available on the NAASR website, www.naasr.org, under "Online Texts."



Prof. Simon Payaslian.

Over the course of five weeks in March and April 2003, Prof. Simon Payaslian offered a lively and thought-provoking overview of the last century in Armenian history, with occasional forays into earlier eras. Payaslian is the newest Armenian Studies chairholder, at Clark University. (See page 2 for related story.)

The lectures proceeded chronologically, beginning with "The Great National Awakening and the Politics of Illusions (1890s-1915)", surveying the emergence of the Armenian Question within the context of rapidly modernizing Armenian culture and political life.

The course continued with "From Genocide to Reconstruction (1915-1945)," "Repatriation, the Great Divide, and Diasporan Dilemmas (1945-1965)," "The Crisis of Soviet Legitimacy and the Diaspora (1965-1985)," and "From Soviet Perestroika to Armenian Sovereignty (1985-2003)."

Payaslian discussed the development of the first Armenian Republic and the subsequent creation of Soviet Armenia; the development of the worldwide Armenian diaspora; relations between the Soviet Republic and the diaspora; the eventual collapse of Soviet power; and the extraordinary events that led to the creation of the current Republic.

Throughout the five weeks the class of nearly forty people engaged in lively and informative discussions with Payaslian, who encouraged dialogue on the sometimes controversial subject matter he covered in the course. He plans to publish a history of modern Armenia in the near future.

NAASR ISSUES STATEMENT ON POLICY REGARDING LECTURES

The Executive Committee of the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) has issued the following statement regarding lectures at its National Center and Headquarters in Belmont, MA. The statement reads:

At a recent lecture of the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) on June 12, "Armenian Language and Studies: A Look to the Future," by Prof. Bert Vaux, formerly of Harvard University, statements and remarks were made by the lecturer about Harvard's Armenian Studies chairholder James R. Russell. These remarks were of a personal and/or political nature and were beyond the scope of the announced lecture topic. NAASR regrets that these remarks were made in a NAASR-sponsored forum and wishes to make clear that they should not be construed as reflecting the views of the organization.

Remarks of an intemperate, inappropriate, and personal nature are regrettable and cannot be condoned, especially when the subject of the remarks is not present to respond or defend himself. NAASR supports the frank and open discussion of all topics relevant to Armenian Studies provided it is conducted in a professional and scholarly manner. However, at this lecture the audience was not given a balanced view but instead was presented with selective facts and at times inaccurate statements about Prof. Russell, as well as comments by him taken entirely out of context.

We wish to restate to members, friends, lecture attendees, and the general public that NAASR is a non-partisan and non-political organization dedicated to the furtherance of Armenian Studies and does not necessarily agree with views expressed by invited lecturers.

Anyone wishing further information about NAASR should consult its website (www.naasr.org).

NAASR Newsletter

ISSN 0890-3794



National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, Inc.

395 Concord Avenue
Belmont, MA 02478
Tel.: 617-489-1610
Fax: 617-484-1759
E-Mail: hq@naasr.org
Web: www.naasr.org

Marc A. Mamigonian
Director of Publications