

The National Association for Armenian Studies and Research

NAASR Co-Sponsors California Lecture Tour by Author Dr. David Gaunt

NAASR, in conjunction with a number of Armenian and Assyrian academic and community groups, co-sponsored a highly successful lecture tour by Stockholm-based scholar Dr. David Gaunt, author of the ground-breaking study *Masacres, Resistance, Protectors: Muslim-Christian Relations in Eastern Anatolia during World War I* (Gorgias Press, 2006). Speaking frequently to overflow crowds between May 3-11 at Stanford, Berkeley, Turlock, Fresno, and the Los Angeles area, Gaunt commented, "I am not used to such attention back home—so it might go to my head if I were



younger. It has been a very, very, very good experience."

An account of the final stop on Gaunt's tour appeared in the May 19 issue of *The Armenian Reporter* and is reprinted on page 2 with their permission.

New Armenian Studies Chairholder Announced at 53rd NAASR Assembly

The 53rd Annual Assembly of NAASR Members was convened on Saturday, May 5, 2007, at the NAASR Center. In addition to its elections and business sessions the highlight of the Assembly was the announcement of the appointment of Dr. Simon Payaslian to be the first Kenosian Professor of Armenian History and Literature at Boston University.

The exciting announcement was made during the luncheon program, which featured a talk by Dr. Jeffrey Henderson, Dean of the College and Graduate School of Arts and Sciences at Boston University, entitled "Armenian Studies at Boston University: The Vision of a New Program."

Following an introduction by NAASR Chairman Nancy R. Kolligian, Dr. Henderson gave an overview of BU's extraordinary growth and development over the past thirty-five years. He then recognized the generosity and vision of the new Armenian professorship's benefactors, the late Charles Kenosian, who received his Ph.D. from Boston University in 1960 and taught there for many years, and his sister Elisabeth, who graduated from Boston University in 1951 and was present at the NAASR Assembly.

"[Charles] thought that it would be great if his university could enrich its curriculum with the study of an important culture and an increasingly important world community," said Henderson, and it had "long bothered Charles that Americans know so little about Armenia's history and heritage."

Henderson also paid tribute to the pioneering role of NAASR in spearheading the development of Armenian Studies in American universities in the 1950s and 1960s and helping to create what is now "an established field." He also saluted Haig Der Manuelian, a close friend and legal consultant to the Kenosians as well as a NAASR Founder, in planning the BU program, which will function on both the undergraduate and graduate levels and will "embrace not only Armenia but also Armenian communities worldwide ... [and] have a modern (i.e., post-1750) focus."

A search was announced to fill the position in the fall of 2006. Henderson then surprised the audience by announcing the completion of the process and the appointment of Dr. Payaslian. Payaslian has been the first occupant of the Robert Aram and Marianne Kaloosdian and Stephen and Marianne Mugar Chair in Armenian Genocide and Modern Armenian Studies



NAASR Chairman Nancy R. Kolligian presents BU Dean Jeffrey Henderson with the book *The Armeniad*.

at Clark University since 2002. (It is worth noting that Payaslian's first area lecture after his appointment was at NAASR's 48th Annual Assembly.) He is the author most recently of *United States Policy Towards the Armenian Question and the Armenian Genocide* (2005).

After Henderson's talk, Chairman Kolligian invited Payaslian to offer some remarks. He explained that when Dean Henderson had told him that he planned to make the announcement at the NAASR Assembly, he had replied that "this was really the most perfect place for this announcement. NAASR is my intellectual home. I've given many lectures here, so when he mentioned NAASR I said 'Go for it!'"

Chairman Kolligian also called upon Haig Der

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David Gaunt Discusses Massacres and Resistance

The Armenian Reporter, May 19, 2007

Arin Mikailian
Sherman Oaks, Calif.

Genocide historian Professor David Gaunt, speaking at the Merdinian Armenian Christian School on May 11, shed some light on the massacres of Assyrians and Armenians during the First World War. The lecture was the last stop in California for his series, "Massacres and Resistance: The Genocide of the Armenians and Assyrians Based on New Evidence from the Archives."

The event was sponsored by the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR), the Assyrian American National Federation (AANF), and the Analysis Research and Planning for Armenia (ARPA) Institute.

Gaunt's speech included evidence he found through his own research in Ottoman archives in Istanbul. By piecing together a timeline with actual documents, Gaunt said he hoped to get a better idea of how certain individuals thought and communicated during this dark time in history.

"I'm more of a social historian than a political historian," he said. "My intention in doing this was to be more of a natural scientist and to see how many different kinds of documentation you can find in such a small area to see who are the perpetrators, instigators, planners, what are the motivations that are going through their heads, and how are people reacting."

Before diving into his research findings, Gaunt gave a little background on Turkey in 1915 and in the years before and after. Turkey was a melting pot, he said, with Assyrians and Armenians scattered throughout the empire. Ministers of the interior, including Talaat Pasha, forced minorities, including Armenians and Assyrians, to move. No village was to have more than two dozen individuals from a single minority, Gaunt said.

"This means it's impossible to keep your culture and religion," said Gaunt. "Not being in contact with your religious leader, it's very probable that you convert over to Islam in order to have some kind of religious life."

In 1915 Russia and Turkey were at war. Russian forces—Russian-Armenians among them—achieved an astonishing victory at the Battle of Dilman on May 2. Gaunt said this frightened the Turkish government and a mas-

sacre of Armenian and Assyrian Christians ensued.

Gaunt said that the Russian press kept records of the massacres. "Armenian journalists writing in the Russian press wrote about both the Armenians and Assyrians," he said. "It was a fairly amazing document."

Gaunt then moved on to demonstrating the importance of how documentation has kept the images of genocide alive for generations.

He discussed the manuscript, "The Calamities of the Christians," written by Ishaq Armalto, an Assyrian priest who chronicled the slaughters of villagers in the town of Mardin in June 1915.

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pages, was a description of another Catholic priest Ignace Maloyan, and his last days of life.

Gaunt said the head of the Turkish Historical Society, Yusuf Halacoglu, dismissed the theory and claimed they were remains from the Roman Empire.

But on the day Gaunt hoped to conduct a scientific investigation, he found the location of the grave empty, with only a few bones remaining.

Gaunt said the matter left him without a means to conduct an investigation and reach a credible solution.

While the site was questionably evacuated and Gaunt had become subject to ridicule in some Turkish newspapers, some individuals are starting to side with his skepticism about what really happened to the remains.

"I've managed to get a few journalists on my side," he said.

After the speech, some audience members said they felt more informed about a part of history about which they didn't know too much.

"I'm glad that people are talking about what he's talking about, I want to know more and come to future lectures about it," said Virginia Karnik, 33. "Our great grandparents are slowly dying and soon will not be around to tell us what happened in that part of history. We need to have that connection to the past."



Left to right, George Kiraz of Gorgias Press, Dr. Eden Naby, Dr. David Gaunt, Nancy R. Kolligian, George Stifo of the United Assyrian Association of Mass.

pages, was a description of another Catholic priest Ignace Maloyan, and his last days of life.

Gaunt discussed how Armalto described how Maloyan was framed by Turks who planted weapons in his church so he could be accused of aiding the Russians.

"No other book is as complete about the destruction of the Armenian community," said Gaunt.

Gaunt then talked about another priest who set up an orphanage in the city of Van after it was devastated by the Young Turks.

Gaunt said his account gave a numerical account of Armenians and Assyrians before and after the massacre.

Prior to the killings, there were 10,500 Ar-

52nd Annual Assembly: Elections and Amendment

The results of the elections held at the 52nd Annual Assembly on November 18, 2006, were as follows: re-elected to the Board of Directors were Gregory H. Adamian, Nancy R. Kolligian, Jack M. Medzorian, and Raffi P. Yeghiayan from Greater Boston; Daniel G. Adamian from New York; and Armand K. Mirijanian from the Middle West (Illinois). Newly-elected to the Board were Frances Weisberg from the Middle Atlantic (VA); Dr. Rubina Peroomian and Bruce Roat from Southern California; and Anne E. Elbrecht from Northern California. We welcome the new Board members and also wish to thank retiring members Dr. Simon J. Simonian (Middle Atlantic), Dr. Jonathan Vargabedian (Southern California), and Charles Tateosian (Northern California).

A resolution was also introduced and approved by 2/3 of those members present at the Assembly to amend the NAASR Constitution by reducing from three to two the required number of years as a NAASR member before being eligible to become a member of the Board of Directors. Subsequently, in keeping with Article XII, Section 1 of the Constitution, this was submitted to the general membership and was ratified after more than 2/3 of the total votes were in favor of the amendment.

2007 NAASR Board of Directors



Members of the NAASR Board of Directors:
Standing, left to right: Robert D. Bejoian, Leon Janikian, Stephen A. Kurkjian, Dr. Suzanne E. Moranian, Bruce W. Roat, Roxanne Etmekjian, Dr. Aram S. Karakashian, Yervant Chekijian.
Seated, left to right, Van M. Aroian, Anne E. Elbrecht, Raffi P. Yeghiayan, Nancy R. Kolligian, Gregory L. Aftandilian, Manoog S. Young, Bertha Mugurdichian, Shushan M. Teager

New Armenian Studies Chairholder Announced at NAASR Assembly

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Manuelian to speak, and he was effusive in his praise of Boston University for the handling of the negotiations to create the chair; and he hailed the Kenosians for having the vision and the generosity to make it happen.

Following the luncheon, those attending the Assembly heard reports about NAASR's ongoing efforts to further Armenian studies, research, and publication, as well as the reports of the Assembly's special committees on Nominations,

Constitution and Rules, New Business and Resolutions, and Auditing. The chairmen of the special committees were Stephen Kurkjian of Manomet, Nominating; Aram Karakashian of Waltham, Constitution and Rules; Roxanne Etmekjian of West Newton, New Business and Resolutions; and Edward Der Kazarian of Watertown, Auditing.

In addition, Chairman Kolligian announced that one member was eligible for a 25-year membership certificate: Mrs. Peter B. Hagopian of Andover.

RESULTS OF ELECTIONS

Newly-elected to the NAASR Board of Directors were Luder Tavitt Saha-

gian of Needham, MA, who thus replaces retiring member James M. Kalustian of Arlington, who has served since 1995. Members who were re-elected are Van M. Aroian of Worces-



Left to Right: Haig Der Manuelian, Elisabeth Kenosian, Dr. Simon Payaslian, Dr. Jeffrey Henderson, Nancy R. Kolligian

ter, Dr. Seda E. Keshishian of Lincoln, Shushan M. Teager of Belmont, and Manoog S. Young of Belmont; Bertha Mugurdichian of Providence, RI; Anna Marie Norehad of Glenview, IL; and Marta Batmasian of Boca Raton, FL.

The members of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors, elected in a meeting subsequent to the Assembly, are Nancy R. Kolligian, Chairman; Raffi P. Yeghiayan, First Vice-Chairman; Jack M. Medzorian, Second Vice-Chairman; Van M. Aroian, Secretary; Robert D. Bejoian, Treasurer; Roxanne Etmekjian, Assistant Treasurer; and Stephen A. Kurkjian, Assistant Secretary.

Why Were Two Assemblies Held Six Months Apart?

Many people have asked why there was an Annual Assembly held in May 2007 when one had just taken place in November 2006. The answer is that a decision was made to return to the original policy of holding the Assembly in May or June of each year if possible. For a number of years it was necessary to push the Assembly to October or November, but due to improvements and streamlining of our financial record-keeping it was deemed appropriate to return to holding the Assembly in the late spring.

2006-2007 NAASR Lecture Series

In 2006 and 2007 NAASR significantly expanded its lectures and programs both in the Boston area, at the NAASR Center in Belmont and other venues, and other parts of the country, offering a remarkable variety of lecturers and subjects. The increased emphasis in recent years on bringing NAASR's programs to areas outside of Boston and collaborating with other Armenian and non-Armenian entities paid significant dividends as successful events took place in Connecticut, New York, and California.

We present here our own accounts of the lectures that have taken place since our 50th anniversary celebration last September as well as a number as printed in the Armenian-American press. These accounts will continue and conclude in the next issue of the Newsletter.

The following is a listing of all NAASR programs held between October 2006 and June 2007:

OCTOBER 10

Gregory Aftandilian, "The Armenian Lobby Then and Now: The 1918-27 Period and the Present Day," at the NAASR Center.

OCTOBER 22

Dr. Levon Chookaszian, "Armenian-Crusader Artistic Relations," an illustrated lecture, at the Armenian Church of Our Saviour, Worcester, MA.

OCTOBER 26

Zeynep Turan, "Objects of Legacy: Material Culture and Post-1915 Armenian Cultural Identity in Diaspora," at the NAASR Center.

NOVEMBER 9

Dr. Isabel Kaprielian-Churchill, "The Armenians in Canada and the U.S.: A Borderless Diaspora," at the NAASR Center.

NOVEMBER 18

Dr. Razmik Panossian, "Armenian National Identity: A Historical Analysis for the 21st Century," at the NAASR Center as part of NAASR's 52nd Annual Assembly of Members.

DECEMBER 3

Van Aroian, "A World in Transition: Armenians in the Ottoman Photographs Collection of the Getty Museum," at the Ararat-Eskijian Museum in Mission Hills, CA. Co-sponsored by NAASR and the Ararat-Eskijian Museum.

DECEMBER 6

Gregory Aftandilian, "The Armenian Lobby Then and Now: The 1918-27 Period and the

Present Day," at the Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs. Co-sponsored by NAASR and the Columbia Armenian Students Club.

DECEMBER 7

Dr. David Gaunt, "Massacres and Resistance: The Genocide of the Armenians and Assyrians Based on New Evidence from the Archives," at the NAASR Center. Co-sponsored by NAASR and the United Assyrian Association of New England.

FEBRUARY 1

Stephen Kurkjian, "Report from Istanbul: The Funeral of Hrant Dink and Its Aftermath," at the First Armenian Church, Belmont, MA.

FEBRUARY 2

Dr. Richard G. Hovannisian, "The Changing Landscape of Historic Western Armenia: Reflections on a Journey Into the Past," at the First Armenian Church, Belmont, MA.

MARCH 4

Sona Zeitlian, "Armenian Pioneers and Statesmen of Egypt," at the Ararat-Eskijian Museum in Mission Hills, CA. Co-sponsored by NAASR and the Ararat-Eskijian Museum.

MARCH 14

Dr. Taner Akçam, "A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility," at Harvard University's Center for Government and International Studies. Co-sponsored by NAASR, the Zoryan Institute for Contemporary Armenian

Research and Documentation, the Harvard Armenian Society, the Mashtots Chair in Armenian Studies at Harvard University, and the Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies at Harvard.

MARCH 17

Van Aroian, "A World in Transition: Armenians in the Ottoman Photographs Collection of the Getty Museum," at St. George Armenian Church, Hartford, CT. Co-sponsored by NAASR and St. George's Church.

APRIL 25

Screening of Apo Torosyan's video documentary *Voices*, with special presentation by Turkish publisher Ragıp Zarakolu, at the NAASR Center.

MAY 3-11

Lectures by Dr. David Gaunt in California. Co-sponsored by the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) and the Assyrian American National Federation (AANF) in conjunction with a number of Armenian and Assyrian academic and community groups, including the Armenian Studies programs at Fresno, Berkeley, and both Armenian Studies chairs at UCLA.

MAY 17

An Evening with Novelist Antonia Arslan, author of *Skylark Farm*, at the NAASR Center. Co-sponsored by NAASR and Hamazkayin Armenian Cultural and Educational Society, Boston Chapter.

MAY 23

Screening of *Rouben Mamoulian: The Golden Age of Hollywood and Broadway*, by filmmaker Patrick Cazals, at the Armenian Library and Museum of America (ALMA). Co-sponsored by NAASR, ALMA, and the Armenian Dramatic Arts Alliance.

JUNE 7

Dr. Christina Maranci, "Architectural Models in Medieval Armenia: The Church in Miniature," at the NAASR Center. Lecture in memory of the late Arshag Merguerian.

JUNE 14

Dr. H. Martin Deranian, "Miracle Man of the Western Front: Dr. Varaztad H. Kazanjian, Pioneer Plastic Surgeon," at the NAASR Center.

NAASR LECTURE SUMMARIES

Zeynep Turan: Objects of Legacy

Zeynep Turan, a Ph.D. candidate in Environmental Psychology at the City University of New York, gave a lecture entitled "Objects of Legacy: Material Culture and Post-1915 Armenian Cultural Identity in Diaspora" on October 26 at the NAASR Center. Turan is in the final year of a doctoral program in Environmental Psychology at CUNY. A native of Izmir, Turkey, she is focusing her research on the effects of displacement on Armenians, Greeks, and Palestinians, as well as others forced to flee their homelands, and their descendants.

Environmental psychology is the study of the meaning of place and how people relate to their surroundings. Turan explained that she is interested in "how people use objects – that is, material artifacts – to sustain the bond to their lost homelands." She cited the historian Eric Hobsbawm who writes of "the destruction of the past" – she analyzes "the use of personal objects for resistance" to this destruction.

After explaining the theoretical basis for her work, Turan spoke about conducting interviews with several dozen respondents in their homes as she explored their views on what these objects signify for them and their complex attitudes toward them. She found that certain objects "help sustain a sense of place attachment and identity" and that "without material objects, personal identities tend to fade. The objects, as concrete reminders of one's life, help preserve the self and the past." They demonstrate continuity, help stabilize self-identity, and show tangible evidence of past existence.



Zeynep Turan

objects of legacy are part of a "will to remember and block the act of forgetting," to immortalize the dead, and materialize the immaterial.

She described the sometimes mixed feelings with which some of the Armenian respondents interacted, initially at least, with her, a Turk. But this barrier was generally overcome as the respondents sensed Turan's sincere interest and compassion. The audience at NAASR was similarly impressed by her warmth, humor, and empathy.

Dr. Isabel Kaprielian: The Armenians in Canada and the U.S.: A Borderless Diaspora

The National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) sponsored a lecture and slide show by Isabel Kaprielian-Churchill, professor of Armenian and immigration history at California State University, Fresno. Kaprielian-Churchill offered an overview of the history of the Armenian community in Canada from

her recent publication, *Like Our Mountains: A History of Armenians in Canada*.

Recounting a sometimes tragic existence in their new country, she placed the arrival of Armenians in Canada in the context of events both in the Ottoman Empire and in Canada and the United States.



Dr. Isabel Kaprielian-Churchill

From the post-Genocide Georgetown boys and domestic servants to the currently thriving community of Montreal, Kaprielian-Churchill has documented an important diasporan community. "I consider myself a storyteller," she said. "I tell stories. The book has a strong theoretical base. But nowhere will you find reference to this or that theory. For example, I believe women's history should be told, especially in ethnic histories, because ethnic women have been marginalized. But I've never wanted them to be separated. I've always wanted them to be incorporated into the larger picture, because that's exactly where they were. I've also tried to do the same with children because, don't forget, 80 percent of the survivors [in Canada] were women and children."

She said she's included the story of her own family in the book, as well—of "their recollections and observations of life in our community. So it's really me, also, in this book. But I've tried to do it in a very imperceptible way, so that it's woven throughout the story."

Launching into a brief description of Armenian-Canadian immigrant history, Kaprielian-Churchill said that "Certain 'pull factors' attracted Armenians to Canada: freedom, democracy, law and order, civil society, educational and work opportunities. By and large, Canada was viewed in the larger context of 'America.' Certainly in the early periods, newcomers didn't distinguish between Canada and the U.S."

She noted the themes that chartered *Like Our Mountains* were family, immigration, church, and politics. "I had to understand events in the U.S.," she continued. "I had to understand the mentality of Armenians on both sides of the border, along with their collective sensibilities both within the Armenian context, and in the larger context of the whole society. But Armenian-Americans might blink twice and think, 'That sounds just like my own family.'"

Kaprielian-Churchill recounted her early childhood memories in Canada, enjoying the company of her "American cousins." She said, "We celebrated the Fourth of July with our American kith and kin in the summer. The Armenian-Canadians reciprocated by teaching our Americans friends about the British monarchy, the Union Jack, and the national anthem, 'God Save the Queen.' But the Americans, of course, always rejected the notion that Benedict Arnold was a national hero because of his loyalty to the Crown."

In the brief question and answer session that followed, she expanded on the relationship and sociological importance that the U.S.-Canadian border played for both Armenian communities. "As girls, when it came time to marry, we were told the boy had to be an Armenian. But in Canada, marriageable resources were scarce. So we played the 'American field.' The marriage-border dynamic fascinated

me. ...The FBI and Royal Canadian Mounted Police hated Armenian Hunchaks and Armenian-American Communists. In order to escape harassment, or possible imprisonment, members simply fled from one country to the next.”

(reprinted with permission from *The Armenian Weekly*, Nov. 9, 2006)

Dr. Razmik Panossian: Armenian National Identity

Dr. Razmik Panossian of the International Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Canada gave a lecture entitled “Armenian National Identity: A Historical Analysis for the 21st Century” as part of the luncheon program preceding NAASR’s 52nd Annual Assem-



Dr. Razmik Panossian, with (seated, left to right) NAASR Chairman Nancy R. Kolligian and Van M. Aroian

bly of Members on November 18. Panossian is the author of the recent major study *The Armenians: From Kings and Priests to Merchants and Commissars* (Columbia University Press). He received a Ph.D. from the London School of Economics and Political Science. His dissertation won the 2001 Lord Bryce Prize for Best Dissertation in Comparative and International Politics, awarded by the UK Political Studies Association.

At the heart of Panossian’s talk and book is the idea that “there are many ways of being Armenian,” and that Armenian identity is not fixed but is constantly changing and evolving. “It is being constructed,” he explained. “I use the word ‘constructed,’ even though some do not care for the term, “but this has been the case historically and it continues to be.”

Nationalist thinking asserts that there is a “fixed” way of being Armenian and that it is a “given,” said Panossian. His approach, however, looks at how Armenian identities have been shaped, by whom, and where. While he finds that an idea of an Armenian people is demonstrably a very old one, the concept of a “nation” is a modern one; thus talk of an ancient “Armenian nation” does not work.

He emphasized what he terms “multi-local identity building” – a concept that was the central focus of his talk. Because until the 20th century there was no Armenian state in the modern era, modern Ar-

menian identity or identities evolved in several locations simultaneously and mostly independently: in the West in Constantinople, Venice, and Vienna; in the East in Tiflis, Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Dorpat; and in the center, the Ottoman Armenian vilayets and to a lesser extent in Russian Armenia.

In the 19th century these three communities underwent parallel but different processes of “reawakening” (*zartonk*) with marked differences not only of geography but also of language, literature, and political ideologies. Panossian explained that this multi-locality persists down to the present day.

He then turned to the under-studied question of post-Soviet nationality and diasporan identity development, with a particular focus on the Soviet side. It “sounds contradictory” but in his estimation the Soviets – who ostensibly sought to transcend notions of nationality and ethnic identity – actually strengthened Armenian identity.

Panossian noted that in 1965 – when hundreds of thousands of people demonstrated in commemoration of the Armenian genocide and calling for “our lands” – there opened up more and more space for Armenian national identity to assert itself. Observing that, crucially, Armenian nationalism was not anti-Soviet, there was an increase in calls for recognition of the genocide and the return of Karabagh, Nakhichevan, and Javakh. There were limits and there were crackdowns, but skillful players were able to serve both Soviet and Armenian nationalist ideologies.

Panossian concluded with remarks on identity development in the diaspora, especially in the United States. Whereas language had long been a marker of identity (and still is especially in the Middle East) there was a decline in the last quarter of the 20th century of language and other traditional markers, and a rise of what Anny Bakalian has termed “feeling Armenian.” Is this assimilation or evolution?

With the emergence of an independent Armenian state, Panossian sees many diaspora Armenians as possessing “multiple homelands”: their host state, their ancestral lands, and the Republic of Armenia.

Gregory Aftandilian: The Armenian Lobby Then and Now

A detailed, analytical comparison of Armenian-American lobbying groups of the past and present was the focus of an informative talk held at Columbia University on December 6, 2006. The event was sponsored by the Armenian Club at Columbia University and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR).

Harvard scholar and former U.S. State Department staffer Gregory Aftandilian spoke about the formation, work, successes, and failures of the American Committee for the Independence of Armenia (ACIA), and then compared it to more recent Armenian lobby groups like the Armenian Assembly of America and the Armenian National Committee.

According to Mr. Aftandilian, in the early period after World War I the American Committee for the Independence of Armenia reflected the strong force of American public sympathy toward Armenia and the Armenians. It also reflected the weaknesses of the Armenian-American community.

The group was made up of noted non-Armenian American politicians, educators, and philanthropists, including Secretary of State and former Supreme Court Justice Charles E. Hughes, Elihu Root, Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, Alfred E. Smith, Charles Elliot, Cleveland Dodge, plus 20 state governors. However, the powerhouse behind it was attorney Vahan Cardashian.

The Armenian community in America at that time was comprised

largely of factory workers, small shop keepers, and farmers “who had one foot in the new country and one foot in the old,” as written in Robert Mirak’s significant history, *Torn Between Two Lands*. Though the community was very political, its activities were mainly directed toward the old country. The small group of Armenian intellectuals also focused their involvement on the old country, and with the Armenian-language newspapers in Boston, New York, and California.

Aftandilian pointed out that, as documented in M. Vartan Malcolm’s book, *Armenians in America*, life was hard for these early Armenian-Americans. Though Armenian-American earning power was close to the top among other immigrant groups, the community had fewer than 12 active attorneys, and only 250 university graduates throughout the United States, a figure comparable to other immigrants.

For the Armenians who were already in America prior to the Genocide, the trauma of being cut off from their families in the old country plunged many into deep despair, with some even committing suicide, Aftandilian said.

The Armenian National Union of America was formed in 1917 with the purpose of sending volunteer fighters to Turkey (1,172 were actually sent), collecting funds for the refugees, rebuilding Armenia, and garnering support for a pro-Armenia campaign. Their efforts netted some \$931,000—a stupendous amount for a community of mainly poor workers.

However, the group lacked political clout and failed to convince the Wilson administration to declare war on the Ottoman Empire. Opposing war was the powerful missionary lobby which feared losing its properties in Turkey and jeopardizing its activities there.

Held back by in-fighting over the formation of the 1918 Armenian Republic, the National Union became mired in internal Armenian politics and went out of existence, but not before it formed the Armenian Press Bureau in New York, with attorney Cardashian at its head. Politically influential, he was close to several American political figures and was also the lawyer for the Turkish Consulate in New York and the Turkish Embassy in Washington, D.C.

Due to the Armenian Genocide, which claimed his mother and sister, Cardashian cut off all relationship to the Turks, and became a dedicated worker for the Armenian cause. With no faith in the National Union, he wanted a more effective lobby for several reasons: he felt the victorious allies had made only vague promises for a reborn Armenia and had divided the Middle East among themselves for imperialistic reasons. Many missionaries wanted an American mandate for all of Anatolia, which Cardashian thought would place Armenians in peril again.

In 1918, Senator Lodge, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, sponsored a bill for an independent Armenia on all of her historic lands. It passed the Senate, but became a victim of American politics. President Wilson, who had voiced support for it, felt he couldn’t send troops to Armenia without Congressional approval. He was also enveloped in his dream of having the League of Nations become a reality.

As Aftandilian related it, in April 1920 the allies “formally asked Wilson to accept a mandate for Armenia, and delineate the border between Armenia and Turkey to include four Turkish Armenian provinces.” Though Wilson accepted this idea, it required Senate approval. Cardashian fought for direct aid without a mandate, which was defeated. *The Chicago Tribune* in April wrote: “It is Armenia’s crowning misfortune, with a ‘mandate’ gone begging, that it has no oil well...What a difference oil makes in the White Man’s Burden.”

In December 1920, part of the Armenian republic was Sovietized, and in 1923, the Lausanne Treaty was signed, which was strongly

supported by U.S. industrialists and missionaries. The U.S. Senate defeated the treaty in 1927, but President Calvin Coolidge recognized Kemalist Turkey through the use of executive powers. In 1923, the Chester concession was approved, which allowed an American company to build railroad lines through large areas of historic Armenia and exploit its mineral resources on 20 kilometers of the rail line.

Aftandilian listed several important differences between the Armenian lobbies of today and those of the earlier period. They include (a) socio-economic conditions, with the earlier community made up of mostly poor factory workers, farmers, and small shopkeepers, as opposed to today’s professionals, businessmen, industrialists, and academics; (b) the money issue, where money today is given to politicians to influence them; (c)

organization; (d) personal contacts; and (e) pro-Armenian sentiment, which was much higher in the earlier period.

Continuing with the differences, Mr. Aftandilian focused on the question of sustainability, where the earlier lobby could count on non-Armenian support in the face of isolationism. “Today, the lobby is more sustainable with second- and third-generation Armenian-Americans, which is supported by large segments of the community,” he said.



Gregory Aftandilian speaking at Columbia University.

There is also a strong connection between the grandchildren of Genocide survivors and the survivor’s own generation. “As long as this third generation lasts, the lobby will last. The question is what happens afterward,” he said, and wondered whether the independent Armenian Republic would be a source of inspiration.

The lecturer was critical of the community for not encouraging young people to take government jobs in Washington. He pointed out that the Armenian National Committee (ANC) is trying to rectify the problem with its “Capital Gateway” program.

Turning to the similarities between the past and present lobbies, he pointed out economic interests. In the early period, the opponents said America “was being urged to foot the bill for an area that was largely a wasteland.” Today, according to Aftandilian, oil companies and Turkey, with its support of U.S. defense contractors and business interests, have worked to get rid of Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act, and block recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

As in the early period, there are divisions in the Armenian-American community. Some non-Armenian scholars view the two long-running lobby groups, the ANC and the Assembly, as an asset, he noted, but added that in 2001, two separate Armenian Genocide commemorations took place on Capitol Hill, and sometimes, the administration plays off one lobby group against the other as part of what Aftandilian characterized as “a divide and conquer strategy.” Aftandilian also mentioned as a constant between the two eras politicians who make one statement while running for office, and do the opposite when elected.

(by Florence Avakian, special to

LIKE many people I was at work when the bulletin moved on Friday, January 19, that Hrant Dink, the outspoken editor of the Armenian-language newspaper *Agos*, had been mortally wounded by an unknown gunman outside of his office in Istanbul. I didn't know him personally but I knew of his work and how he had been prosecuted by the Turkish government under Article 301 of its penal code which prohibits "insulting Turkishness."

What most impressed me—and motivated me the following day to book a flight to Istanbul—was the spontaneous turnout of people outside of his office and what they were shouting: "We Are All Hrant, We Are All Armenian."

I had been to Istanbul in 1992 and saw first hand what life was like for the approximately 70,000 Armenians who still live in Turkey. It is a life of complete assimilation brought on by fear and insecurity. Virtually all have changed their names—there are no -ians, only -oglus.

Nothing about Armenia or certainly the Genocide is taught in the public schools, and the official position of the government since the start of the modern Turkish state has been there was no Genocide, that both Armenians and Turks were killed in fighting during that period of time. On April 24th, the one day that the world stops to commemorate the Genocide, there are no such demonstrations in Turkey. There are no Armenian political figures serving in the Parliament or government and Turkish political parties have for years gained popular support by espousing a strictly nationalistic line, which repeats that the state is in an insecure position because of the push of minorities—especially the Kurds and Armenians—for power. The fear and paranoia that Armenians show living there is palpable.

Which makes all the more extraordinary Hrant Dink's arrival on the national scene and the reaction to his gruesome death: the turnout of hundreds of thousands of Turks, Armenians, and Kurds on the streets of Istanbul, walking the five miles from the *Agos* office to the Armenian Patriarchate where across the narrow cobbled street his funeral was held in St. Mary's Armenian Church. It is said to be the largest peaceful turnout in Turkey's modern history and has galvanized Turks and Armenians everywhere, and providing—as we near its 100th anniversary—one more chance, perhaps the final one, to come to terms with the Genocide and the bitterness that divides we two people.



Stephen Kurkjian

The Death and Funeral of Hrant Dink and Their Aftermath

The following is the basis for the NAASR-sponsored talk given by Stephen Kurkjian, NAASR Board Member and Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist for the *Boston Globe*, on February 1, 2007, before a standing-room-only crowd of some 300 people at the First Armenian Church in Belmont.

So who was this man, Hrant Dink?

He was born in Malatya. He was best known for his role as editor of *Agos* weekly newspaper in Istanbul. At the age of seven, he migrated to Istanbul together with his family. When his mother died, his father was unable to maintain the family so he was placed into an orphanage. It was there that he met his future wife Rakel.

He got his primary and secondary education in Armenian schools. Immediately after lyceum, he got married to Rakel and subsequently had three children—two daughters and a son. He served honorably with the Turkish Naval Infantry Regiment in Denizli. One story I heard while in Istanbul was that he wanted to spend his career in the military but even though he had scored highest on a promotion exam, because he was Armenian he was not elevated. He cried, this person told me, when he left the military.

He went on to graduate from the Zoology Department of Istanbul University's Science

Faculty. Then he continued his education at the Philosophy Department of the same university for a while. His writings show an intense philosophical bent. Unlike most journalists, he did not make his decisions solely on pragmatism: there were philosophical principles involved.

That was most evident in his refusal, despite the urgings of his friends and colleagues in Istanbul and worldwide, to leave Turkey last year after the Turkish courts denied his appeal to overturn his 2005 conviction for "insulting Turkishness" in two statements: one in which he spoke openly of the Genocide and the other stating that Atatürk's adopted daughter, who had become an airplane pilot, was of Armenian heritage.

The loss of the appeal had, in effect, put a bulls-eye on his back, and resulted on his getting a rash of threatening e-mails and phone calls. One even said that his son would be killed and told him where to pick up his body. But still Dink refused to leave.

He considered it abhorrent, he said, to be charged with a crime of insulting the people whom he lived among as a citizen of Turkey. This is how he explained himself in a recent column: "My only weapon is my sincerity. But now the verdict was there and all my hopes were lost. From that time on, I was in the most embarrassing situation a man can experience. The judge gave the decision in the name of 'Turkish people' and legally registered that I had 'insulted Turkish identity.'

"I could bear everything but not this. In my view, to humiliate people who we live with together on the basis of an ethnic or religious difference is called racism and this is something unforgivable.

"Under the influence of such a psychology, I told to the members of the press who were waiting for me at the door to check 'whether I would leave the country or not' the following statement: 'I will consult my lawyers. I will go to the Court of Appeal for cassation and if necessary I will also apply to the European Court of Human Rights. If I am not acquitted at any stage, then I will leave my country. Because in my understanding a person sentenced to punishment with such an accusation does not have the right to live with other citizens whom he has humiliated.'"

The code of Turkish criminal law, Article 301, under which he was prosecuted was introduced on June 1, 2005, replacing a more punishing provision of the penal code that had held for years that to insult Turkishness was a crime.

Despite Turkey's pledge to the countries of the European Union to bring about freedom of

speech and democracy, the new law has been used to prosecute more than sixty individuals, including other journalists, academics, and Nobel Prize-winning novelist Orhan Pamuk, who have been prosecuted under Article 301. In most of the cases, the charges were dropped or never formally pursued, but not Hrant's case.

For me, perhaps the boldest decision that Dink made came when he started *Agos* in 1996: it would be published in both Turkish and Armenian. For a people who had repressed their identity, he was calling on his fellow Armenians to speak out by the mere act of buying his newspaper. But where ancestry had been hidden in the past, Hrant proclaimed it. In columns and public appearances, he took up the causes of the Armenian people in Turkey—why they were being denied access to good employment opportunities, why the children of Armenian refugees were being turned away from Turkish public schools even though he showed there were desks available for them. And of course, the legacy of the Armenian Genocide.

Beyond the injustices done to the Armenian community, Hrant wanted to make *Agos* newspaper a democratic and oppositional voice in Turkey, which is why I think his assassination led to such an extraordinary outpouring in the streets of Istanbul. The demonstration was to begin at 11 a.m. and like a good newspaperman, I arrived early—around 9:30. The streets leading to the modern business district of Shishli where *Agos* is located were shut down and the crowd was growing by the minute.

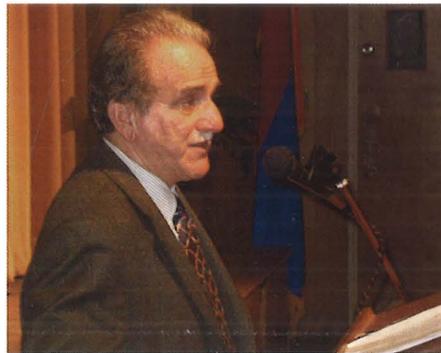
At the demonstration before her husband's funeral, Rakel Dink spoke to the throngs. She asked what kind of system turned a "baby," as she called Hrant's killer Ogun Samast, into a murderer. The question of a higher conspiracy hangs over the case—and Turkey—like a shroud. Some see Samast's actions solely as the crime of a kid from a city, Trabzon, where ultra-nationalism is a hallmark. In confessing, Samast said that once Dink's conviction had been upheld he looked up some of his statements on the web and, not liking what he read, decided to kill him.

Others, including Taner Akçam, the Turkish historian who has called on the Turkish government to acknowledge for sake of its democracy the Armenian Genocide, see a deeper conspiracy. A close friend of Dink's, he said in an interview that Dink had told him that he had been called to the office of the governor of Istanbul several months before he was killed. A lieutenant governor and a senior official of the Turkish secret service warned Hrant to cease his writings and if he didn't "we'll make you pay for everything

you've been doing." Instead of being cowed by the threats, Dink wrote about the meeting in one of his last columns.

Akçam stated: "Nobody should look for the murderer anyplace else but at that meeting in the governor's office in Istanbul. If the prime minister is a good man, he should give us the names of the officials who were present at the meeting and openly threatened Hrant. Follow the connections, they will lead to the murderer."

They will also, many believe, lead to the "deep state" within the Turkish political system that watches out for and protects the security of the Turkish state. I know it sounds to us like something out of the movie *Z* but many of Turkey's top government leaders, including Prime Minister Erdogan, have hinted



Steve Kurkjian

about its existence. According to Erdogan it has been in existence since Ottoman times and "indeed is something derived from the tradition" and was so dangerous that "we have to succeed in minimizing, and if possible, obliterating it."

One theory holds that Dink was not assassinated to silence him but also to strike at Erdogan's government which had not been acting strongly enough against dissenters and favored moving towards the European Union. Kill the best-known democrat in the country, and a clear message is sent to Erdogan: toughen up or you're gone.

The spotlight is on Erdogan, and how he responds provides us a hint as to the future of the modern Turkish state and whether out of this awful tragedy some trust can be built between Turks and Armenians to replace the bitterness between the two people.

He certainly did not look like he had made up his mind when he left the Patriarch's office in Istanbul the day after Dink's funeral—which he failed to attend. Instead, with the Italian prime minister he had opened a new tunnel.

If he reaches to the center and tries to cap-

ture the support of those hundreds of thousands of Turks who came out to demonstrate on Dink's behalf it would be, of course, a positive step. But people who know Turkish politics far better than me tell me not to bet on it.

In Hrant Dink's last column he wrote that it was torture worrying about what the future might bring. He said: "2007 will be a more difficult year for me. Trials will continue, new cases will come up in court."

He said he felt like a pigeon or dove—the word is the same in Turkish. "Like a dove, I have my eyes everywhere, in front of me, at the back, on the left, on the right...Yes, I can feel restless as a dove, but I know in this country people do not touch and disturb the doves. The doves continue their lives in the middle of the cities. Yes, indeed a bit frightened but at the same time free."

Sometime in January, he began getting phone calls from a young man asking to meet with him, according to co-workers at *Agos*. Hrant told the youth that he was too busy to schedule a meeting but the youth persisted. Sometime in the afternoon January 19, Hrant left his third-floor office without announcing where he was headed and walked onto Shishli. It's a modern neighborhood of eight to ten story buildings filled with commercial activity. Moments later three shots rang out, all hitting Hrant in the neck area, and he died instantly.

But we must not give up hope. Like William Butler Yeats at the dawn of the Irish Republic, in his poem "Easter 1916," I believe that the demonstration following Hrant's death shows that a "terrible beauty" has been born, and it has to be taken into account, both in Turkey and by us as Armenians. I do believe that we will get the recognition of what happened to our beloved ancestors in Turkey in 1915 and an apology for it. But the effort to do honor to Dink and those ancestors of ours cannot end with some statements of political leaders.

Instead, we must commit ourselves to making life better for those Armenians who were Dink's neighbors and whom he nourished with his writings and personal courage to recognize and proclaim the value of their heritage. Likewise, we can commit ourselves to go beyond the bitterness towards the Turkish government that has long unified us and find other bonds to our past. There are Armenian organizations here in the United States, indeed here in Greater Boston, like NAASR, Project Save, ALMA, the Armenia Tree Project, and of course our churches and cultural organizations, that need our involvement. Lend a hand—Hrant Dink deserves the honor.

Major Upgrades in NAASR Library and Bookstore

A milestone has been reached in the summer of 2007 at NAASR. The catalogue of the Edward and Helen Mardigian Armenian Reference and Research Library is now accessible online through NAASR's website at <http://naasr.org/library.html>. This permits anyone anywhere to perform a search of the library's holdings of 10,000 books, thus greatly enhancing the usefulness of the library's collection for researchers. At present, a separate listing of NAASR's periodical holdings is also available.

The cataloguing of the library's holdings is an ongoing process due to the continued generosity of our members and friends in contributing books. The cataloguing process was begun in 2005-2006 by Ruby Chorbajian and has continued in 2006-2007 by Hripsime Mkrtychyan. NAASR Board Member Shushan Teager provides valuable support on a volunteer basis.

At the same time, NAASR's unrivaled bookstore, the Armenian Book Clearing House, has made a similar leap forward. The process of writing out sales slips by hand is now a thing of the past as each book now has its own bar code which is read by the computer scanner. Each book also has the list price indicated on it (prices for NAASR members are, of course, lower).

But it is not only shopping in the NAASR bookstore proper that is changing. By fall 2007, NAASR will launch its online shopping cart which will allow secure purchasing on the web. The entire up-to-date catalogue will be available and gradually enhanced with images and descriptive material about the books and other items.

The bookstore project has been overseen by Peter Bogosian and implemented by Thomas Galvin and Vartan Babikyan.



Peter Bogosian working with Thomas Galvin in the NAASR Bookstore

"Upgrading our library and bookstore technology—and thus enhancing their value to our members, customers, and researchers—has been a major priority for the organization in recent years," said NAASR Board Member and Treasurer Robert D. Bejoian, who has spearheaded the effort, "and people are already starting to see the difference. It is going to make for a much more modern and convenient experience for everyone."

NAASR Supports Student Attending Genocide and Human Rights University Program

In 2006 NAASR offered financial support for a qualified student to attend the Genocide and Human Rights University Program in Toronto, organized by the International Institute for Genocide and Human Rights (a division of the Zoryan Institute) and the University of Minnesota. NAASR has worked with the Zoryan Institute to organize lectures and programs for many years and is pleased once again to be sponsoring a student to attend the 2007 summer program in Toronto. In so doing, it is hoped that a new generation of scholars will continue the important scholarly work that these two institutions have each been instrumental in fostering.

It is with pleasure that we share the comments of last year's NAASR-sponsored student, Yetvart Majjan.

My name is Yetvart S. Majjan, and in the summer of 2006 NAASR helped to fund my attending the Zoryan Institute's Genocide

and Human Rights University Program in Toronto. My experience in the program—like that of my fiancée, Hasmig, in 2003—was utterly invaluable. My time with the scholars at Zoryan not only compensated for my college's lack of genocide courses, but served to inspire and sustain me in the months that followed. Thus, first and foremost, I would like to thank NAASR for helping to make that experience possible. Without the grant, I would not have been able to afford the program.

The months between my time in Toronto and now have been a Niagara of transitions, events, proposals, and readjustments to "everyday" life. Some time after I had made my plans to study in Canada, Hasmig and I were asked to join a student project, called the Journey For Humanity (J4H), an unprecedented, five-month, 3,300-mile walk across the United States, to educate America about the problem of genocide. As part of the J4H, and in addition to the walk itself, we met with

media, congressmen, and senators in each state, spoke at university campuses and faith groups, and held public forums across the nation. The project culminated in Washington, D.C., where Congressman Frank Pallone of New Jersey presented us on the House floor.

Having returned to our academic careers, Hasmig and I have begun the process of speaking and writing publicly about our experiences, and the issue of genocide—as it relates to humanity, in general, and Armenians, in particular. Upon my return to Saint Peter's College (where I currently study in New Jersey), I helped to establish a course on genocide that will be taught for the first time in the fall of 2007. As part of this course, there will be a substantial section on the history of the Armenian Genocide, as well as the prolonged reality and injustice of genocide denial. In working closely with the head of the social justice program there, it is hoped that this course remains long after I graduate.

New Issue of *Journal of Armenian Studies* Released

The new issue of NAASR's *Journal of Armenian Studies* features a wide range of articles by diverse scholars and researchers. The issue, Volume 8, Number 2, of the *Journal*, which has been in existence since 1975, is sent to all NAASR members in good standing with dues paid for the current year and is also available for purchase through the NAASR Bookstore.

The first article in the *Journal* is by Seta Dadoyan, formerly of the Haigazian University in Beirut who has more recently taught at Columbia and St. Nersess Seminary in New York, whose piece functions as a kind of afterword to the 2003 special issue of the *Journal* entitled "Rethinking Armenian Studies." Dadoyan's "The Year of Armenian Studies: NAASR Oct. 2002, Erevan Sep. 2003, AIEA Venice/Lecce Oct. 2003," analyzes the unusual occurrence of three separate conferences within one year that looked at aspects of the field of Armenology. Dadoyan attended two of the conferences (Lecce and Erevan) and had the published proceedings of NAASR's "Rethinking" conference (which was co-sponsored by Harvard's Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations). Any observer of the field of Armenian Studies will find Dadoyan's views thought provoking.

D. Aram Donabedian's "Arshile Gorky: Master of the Phantom" continues the interest in recent years in this seminal figure in 20th century art. The article "examines how Gorky responded to the challenge of Picasso's dominance of the art world in the 1930s and, in eventually freeing himself from him, helped to liberate his own art with that of the nascent New York School." Donabedian analyzes "Gorky's psychological response to exile, including his role-playing, aspirations, and accomplishments" as well as "his Armenian childhood, the Armenian Genocide, and his life in New York."

Tim Kennedy, who has studied film at the University of Reading in England where he is currently completing a Ph.D. in Film Studies on film and national identity, offers a welcome take on much-neglected Armenian cinema in "Looking Back From Ararat: Soviet Armenian Cinema and the Search for Identity." Focusing on key figures such as Hamo Bek-Nazarov, Henryk Malyan, Artavazd Pelechian, Sergei Paradjanov, and Frunze Dovlatyan, Kennedy discusses themes and images that can be found within their films, especially "the precarious nature of the nation and the destruction and trauma suffered by its people."

Vartan Matioosian of Del Salvador University and the Hovnanian School in New Jersey pro-

vides a short but informative look at "The Armenian Orontids and Their Dynastic Symbol." The Orontids were "hereditary satraps of Armenia under the Achaemenids and became kings after their fall, until 201 B.C.," but information about them is scarce. Matioosian looks at the information provided by coinage and also the massive complex of Nimrud Dagh to draw some conclusions on the dynasty's symbol.

Paul Mirabile from Paris takes an unorthodox comparative look at two important medieval figures, one French and one Armenian, in "Two Medieval Chronologists: Gregory of Tours and Yovhannes Draxanakertc'i." While, of course, noting that the two could have had no knowledge of each other's work, Mirabile discusses similarities of style and approach. Far from lifeless recorders of historical events, Mirabile hails them both as master storytellers and fabulists.

Katia Peltekian of the American University of Beirut, in the course of compiling Armenian-related articles in *The Times* of London, followed one lead which put her "On the Trail of Religious Artifacts and A Grand Old Man." The "Grand Old Man" is William Ewart Gladstone, who as British Prime Minister championed the Armenian cause; the "religious artifacts" were presented to Gladstone in recognition for his service to the Armenians. How Peltekian tracked them down makes for a good combination of history and sleuthing.

The final article is "Argawan: The Indo-European Memory of the Caucasus" by James R. Russell, Mashtots Professor of Armenian Studies at Harvard University and a frequent contributor to the *Journal of Armenian Studies*. Using John Colarusso's recent translation of the Ossetic Narts epic (*Nart Sagas from the Caucasus: Myths and Legends from the Circassians, Abazas, Abkhaz, and Ubykhs* [Princeton University Press, 2002]) as a point of departure, Russell bolsters our understanding of Armenian epic by detailing and discussing the important connections between the epic of the Ossetes and the "oral epic cycle of King Artašes I and his Alan bride Sat'enik. Artašes was the eponymous founder of the Armenian Artaxiad dynasty."

In addition to these articles there are book reviews by James Ajemian, Levon Chorbajian, Vahakn N. Dadrian, Asbed Kotchikian, and Marc A. Mamigonian.

The next issue of the *Journal* will contain papers presented at the 2006 NAASR symposium on "Armenian-Turkish Dialogue and the Direction of Armenian Studies."

Grants to Young Scholars Awarded

Based on the recommendations of its Academic Advisory Committee, in 2006-2007 NAASR has awarded research grants to three young scholars: Harout Semerdjian of St. Antony's College, University of Oxford; Lerna Ekmekcioglu of New York University; and Alexander Ryabogin of Harvard University.

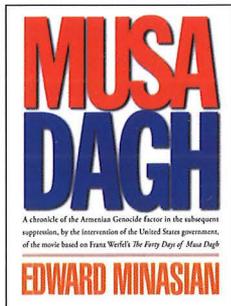
Semerdjian has just completed his first year in the doctoral program in modern Middle Eastern history and politics at Oxford. He has received Masters degrees in history from the University of California, Los Angeles, and in law and diplomacy from Tufts University's Fletcher School. He is currently conducting research for his dissertation that will focus on 20th century Turkish social and cultural history with particular attention to the experience of the Armenian community, as well as Turkish-Armenian relations.

Ekmekcioglu is currently writing her dissertation which focuses on comparative Armenian and Turkish nationalism and feminism in Istanbul during the 1920s, provisionally entitled "Feminists and Nation-keeping: The Armenian Community of Istanbul, 1919-1933." Her MA thesis focused on the Cairo-based Armenian women's journal *Ardemiš*. (A version of this was published in NAASR's *Journal of Armenian Studies*, Volume 8, Number 1.) Ekmekcioglu was born and raised in Istanbul.

Ryabogin began the doctoral program in Armenian Studies in Harvard's Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations in fall 2006, where his studies focus on Armenian epic, mythology, and poetics. He previously received a degree in linguistics from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Born in Stavropol, Russia, he is also fluent in Russian and Modern Hebrew with advanced knowledge of numerous other languages including Greek, Persian, German, and French.

Musa Dagb Has NAASR Connection

Ed Minasian's new book *Musa Dagb* (Cold Tree Press), on the 70+ years of attempts to film Franz Werfel's epic novel *The Forty Days of Musa Dagb* has deep NAASR roots. In 1984 Minasian, who has been a member of NAASR since 1955 (thus making him a charter member), presented a paper at the "Identity and Assimilation" conference co-sponsored by NAASR and Harvard's Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations,



entitled "The Forty Years of Musa Dagb: The Film That Was Denied," which was later published in a special issue of the NAASR *Journal of Armenian Studies* devoted to the conference proceedings (Vol. 3, Nos. 1 and 2, 1986-87). The book has been in the works ever since as Minasian amassed more and more information which has resulted in a definitive and damning work of investigative history.

In the Preface to his book Minasian tells of his long fascination with Werfel's great novel. "I first read *The Forty Days of Musa Dagb* during World War II while serving in the U.S. Army Signal Corps ... In time, [it] became my second Bible. I have read *The Forty Days of Musa Dagb* more often than any other book. Each time I read it, I sense a rush of adrenaline. As a history teacher and a longtime movie buff, I became concerned about Werfel's treasure in Hollywood."

Musa Dagb draws on Minasian's research in the MGM archives and the U.S. State Department, the Franz Werfel Papers at the UCLA Special Collections Library, the American Film Institute, and his interviews of personalities involved in the film project.

Although a low-budget, generally poorly regarded film of *The Forty Days of Musa Dagb* was made in 1982, it has aptly

been called the most on again, off again film in the history of Hollywood. As recently as this past spring rumors circulated that Sylvester Stallone was interested in making a film adaptation of the book. Sometimes it seems that the list of people who have not been connected with possible films of the book is shorter than the list of those who have.

So, how hard can it be to make a film of a book that was a best-seller in its day, has been in print for more than 70 years, is universally regarded as a masterpiece, and has commanded the interest of a who's who of Hollywood directors, writers, and producers?

The answer is unbelievably, excruciatingly difficult, if not impossible. Though many people – at least within the Armenian-American community – may be familiar with the fact that a film of *Forty Days* was planned by MGM in the 1930s but abandoned under pressure from Turkey and the U.S. State Department, few will be aware of the repeated, almost continual near-misses in the decades since then. In the 1950s and 60s, the name most associated with a prospective film of *Musa Dagb* was the great director Elia Kazan. Kazan, of course, made many classic films – but anyone who has viewed his now seldom-seen saga of immigration from Asia Minor *America, America* (1963) can imagine what he might have done with *Musa Dagb*.

As one reads Minasian's painstakingly detailed work, after a while one ceases to be surprised as each attempt to make the film founders on the rocks of Turkish-American relations; instead, one is continually surprised at the persistence of interest in the project despite the numerous previous failures.

There is no question that Minasian has written a page-turner in his own right in *Musa Dagb*. Even if a film is never made of Werfel's novel, a no less interesting film could be made of Minasian's book. He is to be congratulated on his formidable efforts and NAASR is proud to have played a part in the book's genesis.

NAASR Staff Changes

PETER BOGOSIAN began working at NAASR in February 2007 and has taken on special assignments in the financial and technological areas. He has worked as controller of a manufacturing company in Chicago and in management at UPS prior to his time at NAASR.

With Bogosian's major involvement, NAASR has updated and streamlined internal procedures for accounting and reporting in order to provide accurate and timely financial data for use by the Executive Committee and Board of Directors. He has also led the effort to upgrade NAASR's library and bookstore software and website. "I want us to continue doing the core things NAASR has been doing for decades," says Bogosian, "with the maximum amount of efficiency and professionalism. We do not have a large staff so it is crucial that our people are allowed to work as efficiently as possible."

NAZENI AFTANDILIAN, the wife of NAASR Board Member Gregory Aftandilian, temporarily joined the NAASR staff from February through June and served as assistant to Administrative Director Sandra Jurigian and assisted in the management of the bookstore. The Aftandilians were in the Boston area for 2006-2007 when Greg was a fellow at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government and will be returning to Virginia in late summer 2007. They will be missed by everyone at the NAASR Headquarters!

RUBY CHORBAJIAN, who worked as NAASR's Library Project Manager and Editorial Assistant in 2004-2006, left NAASR to attend graduate school in the fall of 2006. Ruby is enrolled in an MA program in Human Rights Law at Queen's University in Belfast, Northern Ireland, and the National University of Ireland in Galway.

Ruby has been succeeded by HRIPSIME MKRTCHYAN. Hripsime was born in Armenia and has a degree in Elementary Education from Yerevan Pedagogic Institute. She has been working at the Bright Horizons Day Care Center in Wattertown since 2005 and had previously done library work as a volunteer at the Armenian National Library in Yerevan. She is fluent in Armenian and Russian and rapidly learned the cataloguing process to continue the NAASR Library project.

THOMAS GALVIN volunteered in the NAASR Library in 2005-2006 and has worked primarily as a bookstore assistant since June 2006. He is a recent graduate of Belmont High School and will be attending Boston College in the fall.

VARTAN BABIKYAN, also a recent graduate of Belmont High School, is working mainly in the bookstore during the summer of 2007. Vartan, the son of Jirair and Carol Babikyan of Belmont, will attend UMass-Amherst in the fall.



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