



# Hamazkayin Newsletter

2013-2014

Hamazkayin Armenian  
Educational And Cultural Society

Published By  
Central Executive Board



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# IN TUNE WITH THE TIMES

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In keeping with its mission of struggling for the survival of the Armenian homeland and the nation Hamazkayin aims at preserving, developing and spreading Armenian culture and education. In 2013 the Society celebrated its 85th year of dedicated service.

Long-lived organizations may develop over time distinctive positive or negative characteristics. A positive example would be the accumulated experience, if, of course, a significant amount of experience is transmitted from one generation to the next. On the other hand, negative characteristics, such as misplaced self-confidence built up over time, could also be a determining factor.

The 85-year-old Hamazkayin does not claim to be experienced; it does not claim to be free from negative aspects. The 85-year-old Hamazkayin does, however, claim to have remained faithful to its mission and purpose.

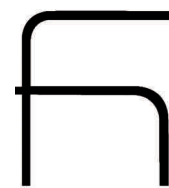
The 85-year-old Hamazkayin believes that it is up to the people to judge the character of the Society and to evaluate its performance. It is with this belief and approach that in this issue of our newsletter, we once again report on the Hamazkayin activities of the year, for information and evaluation.

This newsletter includes a special report on the Hamazkayin Galstaun College established in the Australian city of Sydney. In our present conditions, the preservation of Armenian identity offers great challenges, especially in those countries that are part of the Western world, admitting that circumstances vary from country to country. Each country has its own educational system and its specific minimum requirements for accreditation. Trying to adapt to the demands of the Australian educational system, as well as to the social and cultural conditions in Australia, Galstaun College does what it can to keep the new generations firmly attached and faithful to their Armenian identity.

The Current Topic section of our newsletter introduces the idea of an all-encompassing leadership for the Diaspora and invites the reader to join a debate on the issue taking place on the Hamazkayin website, as in previous years. To stimulate the debate we quote the views of eight Armenian intellectuals. Their thoughts reveal the importance, as well as the complex and topical nature of the issue. At this stage, Hamazkayin aims at generating public discussion on the subject, in the hope that people will embrace it as a vital issue in need of a solution, and will come to effective conclusions in the near future.

In the meantime, as featured in this issue of our newsletter, the dynamic beehive of activity our regions and chapters generate is live testimony to Hamazkayin's will to struggle ahead. Moreover, Hamazkayin promises to continuously widen its span of action and to make sure that its practices are in accord with the times.

**HAMAZKAYIN ARMENIAN EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL SOCIETY  
CENTRAL EXECUTIVE BOARD**





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## **HAMAZKAYIN COMBINES THE TRADITIONAL WITH THE REFRESHING AND THE INNOVATIVE (THE YEAR 2013-2014)**

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*Hamazkayin continues to provide a nurturing environment where children and young adults are inspired to sing and dance, to play, to paint and write, to find their anchor of identity in life.*

*More than 350 cultural and art events in Armenian communities continue to stand as signposts along paths leading them to an understanding of who they are.*

*The Armenian culture continues to thrive on core values through the efforts of committed artists, volunteers and enthusiastic participants.*

*“Life Goes on” in Aleppo*

*through the perseverance of the Hamazkayin choir, theatre and dance groups instilling hope in the people of the besieged city.*

*The pace of all this is determined by myriad hours of diligent work and ever-growing enthusiasm as reflected in the pages of this newsletter*

*which covers the activities of Hamazkayin and its worldwide chapters in the year 2013-2014.*



### **OFFICIAL INAUGURATION OF THE LUCY TUTUNJIAN ART GALLERY (LEBANON)**

*Sponsored by gallery benefactors Garbis and Lucy Tutunjian, the opening ceremony takes place on 8 November 2013.*

*The gallery presents a collective exhibition of 100 works by 30 artists.*

*Aram I Catholicos of the Holy See of Cilicia sends a Letter of Blessing, praising the gallery's role.*

*In a congratulatory letter, President of the Artists Union of Armenia Karen Aghanian commends the gallery for its activities.*

*The expanded gallery connects people in the Diaspora, Armenia and Lebanon through arts and culture, offering the opportunity to artists to exhibit their works for long periods of time, in a permanent exhibition.*

## THE HAMAZKAYIN THEATRE GROUP OF NEW YORK

### EXPLORES THE PARADOX OF FREEDOM THROUGH LIFE BY THE CAGE



The latest play by **the Hamazkayin Theatre Group of New York** was an allegorical depiction of Armenian life which earned an "intense and prolonged applause" from the audience. The statement comes from Karine Kocharian, the program editor of the Voice of Armenians TV New York.

Samuel Kosian's *Life by the Cage* was staged on October 18 at the Armenian Centre of New York. Kosian, a writer from Armenia, explores the absurdity of the situation in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union, when the long awaited independence brought with it the paradox of freedom and the nostalgia for the "cage".

"The plot is about caged birds, allegorically, about the freedom of the human mind and soul," says Kocharian. "With a cast of only 5 characters and amateur actors the play made a strong impact on the audience who are fans

of the Hamazkayin theatre group's performances since years."

In answer to Kocharian's question about the choice of the play, Hrant Markarian, the director of the **Hamazkayin Theatre Group of New York** says: "It is a beautiful work, it has depth; having freedom or being caged is a universal theme, the playwright has turned it into an art and we re-present it in the form of art, to get the people to think about how to maintain freedom."

Playwright-director Hrant Markarian has been directing the **Hamazkayin Theatre Group of New York** for over 46 years, staging plays with nationalistic themes, introducing new playwrights and actors, encouraging young Armenians to promote the Armenian cultural heritage.

"Cultural hubs of the Diaspora also serve another important function in areas outside the sphere of art: they preserve the Armenian language and represent the Armenian reality in various ways," says Kocharian. "The preservation of national identity and heritage faces serious challenges; it requires great efforts and sacrifice as the members of this theatre group make voluntarily by traveling long distances for the purpose."

The **Hamazkayin Theatre Group of New York** has attracted more than 400 members over the years. It holds the record for the longest continuously running Armenian theatre group in the United States since 1967, as well as for the largest number of world premiere Armenian plays in the Diaspora. It is the only Armenian theatre group that has performed off-Broadway and the first theatre group of Hamazkayin to have been invited to participate in the first Diasporan Theatre Festival in Armenia in 1991.

"It's not easy to keep an Armenian theatre group going in the conditions that a megacity would allow; to maintain a theatre group that would be known for its powerful presence and perseverance," writes Hagop Vartevanian in the Boston based Armenian newspaper Hayrenik. "Far from staging plays that generate banal amusement or filling the time with laughter, what Hrant is always trying to do is to make sure the audience leaves the theatre thinking deeply about the issues raised. And surely themes illustrating the development of political thought should be presented on our stages."

After the performance the group celebrated its 45th anniversary. The actors and the director were presented with Hamazkayin souvenirs in appreciation of their service.





## HAMAZKAYIN'S MOSAIC V CONCERT

### A KALEIDOSCOPE OF CONTEMPORARY ARMENIAN ARTISTS



Organized by the **Hamazkayin USA Western Region** and the **Mosaic Committee**, a celebration of music took place on March 16 in the beautiful courtyard of the San Gabriel Mission Playhouse, featuring performances in a range of musical genres, in both Armenian and English.

In keeping with the tradition of the previous four **Mosaic** concerts, **Mosaic V** showcased an international lineup of young musicians and bands, who brought music from Lebanon, the US and Armenia to rapturous audiences in Los Angeles.

Eileen Khachadourian sang traditional Armenian songs set to contemporary rock tunes. Ayline Amirayan introduced her original songs, a mixture of rock and pop. Vocalist Elena Yerevan interpreted Armenian classics on her guitar. C-Rouge fused traditional Armenian melodies with modern trance sounds. Raffi Semerjian performed his rock renditions of Armenian folk songs. Eternal Mind Control, a hard rock band influenced by Armenian music and the musical traditions of the Mediterranean region, told stories about life with their own lyrics.

"Despite their different musical approaches, practices and styles, they share a common thread- their Armenian heritage," writes the Los Angeles based Armenian newspaper Asbarez in its Hamazkayin Page dedicated to the event. "They represent different generations of musicians in the multi-dimensional and multi-layered Armenian musical scene, as well as the rich traditions of the Armenian musical heritage, forming a "mosaic" of contemporary Armenian artists; hence the title of the concert, **Mosaic**."

The idea to create **Mosaic** was born in 2007, when the **Hamazkayin Regional Committee** of the day collaborated with a group of artists, musicians and art lovers to devise a plan to encourage the creative spirit of young Armenians and to foster their sense of cultural belonging. "**Mosaic** served as a platform to discover young talents, empowering several artists to take firm steps towards becoming the well known and popular artists they are today," writes Asbarez in its Hamazkayin page.

"When I first attended the **Mosaic** concert 5 years ago, I decided that I too would love to sing on this stage one day, and I am very happy today to have achieved my goal," says Ayline Amirayan.

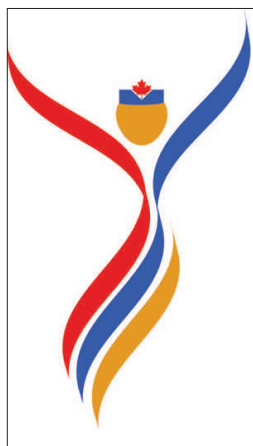
More than a thousand young fans attended the **Mosaic** concert which featured also poetry recitation by Matilta Tavanian and the artist Ara Azad, who painted live on stage to open the concert.



Many innovative singers, musicians and bands have appeared in the **Mosaic** concert series over the years: Vicken Tarpinian, Aren Emirze, Lavash, Vahagn Turgutian, Sebouh, Visa, Armenian Space Station, Ecocell, A Splinter and Armenian Public Radio to name a few.

## THE EREBUNI DANCE ENSEMBLE AND THE HAMAZKAYIN DANCE INSTITUTE

CELEBRATE "OUR LEGACY, OUR AUTHENTIC CULTURE AND TRUE HERITAGE"



Dance is an immediate and exciting way for the young generation to experience their culture and heritage. In keeping with their mission of instilling Armenian values in future generations the **Erebuni Dance Ensemble** and the **Hamazkayin Dance Institute** of the **Klatzor Chapter** in Toronto have focused on targeted projects, expanding the possibilities of the dance medium year by year.

Far from being ordinary events, the annual performances of the

**Erebuni Dance Ensemble** and the **Hamazkayin Dance Institute** are built around special themes that combine different art forms and support various goals, nurturing and enlivening the multiple layers of the Armenian cultural heritage.

"Armenia is Calling..." was the theme for the annual performance of the **Erebuni Dance Ensemble** in 2012 as they prepared for their trip to Armenia, where they took part in the My Armenia Pan-Armenian Festival along with 10 other dance groups. Featuring Armenian traditional and modern dances, poetry recitation and video projections the ensemble's show transported the audience to the world of their ancestors. Paintings on the theme of dance from the **Hamazkayin Art Institute**, as well as miniature paintings by Armen Daneghian enriched the artistic appeal of the event.

After their return from Artzakh, Tbilisi, and Javakhk in 2013, the **Erebuni Dance Ensemble** and the **Hamazkayin Dance Institute** celebrated renowned Armenian musicians under the theme "Dance and a Melody". Videos featuring classical and folk musicians as well as troubadours were projected on stage; professional musicians played a selection of Armenian-inspired music; Armenian musicians were brought to life in portraiture by the Hamazkayin Art Institute.

"As for the dance itself, the Armenian dance is not just dance; it is spirit, identity and history, an expression of Armenian character, the beating soul; it pulls us and leads us there, to the land of our forefathers... to the sources of our existence, where each beat of dancing feet keeps echoing: Come lad, come, let's go to our land," writes Tamar Donabedian in the Toronto based Armenian monthly *Torontohay*. "Therefore, let's keep on dancing; let's dance, all of us, together, and with each beat of dancing feet let us carry the legacy of our forefathers, our authentic culture and true heritage."

The **Hamazkayin Dance Institute** has 70 students between the ages of 6-16. The 20-member **Erebuni Dance Ensemble** was reorganized in 2011 with graduates of the dance institute. Within a few years it became a regular presence in community activities, performing at folk nights and multicultural events.

The dance teacher at the **Hamazkayin Dance Institute** and the artistic director of the **Erebuni Dance Ensemble**, Lori Najarian is a graduate of the Yerevan State Dance College. She is a graceful dancer and her solo dances bring their own unique flavor to the stage. The projects of the ensemble and the dance institute are made possible through the persistent efforts of a team of artists, amateurs and volunteers.





## A WEEK DEDICATED TO SOS SARGSIAN

IN TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF THE "PATRIARCH" OF ARMENIAN THEATRE



*"A great Armenian intellectual, a man who has dedicated his entire life to his beloved people, who has wholeheartedly served the Armenian culture and the Armenian state, has departed this life. Sos Sargsian has made a great and invaluable impact on our social and cultural life. With his portrayal of several characters on stage and screen and with his excellent conduct as an Armenian citizen, he inspires us with a high level of pride and self-confidence to share and create universal values of culture and civilization. He was of the lineage of our noble ones. He taught us how to live with dignity. Sos Sargsian has also left a legacy of bridging the spiritual divide between Armenia*

*and the Diaspora. The great master was one of the founders of Hamazkayin in Armenia. It was through his tireless efforts that in 1991 the Hamazkayin theatre was founded and which he cherished dearly. Sos Sargsian is a treasured and true symbol for the entire Armenian nation and for the large family of Hamazkayin."*

It was with these words that the Hamazkayin Central Board bid farewell to Sos Sargsian who died on 26 September 2013.

A rare actor and an exceptional Armenian figure, Sos Sargsian was commemorated in a series of events organized by the Regional Committee of Hamazkayin in Lebanon in December 2013.

Davit Mouratian, Head of the Armenian National Film Academy and Nelly Sargsian, the widow of Sos Sargsian and a music expert, were invited to Beirut, sponsored by the Hamazkayin Central Board.

The opening of the event on December 10 was marked by the screening of *Let me Depart*, a video narrated by Sos Sargsian in his own voice. It was followed by video testimonies and videos celebrating the 70th anniversary of the actor's birth. Davit Mouratian praised the actor for his ability to "raise us above the mundane, creating a narrative of human life and of our Armenian existence". Speaking on behalf of the Hamazkayin family Keghani Etyemezian recounted Sos Sargsian's history of collaboration with Hamazkayin.

A slideshow of Sargsian's photographs and excerpts from *Naregatzi* in the actor's own voice carried the audience to the Armenian highlands.

In tune with the spirit of the occasion the Jenterejian brothers Ashot and Armen performed *The Hymn of Naregatzi* on the violin, soprano Arevig Krikorian sang the *Miserere*

of Komitas.

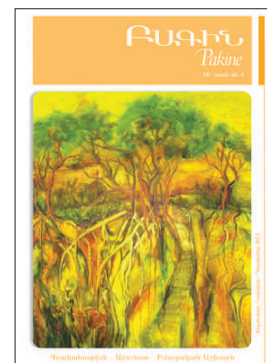
Nelly Sargsian made a heartfelt speech about "the great Armenian man whose heart ached for his homeland" and shared stories about his public service.

*Triangle*, starring Sos Sargsian, was shown on December 11. Davit Mouratian, an authority on the films of Sargsian described it as a "threshold" for Armenian film culture, "an aesthetic and moral turn towards embracing the national identity, towards the Armenian "self-image", in the language of our times".





## LITERATURE



### SYMPOSIUM (ARMENIA)

#### DEDICATED TO THE FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES OF CONTEMPORARY ARMENIAN PROSE

An initiative of the Hamazkayin Central Board,  
the Yerevan State University and the Writers' Union of Armenia,  
assesses the Armenian prose by modern standards of literary criticism;  
discusses the relationship between contemporary Armenian life and prose,  
aesthetic and thematic matters, developing trends.  
About 22 literary critics from Armenia, Artzakh and the Diaspora participate in the event.  
An anthology of the lecture series is published.

### PRESENTATIONS AND READINGS AT THE EDITORIAL OFFICES OF PAKIN (LEBANON)

- Vartkes Shamlan and his book: Anthology of Various Writings.
- Kaloust Babian and his photographic album: Retrospective.
- Meguerditch Margossian and his memoir: On the Banks of Tigris.
- Ler Kamsar and his play: Extreme Communists.
- Hagop Garabentz: A Biographical Sketch and Literary Characteristics.
- Artem Harutyunian and his volume of poems: Tele Poems from the Tower of Shushi and Babylon Hotels.

### THE VAHE SETHIAN PRINTING PRESS AND DISTRIBUTION CENTRE (LEBANON)

- Issues a calendar featuring artists from Armenia, in collaboration with the **Hamazkayin Armenia Office**.
- Organizes a traveling Children's Book Fair and Sale of Educational Games.
- Exhibits Armenian and non-Armenian publications at the international London Book Fair.
- Sells books at the Jesus and Mary School's annual charity fair.
- Holds a book publishing contest on the theme of "The Year of the Armenian Mother" for the 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th Grades.
- Enters into a cooperative agreement with the Bouquiniste bookstore in Yerevan to sell books.
- Enters into an agreement with the Armenian Genocide Museum to sell their publications.
- Holds a book fair featuring publishers from Armenia.
- Organizes a round table to discuss "The Challenges Facing the Publishing Industry in Armenia".
- Participates in the annual book fair organized by the Catholicosate of Cilicia.
- Distributes book packs in Lebanon. 3120 books enter Armenian homes within a month.

### HAMAZKAYIN BOOK READERS CLUBS

- **Book Lovers Group:** Young adults present H. Shiraz, Ashough Jivani, Sibil, B. Sevag, T. Varoujan, "Martyred Writers of the Armenian Genocide", "An Anthology of Excerpts from Our Textbooks".  
The group recites poems at an Evening of Love Poetry and Songs held by the **Hamazkayin Literary Committee**; at the May 28 Independence Day event (**Toronto**).
- **Hamazkayin Armenian Seminar:** Lecturers are invited from abroad to talk about literary topics (**Montreal**).
- **Conversations about Armenian writers** focus on: L. Shant, V. Tekeyan, H. Baronian, Y. Odian (**Cyprus**).
- **The Book Club** conducts weekly readings and analysis of literary works (**Aleppo**).

### COMMEMORATIONS

- An evening dedicated to the ARF leader, educator, editor and public speaker Dr Papken Papazian in memoriam features a speech by Garo Hovhanessian, poetry recitation and music (**Lebanon**).
- "The Sun Traveler": an evening dedicated to the 115th birth anniversary and the 75th death anniversary of Y. Charents includes a lecture - The Poet and the Time, recitation, song, music, a video presentation (**Toronto**).
- "Indra, Life and Fate": Yervand Ter Khachaturian celebrates the poet and writer (co-sponsored with Aztag) (**Lebanon**).
- Celebrating the 500th anniversary of Armenian printing; Artak Movsisian evaluates the trends in: "Armenian Literature from Petroglyphs to Printing" (**New York, Boston, Philadelphia**).
- The 50th anniversary of the **Hamazkayin Society in Australia** is marked by: a literary evening dedicated to the founders, a lecture, recitation, song and music (**Sydney**).
- An evening dedicated to the literary and pedagogical activities of Bedros Hajian includes speeches by Roupen Barsoumian, Vartan Matiossian, Hagop Balian (**New York**).
- An appraisal of Levon Ananian's literary activities by Abdo Labaki, Jirayr Tanielian and Sarkis Guiragossian is followed by a video presentation, song and recitation (**Lebanon**).

## LITERATURE



### LITERARY PRESENTATIONS

- George Mouradian's book: Evils of the World (**Detroit**).
- Hagop Balian's novel: Miss Anna's Love, Her Loves and the Others (**Lebanon**).
- Haiganoush Grkasharian's memoir: Hadjn, si on t'oublie (Hadjen, if We Forget You) (**Paris**).
- Arch. Hagop Keledjian's monograph: The Apricot Tree – translated into Spanish (**Montevideo**).
- Ani and Jean Pierre Mahé's history book: Histoire de l'Arménie des origines à nos jours (The Armenian History from its Origins to the Present Day) (**Paris**).
- Meliné Karakashian's research book: Komitas: A Psychological Study (**New Jersey**).

### COLLABORATION WITH THE GRANISH LITERARY MAGAZINE (ARMENIA)

The *Granish* literary club in Armenia and Hamazkayin sign a cooperation agreement with the aim of combining their capabilities in view of the development of literary culture in Armenia and the Diaspora.

### BOOK LAUNCH

- Hagop Altounian's new books: Along the Luminous Paths of Armenian Culture; Nubar Pasha and Boghos Nubar Pasha (**Toronto**).
- Artak Movsisian's illustrated books in both Armenian and English versions: 10 Outstanding Armenian Kings; 10 Holy Places of Western Armenia; Armenian Statehood 5000-Years-Old and... 20-Years-Old (**Boston**).
- Khatchig Dedeyan's book of poems: Wanderings in Crazy Nights; with speech, recitation and music (**Lebanon**).
- Boghos Shahmelikian's book: Memories and Bygone Days; with testimonials, music and song (**San Francisco**).
- A collection of selected poems by 13 young poets: 18-33 Modern Armenian Poetry (**Armenia**).
- Alan Whitehorn's book of poems: Return to Armenia (co-sponsored with other associations) (**Montreal**).
- Gaylag's (Mgo Panossian) book of poems: Love and Fire; with speech, recitation and dance (**Pasadena**).
- Rouben Galichian's books: A Proven Axiom; The Clash of Histories in the South Caucasus (**London**).
- Hasmig Chahinian's children's book: My Birthmark; presentation and appraisal (**Lebanon**).
- Christopher Atamian's English translation of Nigoghos Sarafian's The Bois de Vincennes as the winner of the 2013 **Minas and Kohar Tölölyan Prize in Contemporary Literature** (**New York**).
- Zaven Khanjian's memoir: Aleppo: First Station (**San Francisco**).
- Jeanette Kirishian's book of poems: Anthology; with speech and recitation (**Toronto**).
- Matthew Karanian's travel guidebook: Armenia and Karabagh: The Stone Garden Guide; with slideshow (**Toronto**).

### LITERARY ACTIVITIES

- An evening dedicated to Hovhanness Toumanian: features fairy tales, recitations, songs, quartet readings, a slideshow, staged scenes. Both children and adults take part (**Lebanon**).
- “Tea, Coffee and Perspectives” is held periodically, includes proverbs, readings and poetry recitations (**Montreal**).
- Second annual presentation of Armenian-American young authors: Nancy Agabian, Christopher Atamian, Alan Semerdjian, Aida Zilelian-Silak read excerpts from their works (**New York**).
- “Jewels of Armenian Art and Literature”: An annual youth event features readings of poems from past and present poets (**Detroit**).
- Poetry recitation contest is held for 16-30 year olds (**Fresno**).
- Poetry Night: Silva Yuzbashian presents a selection of poems by H. Sahian, V. Davtian and W. Saroyan (**Washington**).
- “Literary Activities and the Literary Field (Diaspora-Armenia)”: A lecture by Dikran Kapoyan is followed by readings and an interview with the writer (**UAE**).
- A writing contest on the theme of the “Armenian Mother” attracts 20 young adults as participants; the winning entries are published in a book (**Toronto, Montreal**).
- The **Poetry Recitation Group** performs at the May 28 Independence Day event (**Aleppo**).
- “Ode to Aleppo”: Children and teenagers take part at a poetry recitation session (**Aleppo**).
- A poetry recitation session on the theme of the “Armenian Mother” attracts 35 children and teenagers as participants (**Toronto**).
- Vrej-Armen Artinian's My Travelogue-Memoirs is published by the **Regional Committee** (**Canada**).
- A Weekend of Books: Armenian books, CDs and souvenirs are displayed and sold (**Toronto**).
- A children's book fair is organized (**Cambridge-Canada**).
- The monthly literary newsletter **Karoun** continues to be published (**Sydney**).
- **Radio Gomidas** presents readings of Armenian literary pieces translated into Spanish (**Montevideo**).
- **Story Hour**: 3-8 year old children listen to stories read to them on a monthly basis (**Montreal**).
- New issues of the literary newsletter **Cassius** are published (**Kessab**).



## MUSIC



### PARSEGH GANACHIAN MUSIC COLLEGES OF HAMAZKAYIN

- The school year begins with 319 students in Lebanon. The college presents concerts of classical and popular music performed by college students and staff. The British pianist Oliver Pool conducts a master class for college students. The **Guitar Ensemble** gives its annual concert and performs with the **Dhol Ensemble** at: the ARF ZOM's "Red Earth" event; at an evening dedicated to the Armenian Genocide; at the Bourj Hammoud Festival. The **Guitar** and the **Dhol Ensembles** are awarded by OTV for their outstanding participation in the Meet Us at the Square program. The **Chamber Ensemble** and the **Guitar Ensemble** perform at a concert marking the 30th anniversary of the college. The college establishes summer courses; graduates receive their diplomas at the end-of-the-year concert (**Lebanon**).
- In Aleppo the school year begins with 130 students; graduates receive their diplomas at the end-of-the-year concert. The college moves to the Aram Manougian Centre due to security reasons. Students play at an event marking the founding of the ARF; on the occasion of May 28; at the "Life Goes on" event (**Aleppo**).
- In Athens the college opens its doors to 11 students; offers guitar and piano lessons (**Athens**).

### CHORAL AND MUSICAL PERFORMANCES

- The newly formed **Choir of the Aram Khachaturian Chapter** sings at the National Museum (**Alexandroupolis-Greece**).
- The **Ayk Youth Choir** performs Armenian and European songs in annual concerts; sings at an event marking the 122th anniversary of the founding of the ARF (**Lebanon**).
- The **Armenian Folk Music Ensemble** accompanies the **Ayk Choir** at their concerts (**Lebanon**).
- The **Hay Asdgher Junior Choir** goes on stage with 55 choiristers; performs a program of Armenian songs at its annual concert; sings on the occasion of May 28 and at an event marking the 25th commemoration of the Armenian earthquake (**Toronto**).
- The newly formed **Koussan Choir** (Canada) sings at an event marking the 25th commemoration of the Armenian earthquake (**Toronto**).
- The **Gargach Children and Junior Choirs** perform a program of Armenian and non-Armenian songs at their annual concert; they render Christmas songs at the Beirut Chants Festival (**Lebanon**).
- The **Zvartnotz Choir** sings: at celebrations marking the 122th and the 123th anniversaries of the founding of the ARF; at the "Life Goes on" event (**Aleppo**).
- The **Koussan Chamber Choir** performs at an event dedicated to the memory of the conductor Kevork Kandaharian; at an evening dedicated to the Armenian Genocide; at a lecture titled: "Komitas Haunted" (**Lebanon**).

### CONCERTS AND MUSIC EVENTS HOSTED BY HAMAZKAYIN CHAPTERS

- Ara Dabanjian's Element Band with a contemporary take on traditional melodies (**Toronto**).
- The **Mozaic V** concert with contemporary Armenian artists and multidimensional musical approaches (**Glendale**).
- Elena's guitar concert with a program featuring Armenian and Western musical styles (**Boston**).
- "**Tea, Coffee and Perspectives**": Hasmig Injejkian describing Lousine Zakarian's vocal style (**Montreal**).
- The Anna Mayilian Vocal Trio with a repertoire of songs spanning several centuries (**Washington, Boston, Glendale**).
- Kevork Bebejian's concert with the **Armenian Folk Music Ensemble** (**Lebanon**).
- The Komitas Quartet from Armenia playing Armenian and classical pieces (**Lebanon**).
- "Folk Music and Time": with music by artHaroutioun and discussion by Hasmik Harutyunian (**Pasadena**).
- An evening in support of the **Sayat Nova Choir** bringing together young and emerging artists (**Glendale**).
- "Armenian viola da gamba": Grigor Arakelian in concert with the Montreal-based VivaVoce Chamber Choir (**Montreal**).
- The Musaner band accompanied by Alexan Harutyunian in jazz concert (**Boston**).
- The Chookasian Armenian Concert Ensemble in folk music and dance concert (**San Francisco**).
- Aramé and his band performing old and new songs (**Lebanon**).
- **Song of Songs** contest: with winners determined by voting on Facebook and Radio Voice of Van, from the audience and a panel of judges (**Lebanon**).
- The multi-genre music producer BeiRu in concert with DJ Shahé (Co-hosted with the ONEArmenia project) (**Pasadena**).

### COMMEMORATIONS

- **Song of Songs** in a special memoriam tribute to Flora Martirosian: singers join the Aghtamar band in concert (**Lebanon**).
- A concert dedicated to the Armenian Genocide in collaboration with the Macedonian Music Centre features: the Orpheus Soloists Ensemble and the Little Angels Choir (**Thessaloniki**).
- An evening dedicated to the conductor Kevork Kandaharian in memoriam includes speeches, a video presentation and songs (**Lebanon**).
- Elie Berberian and his band perform at an evening dedicated to the 300th birth anniversary of Sayat Nova (**New York**).
- Alla Avedisian (soprano) and Father Mkhitar Kuduzian (organ) pay tribute to Arch. Datev Gharibian in concert (**San Paulo**).

## HAMAZKAYIN EVENTS



- The 50th anniversary celebrations of the **Hamazkayin Society in Australia** include: A memorial service in honor of Hamazkayin members; a concert; an evening in tribute to the founders; an art exhibition; the publication of a commemorative volume; a dinner and dance evening; honoring members and educators; a major 50th anniversary event; the awarding of Hamazkayin medals to benefactors Haroutyoun and Sonia Matheossians from Melbourne (**Sydney**).
- A dinner and dance evening: Adis Harmandian and Ashot Ghazarian take part in the event (**Lebanon**).
- A New Year and Christmas party for children features songs, recitations, music, theatrical acts (**Sèrres-Greece**).
- An evening dedicated to the 25th anniversary of the war for the liberation of Artzakh showcases: The **Ayk Youth Choir**, the **Armenian Folk Music Ensemble**, the **Guitar Ensemble**, the **Dhol Ensemble**, the **Parsegh Ganachian Music College**, the **Knar Dance Ensemble**, the **Gayane Dance School** (**Lebanon**).
- The **Hamazkayin Armenia Office** hosts the founders of Open University Movement (**Armenia**).
- An evening dedicated to the 98th commemoration of the Armenian Genocide features songs, music, recitations (**Lebanon**).
- An event commemorating the victims of the Armenian Genocide features the screening of Mayrig, song and recitation (**Nancy**).
- The **Hamazkayin USA Eastern Region** holds its 3rd annual pan-gathering showcasing speeches, awards and a concert (**Boston**).
- "The Legacy of May": An Independence Day event is marked by a speech, recitation, dance (co-hosted with the ARF) (**Thessaloniki**).
- Hamazkayin collaborates with the Armenian Embassy to introduce the Armenian cognac at a special event (**London**).
- "Life Goes on": Hamazkayin groups perform at an evening of culture (**Aleppo**).
- Weekly cultural gatherings and Armenian programs continue for Armenian students attending foreign schools (**Lebanon**).
- Spoken Armenian courses are taught in weekly classes (**San Paulo**).
- A New Year charity party is organized to collect donations for the children of the Orran center in Armenia (**Pasadena**).

## LECTURES

- "Armenian Massacres, Liberation Struggle, Genocide and Armenian Painters": Lévon Chookaszian (**Paris**).
- "Healthy Diet During Lent": Ani Degirmenjian-Jertidian (**Lebanon**).
- "The Problem of the Islamicized Armenians" and "Nemrut: The Great Sanctuary of the Sun-King": Artak Movsisian (**Glendale**).
- 1050th anniversary of Ani's proclamation as capital of Armenia: "The Secrets and Enchantment of Stones" (Photographic exhibition): Ashot Grigorian (**Toronto, Montreal**).
- "The Role of Culture in the Preservation of the Armenian Identity in the Diaspora" (with song, music, dance, recitation): Nazareth Berberian (**Athens**).
- "Armenian-American Contributions to Humanity after the Genocide and the Armenian in America"; with photographs (co-hosted with TCA): Stepan Partamian (**Boston**).
- "The Activities of the YSU Institute for Armenian Studies", "Tigran the Great: The Patriotic Sovereign"; with screenings (co-hosted with Aztag): Mher Hovhanissian (**Lebanon**).
- "Syrian Armenians Living in Artzakh": Artak Beglarian (**Boston**).
- Academic Conference Dedicated to the 1650th Birth Anniversary of Mesrob Mashtotz (co-sponsored) (**Los Angeles**).
- "The Invention of the Armenian Alphabet: Power... Culture... and Nation"; with slideshow: Hrant Markarian (**New York**).
- "Repatriation and Deception: Post WWII Soviet Armenia": Hazel Antaramian-Hofman (**New York**).
- "The Armenian Mother and the Armenian Woman throughout History": Fr. Hrant Kevorkian (**Detroit**).
- "Ararat-Urartu in the Bible": Bedros Tovmasian (**London**).
- "Komitas Haunted": Armen Abdalian (**Lebanon**).

## EXPANSION

### THE HAMAZKAYIN STOCKHOLM CHAPTER IS FOUNDED IN SWEEDEN

The **Hamazkayin Central Executive Board** opens its first chapter in Sweden.

A board member inaugurates the 15 member strong chapter.

At the founding meeting on 1 December 2013,

the goals and history of the 85 year old society are presented in a video and in a speech;

the first committee of the chapter is elected.



## DANCE



- The **Arax, Houys and Hrashk** adults', teens' and children's dance groups present a joint performance. The **Arax Dance Group** performs at the 6th Detroit Armenian Festival; at the grape blessing picnic organized by the St. Sarkis Church (**Detroit**).
- The **Knar Dance Ensemble** takes part in the Ainjar and Bourj Hammoud Festivals; dedicates its annual performance to the 110th birth anniversary of Aram Khachaturian; represents Lebanon at the Eid al-Fitr Festival in Jakarta in a Fantastic Middle East Show; continues to provide dance lessons for women at the **Levon Shant** and **Jirayr and Tzoline Khachadourian Centres**. The **School Dance Festival** of the ensemble showcases 15 groups and 150 students from Armenian schools (**Lebanon**).
- The **Gayane Dance School** and its 230 young students rehearse for their upcoming biannual performances; they take part in the **Knar Dance Ensemble's** annual performances; in the "Red Earth" event organized by ZOM (**Lebanon**).
- The **Sardarabad Dance Ensemble** (Syria) performs: at a celebration marking the 123th anniversary of the founding of the ARF; at the "Life Goes on" event (**Aleppo**).
- The **Hayasa Dance Group** appears with Silva Hagopian in concert in Strasburg; joins a pilgrimage in honor of the Heroic Battle of Mousa Ler (**Nancy**).
- The **Sardarabad Dance Ensemble** (USA) takes part in the Skokie Festival of Cultures (**Chicago**).
- The **Araz Dance Troupe** takes part in a concert dedicated to the Independence Day of Armenia on May 28 (**San Francisco**).
- The **Yeraz Dance Ensemble** stages "A Dream Come True" with 40 dancers between the ages of 4-19 (**Orange County**).
- The **Ani Dance Company** takes part in the LA's Best Dancers International Dance Show (**Glendale**).
- The **Erebuni Dance School and Ensemble of Greater Boston** give their 2nd annual performance with 80 students; they take part in a joint event to help raise funds for Syrian Armenians; they dance at an event on the occasion of May 28; at the ARF annual dinner (**Boston**).
- The **Meghri Dance Group** gives its annual performance; dances at the Armenian Genocide commemorative walk; takes part in the Multicultural Dance Event at the University of the Sciences in Philadelphia; dances at the International House of Philadelphia annual Gala (**Philadelphia**).
- The **Nayiri Dance Ensemble** (USA-East Coast) dances at the PAYA event to help raise funds for Syrian Armenians (**New Jersey**).
- The **Nayiri Dance Ensemble** (USA-West Coast) takes the stage with 118 dancers in front of a 1000 strong audience; dances at the Prelate's Christmas dinner; at an event on the occasion of May 28; at the launch of the book Love and Fire; at an event marking the 55th anniversary of the founding of the ARS Anahid Chapter (**San Francisco**).
- The **Nayiri Dance Group** (Athens) performs at UNESCO's Traditional Greek Village Festival; dances on the occasion of May 28; at the International Conference on Dance Research; at the Cultural Festival in Corinth; Joins the stage with **Nanor** (teen's) **Dance Group** (Athens) at an event marking the 22nd anniversary of the independence of the Republic of Armenia (**Athens**).
- The **Hamazkayin Dance Group of Thessaloniki** dances at the National Traditional Festival in Aridea; at an event on the occasion of May 28; at the music and dance evening hosted in association with Greek organizations (**Thessaloniki**).
- The **Sipan** (adults') and **Nanor** (teens'-Cyprus) **Dance Ensembles** give their annual performance. They dance at the "Multicultural Cyprus: The Armenian Community" event organized by the UNESCO. The **Sipan Ensemble** dances at an event celebrating May 28; joins Armenian Folk Singers and Musicians in concert; dances at the Ayia Napa International Festival; at the Mediterranean Folk Dance Festival in Larnaca and Yeri; at a farewell reception for the Ambassador of the Slovak Republic to Cyprus; at the Rotary Club Conference (**Cyprus**).
- The **Sydney Dance Company** celebrates the 50th anniversary of Hamazkayin in Australia and takes the stage with 240 dancers. The group is invited by the Los Angeles based Zvartnotz Dance Ensemble to participate in a joint performance (**Sydney**).
- The newly formed **Cilicia Dance Group** dances at events dedicated to: the Independence Day of Armenia on May 28; the Khanasor Expedition; the Treaty of Sévre; the Lisbon Act; the anniversary of the founding of the ARF; performs at the First Pan-Armenian Festival (**San Paulo**).
- The **Shiraz Dance Ensemble** showcases Armenian folk dances (**Montevideo**).
- The **Ani Dance Ensemble** (Canada) gives its annual performance; dances at the Ottawa Armenian Festival; offers dance lessons for toddlers ages 0-3 (**Montreal**).
- The **Arax Dance Troupe** (USA-West Coast) dances at the San Francisco City Hall Dance Festival (**San Francisco**).
- The **Erebuni Dance Institute and Ensemble** (Toronto) give their 3rd annual performance (proceeds are donated to help Syrian Armenians). The **Erebuni Dance Ensemble** celebrates renowned Armenian musicians under the theme "Dance and a Melody"; dances at the Zeytoun and Hadjen Folk Night; at an event on the occasion of May 28; at the AYF/ARF Winter Festival; at McMaster University's Pangaea multicultural event; offers a three-day dance workshop for children ages 6-13 (**Toronto**).

## CULTURAL ACTIVITIES-2013-2014



## ART

### EXHIBITIONS AT THE HAMAZKAYIN LUCY TUTUNJIAN ART GALLERY (LEBANON)

- Charles Khoury, Lamis Rammal, Sleiman Dia, Mohammad Abdallah, Mansour El Habre, Mona Ezzedine: *Collective Exhibition*.
- Carlos Sayadian: *Paintings*.
- Lucy Tutunjian: *"In tribute to Paul Guiragossian", paintings (for charitable purposes)*.
- Razmig Bertizian and Daria Hadichian: *"Emotions: Colors and Lines", paintings*.
- Krikor Agopian: *"There was a Garden", paintings*.
- Armen Jenterejian: *"Dreamy Aleppo", photography exhibition (for charitable purposes)*.
- Mushegh Mkhitarian: *"Peaceful History, Bread and Wine", Armenian-inspired collages*.
- Gago: *"Bronze Sculptures-2013"*.
- Beirut Art Fair: *Exhibiting at the international art fair with 50 other art galleries*.
- Vahé Barsoumian: *Paintings*.
- Vahé Berberian: *Paintings*.
- Shahé Der Haroutyounian: *"Heavenly Armenia" (ceramic, oxide, glaze)*.
- Ali Chams, Issa Halloum, Fatat Bahmad and Zeina Badran: *Collective Exhibition*.

### THE SANAHIN ART CENTRE IS FOUNDED IN MONTREAL

- The new Hamazkayin institution opens next to the Armenian Centre in April.
- The centre organizes exhibitions of works by local Armenian artists.

### THE ARSHILE GORKY ART STUDIO AND EXHIBITION HALL (TORONTO)

- The exhibition hall showcases Meruzhan Khachatrian's "Independence" painting series on the occasion of May 28.
- Portraits of Armenian musicians from the **Arshile Gorky Art Studio** are displayed at the **Erebuni Dance Ensemble's** performance.
- At an event celebrating Y. Charents students put on an exhibition of paintings that tend to depict the psychological states of the poet.
- The studio continues to offer painting classes for adults, teens and children as in the previous year.

### ARSHILE GORKY ART SCHOOL (ALEPPO)

Entries are accepted for a painting exhibition organized by the RA Ministry of Education and Science.

### TOROS ROSLIN ART SCHOOL (LEBANON)

- At the start of the school year 94 students are enrolled in the established curriculum.
- The school offers two new courses: Digital Painting and Sculpture.
- Artists Haroutyoun Torossian, Raffi Tokatlian, Krikor Norikian and Vahé Berberian conduct master classes for students.
- The school holds a student exhibition on the theme of the Armenian Genocide; organizes a painting contest with entries from all Armenian schools in Lebanon.
- An end-of-the-year exhibition showcases works by students.

### ORGANIZED BY REGIONAL CHAPTERS

- Student contest and exhibition: Paintings on the theme of the "Armenian Mother" (**UAE**).
- **"ARVESD"**: The 3rd annual exhibition of art attracting more than 220 art lovers (**Pasadena**).
- An exhibition of paintings by Shant Guiragossian (**San Francisco**).
- An exhibition of paintings by Meruzhan Khachatrian (**Boston**).
- The 9th Biennial Photography and Art Contest: Celebrating the 50th anniversary of the **Hamazkayin Society in Australia**; showcasing the works of 51 artists; 125 paintings, sculptures and photographs (**Sydney**).
- Design, publishing, distribution of educational posters on Armenian themes: "The Map of Armenia" (**Glendale**).



## THEATRE

### HAMAZKAYIN THEATRE GROUPS

- The **Hamazkayin Theatre Group of Valence** presents Hagop Baronian's *Alafranga* (À la Française) (**Valence, Nice, Lyon, Brussels, Marseille, Paris, Geneva**).
- The **Hamazkayin Theatre Unit** offers a course in poetry recitation, performs a work by Saroukhan at the "Life Goes on" event (**Aleppo**).
- The **Arek Children's and Youth Theatre School** opens its doors to 50 students; the program expands to 3rd grade.
- The **Arek Children's and Youth Theatre Group** presents The Epic of David of Sassoun (**Lebanon**).
- The **Kasbar Ipekian Theatre Company** presents:  
Vahè Katcha's Dinner for Savages and Eugène Ionesco's The Bald Soprano (**Lebanon**).
- The **Bedros Atamian Theatre Troupe** marks its 50th anniversary; honors previous stage directors; continues to present Francis Veber's Dinner for Schmucks (**Montreal**).
- The **George Sarkissian Theatre Troupe** presents George Apelian's We Became Millionaires (**UAE**).
- The **Hamazkayin Theatre Group of New York** stages Samuel Kosian's Life by the Cage (**New York**).
- The **Timag Theatre Group** presents Harout Tahmazian's In the Wrong Direction (**Cyprus**).

### PLAYS HOSTED BY REGIONAL CHAPTERS

- Vardan Petrossian's one man show: Gentlemen 50-50 (**Lebanon**).
- Lorne Shirinian's Monumental: A stage reading of the play (**Toronto**).
- Narek Durian's Don Juans in Marseille (**Glendale, San Francisco, Fresno, Toronto, Montreal**).
- Marie Rose Abousefian's solo performance: Tigran the Great - King of Armenia (**Toronto**).
- Vahè Berberian's solo comedy: If... (**San Francisco, Montreal, Lebanon**).

### THE HAMAZKAYIN STATE THEATRE

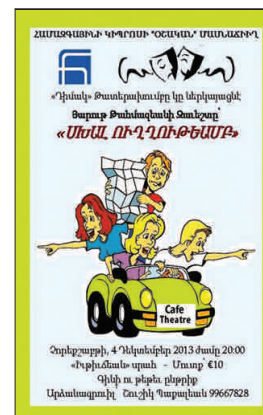
#### Festival of Armenian Theatre in Los Angeles

*Celebrating the 85th anniversary of Hamazkayin and under the auspices of the **Hamazkayin Central Board**, The **Regional Committee of Western USA** hosts the **Hamazkayin State Theatre** in Los Angeles.*

- *Performances: The group stages Under 44 Degrees and Sale (stage adaptations); H. Toumanian's Houri the Dumb.*
- *Composition Contest on the theme of Houri the Dumb takes place with the participation of Armenian schools.*
- *Visits: Members of the group tour the Armenian schools in Los Angeles amid great student excitement.*
- *Variety Show: Actors sing solo and in groups; they recite poems, perform readings and stage theatrical acts.*

#### The Theatre Company's 4th Visit to Lebanon

- *Performances: William Saroyan's A Cup of Goodness (based on The Time of Your Life) and the comedy Shan Aghchig (Sylvia).*
- *Cultural Night: Musical and theatrical performances by members of the group.*
- **Performances in Artzakh:** The group stages the plays Blaise and The Tragicomedy.



## MOVIES

### Screenings:

- Men by Edmond Keosayan; followed by discussion (**Lebanon**).
- Ethiopian Diary by Artur Bakhtamian; followed by discussion (**Armenia**).
- Enemy of the People by Zareh Tjeknavorian (**New York**).
- Without Anything by Dzovig Torikian; with an introduction (**Lebanon**).
- Figure of Armen by Marlene Edoyan (**Montreal**).
- The Legend of the Suram Fortress by Sergei Parajanov; followed by discussion (**Lebanon**).
- The Voice of Silence and The Priestess by Vigen Chaldanian (**Boston**).
- Disappearing Memories by Hayk Bianjian; followed by discussion (**Armenia**).
- Nostalgia by Frounze Dovlatian; followed by discussion (**Lebanon**).
- From Ararat to Zion by Edgar Baghdasarian; followed by discussion (**London**).
- Armenia: A Proven Axiom by Marianna Abrahamian and Angela Frangian (**London**).
- Garegin Njdeh by Hratch Keshishian (**London, Boston**).
- Armenian short films (**Boston**).
- I Left My Shoes in Istanbul by Nigol Bezjian; with an introduction (**London**).
- Milk, Carnation and a Godly Song by Nigol Bezjian (**London**).
- Miro of the Valley at an evening dedicated to the memory of Sos Sargsian (**Montreal, Washington**).
- Triangle at an evening dedicated to the memory of Sos Sargsian (**Lebanon**).
- The 8th **Pomegranate Film Festival** features 37 films from 16 countries and attracts more than 3000 viewers (**Toronto**).

## EDUCATION



### MELANKTON AND HAIG ARSLANIAN DJEMARAN (LEBANON)

- Djemaran renovates and equips the Norsiguian kindergarten.
- Sandra Arslanian produces Towards a Bright Future, a corporate film for Djemaran.
- Djemaran hires experts in orthophony and psychomotricity.
- Freedom fighter-singer Magich enthalls the students on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the war for the liberation of Artzakh.
- Varak Ketzemian talks about the war for the liberation of Artzakh to 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th graders.
- Visitors to the school include: Mher Hovhannisian, Deputy Director of YSU Institute for Armenian Studies; Vaghinak Vardanian, Head of the Department of Information and Telecommunication at the RA Ministry of Diaspora; Razmik Panossian, Director of the Armenian Communities Department of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.
- Authors Boghos Snabian and Hasmig Chahinian talk to the students.
- Students receive awards at: the book publishing contest held by the Vahè Sethian Printing Press; the Pan-Armenian Youth Contest held by the Armenian National Centre of Aesthetics; the Lebanese Chess Championship; the Mount Lebanon Inter-School Dance Competition and the HMEM/LEVAM sports tournaments.
- A total of 24 students graduate from Djemaran. 22 out of 23 students succeed in the French Baccalaureate exams.
- Graduation ceremonies for kindergarten and high school students and a kermes mark the end of the school year.

### THE ARMENOLOGICAL INSTITUTE OF HAMAZKAYIN (ALEPPO)

- The institute moves from one location to another due to security reasons and continues to operate in the war-ravaged city.
- After completing a 4 year program 14 students receive their degrees between 2011- 2013.

### THE MARSEILLE DJEMARAN (FRANCE)

- Following a demand made 2 years ago, the French Ministry of Education places Grade 11 under contract.
- The school receives donations from the Armenian Fund of France, the Armenian Blue Cross of France, the Napoleon Bullukian and Gulbenkian Foundations.
- More than 205 supporters attend the annual dinner which raises 107 thousand Euros in donations.
- The school announces an anonymous donation of 150 thousand Euros for the construction of the sports and cultural complex.
- The construction of the theatre in the sports and cultural complex is completed.
- Students participate in the programs of the Hamazkayin **Courants d'Art** cultural association which operates on the school premises.
- Martin Melkonian discusses Zabel Yesayan's novel My Soul Exiled from a contemporary perspective.
- Students of Year 8 travel to Armenia to commemorate the Armenian Genocide.
- The Alumni Association holds a dance night and offers orientation programs for students.
- A total of 16 students graduate from the Marseille Djemaran in 2013, with a success rate of 100% in the French Baccalaureate exams.

## FORUM

***An opportunity for university students to come together in an Armenian environment; to learn about:***

***Armenian history and about complex matters of Armenian concern in today's world, the importance and means of preserving Armenian cultural values, the social and national issues facing the Armenian youth.***

In 2013 the Hamazkayin Cultural Forum brings together 40 students from Armenia, Artzakh, Javakhk, Tbilisi, USA, Canada, Australia, England, Lebanon, Syria, France, Cyprus, UAE and Istanbul.

During their 17 day stay in Armenia the participants

- visit museums, monuments, monasteries, churches, schools, universities, natural places,
- listen to Samuel Karapetian's explanations of architecture, to Garo Hovhanessian's lectures on The Armenian Question and The Definition of a Leader, to Vahé Tashjian's presentation of the Houshamadyan website and Vardan Marashlian's introduction to the Repat Armenia Foundation, to Elke Hartman's and Garo Hovhanessian's lectures on "Who is Armenian?" (Followed by discussions),
- attend cultural events, exchange ideas and establish friendships.

***A new chapter opens in the history of the Forum: The participants also travel to Artzakh, where they are introduced to the cultural and historical values of the region. They also focus on the military achievements of the region and the problems it faces.***





## GOAL-ORIENTED PROJECTS AND NEW AREAS OF ACTIVITIES

### DELEGATION TO ISTANBUL

**By the initiative of the Central Board two of its members are officially delegated to Istanbul.**

*Aim:* Establish contact with the Armenian community in Istanbul; learn about their expectations of Hamazkayin; collaboration in the areas of culture and education.

*Meetings:* with representatives of Armenian associations in Istanbul, the Hrand Dink Foundation and the Anadolu Kültür organization; the editors of Marmara, Jamanag, Agos newspapers and Aras publishers.

### LEVON SHANT THEATRE AWARDS

*Aim:* Supporting the development of contemporary Armenian theatre, discovering new creative talents and directions.

*Themes:* National and universal values, the search for self and identity, the hero of our times.

*Participation:* A total of 51 authors from Armenia, Artzakh and the Diaspora submit unpublished works.

*Awards Ceremony:* Takes place on 17 July 2013 in Armenia; the winners receive monetary prizes.

*An anthology* of the 13 best entries, **13 Plays**, is published and launched.

### NAYIRI LIBRARY OF ELECTRONIC DICTIONARIES

The number of digitized dictionaries grows to 47 with the financial support of the **Hamazkayin Central Executive Board**.

The Nayiri Library adds the digitized versions of 2 more dictionaries:

New Dictionary of the Armenian Language; Handy Dictionary of the Armenian Language.

### SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION SCHOLARSHIP

*Aim:* Meet the demand for qualified school administrators in the Armenian Diaspora;

Provide the means for Armenian students who already hold a BA or BS to earn a master's degree in school administration.

*Terms:* Each year the **Hamazkayin Central Executive Board** will offer a scholarship opportunity to one new student.

Students can pursue their studies in English or in French. In return, they are required to sign an agreement and assume the moral responsibility to serve for a minimum of 5 years after graduation, in an Armenian school.

Applicants are selected on a competitive basis.

The scholarship application is available on the Hamazkayin website at: [www.hamazkayin.com](http://www.hamazkayin.com)

### PREPARING NEW TEACHERS

*Preparing skilled teachers and educators in the field of teaching Armenian subjects is a board initiative that came into effect in 2012.*

Applications are accepted from Diasporan Armenians. Candidates study education in their own country.

After graduating with a BA degree and a Teaching Diploma,

they should enroll in the Western Armenian program at the Yerevan State University.

The Hamazkayin Central Board covers their full tuition fees.

Students interested in joining the project can contact the Hamazkayin Central Board office at:

[central@hamazkayin.com](mailto:central@hamazkayin.com); 00961-4-715684

### HAGOP GARABENTZ SCHOLARSHIP

The scholarship is awarded to 5 students at the YSU Faculty of Philology.

### ALLOCATION OF REVENUES FROM HAMAZKAYIN FUNDS - 2013

**Meguerdich and Knar Karakashian Fund** (Djemaran)

\$1800 for the M. and H. Arslanian Djemaran's Student Fund

**Zohrab Bosnoyan Fund** (Scholarships for Djemaran students and graduates)

\$660 for the M. and H. Arslanian Djemaran's Student Fund

\$3000 for three graduates from M. and H. Arslanian Djemaran, for their first year at the university

**Basdermajian, Mazmanian and Hamazkayin Publishing Funds**

\$5000 for Hamazkayin Publishing Projects

**Meguerdich and Azniv Sarkissian Fund** (Armenological studies)

\$3000 for the Armenological Institute of Hamazkayin in Aleppo

### ANTOINE KEHEYAN-SIR FUND

Antoine Keheyian (Sir), who devoted half a century of his life to the Hamazkayin Djemaran, dies on 31 January 2013.

Djemaran starts a scholarship fund to keep the experienced and beloved teacher's memory alive.

The fund's investment income will be transferred to the M. and H. Arslanian Djemaran's Student Fund.

## GALSTAUN COLLEGE

**AN ARMENIAN ENVIRONMENT IN SYDNEY**

*Galstaun College is an educational institution that has been operating for more than twenty eight years under the auspices of the Regional Committee of Hamazkayin in Australia. It is the only Armenian day school catering for Kindergarten to Year 12 in Australia, striving to ensure the survival of Australian-Armenian generations into the future.*

*At first glance it looks like a mountain-top village where little paths lead to cottages through bushes swelling in perfect unison. Windows reflect clusters of clouds bundling the sun. Colorful scripts emerge from inside; children's handicrafts dangle in mid air; posters of different sizes adorn the walls, and rows of little heads, smiling faces pop up everywhere.*

*The two high school buildings rise above the rest of the seven structures. The campus sprawls over an area of 40 thousand square meters interspersed by green sports grounds and surrounded by scenic nature and wildlife, where kangaroos roam and occasionally leap into the school premises to surprise the children- it can also happen the other way around.*

*Further beyond, the mountains are piled upon each other. Situated on top of the second highest peak in Sydney, the location of Galstaun College itself is a blessing and a curse.*

*It depends on how one looks at it. Far from the traffic, the social threats and the pollution of the city, and in tune with nature's rhythms, the college is more akin to a luxury campus not every community could afford. It presents itself as a safe Armenian environment, an extension of home, where the architectural design supports the social-familial atmosphere.*

*However, the majority of the 240 students come from far-off districts, making a two-hour bus ride through endless highways up to the college. Not everyone would be up to this challenge as most parents would admit, and so would the college administrators.*

*Hence, the small number of students, which could be seen as a disadvantage, sometimes resulting with only a handful of students in each class, and that, in turn, could lead to a limited choice of subjects offered and to less competitive outcomes. The college soon loses its charm, and Saturday schools provide an alternative for some.*

*What follows is a feature report based on interviews done with a few dozen individuals in Sydney. It reflects the visions, experiences and concerns of founders, principals, teachers, parents and students at the Hamazkayin Saturday and day schools.*





## “AN EXISTENTIAL PROBLEM”

The school has developed up to the present from its rather improbable beginnings, while the twenty eight years of its life have been marked by an ongoing struggle for survival.

“The opening of the first school was postponed. The building was flooded with mud and water due to heavy rains and it collapsed,” recalls Vazken Pailagian, one of the founders of the project for a day school in Sydney.

Three committees were created to organize the founding of the school. These included committees on academic education, publicity measures and construction matters. The foundation stone of the school-building was laid in 1986 with contributions from community members and benefactors Arshak and Sophie Galstaun who donated 250 thousand dollars for their namesake school in Terrey Hills.



***“What we did was an obligation rather than a benefaction, specially my obligation. The Armenian people, the Armenian benefactors have provided free education to me. Do not call me a benefactor, for I am paying my debt to my people.”***

***ARSHAK GALSTAUN, extract from the benefactor’s speech (1985)***

“There was no Regional Committee of Hamazkayin back then; there was only one chapter,” remembers Hagop Zaratian, a member of the first school board as he describes the efforts made to establish a day school under the leadership of Hamazkayin Sydney Chapter. The purpose of the initiative was to preserve the identity of the newly forming Armenian community. In 1989 the school moved under the auspices of the newly formed Regional Chapter of Hamazkayin in Australia.

“Our main concern was the issue of preserving Armenian identity. In fact, the school was founded by a generation of community members, who were self-taught in Armenian. First we opened Saturday schools. Each of us was allocated an area and a map. We picked up students in cars, waited in the street for two hours until they finished their classes, and dropped them off,” recalls Pailagian. “However, we need a day school to prepare a person for life and for higher education, to imbue the child with the Armenian spirit, to instill a commitment to serve.”

“Our goal was to have a school of this quality in our community, so that parents would willingly enroll their children, and there I think we at least partially succeeded. In the beginning it was doing really great. We were obliged to turn away 5-6 kindergarten students every year and parents used to raise hell. It wasn’t bad of course. We used to register up to 38 students for the next year.”

The enthusiasm of the community on the one hand, and the addition of a new grade level each year on the other, stressed the need for a spacious building. Thus, the opening of the present Arshak and Sophie Galstaun College campus crowning the picturesque hill of Ingleside was itself the outcome of rarely mentioned procedures.

Pailagian and another co-founder, Dr. Paul Sarian had mortgaged their houses and Arshak Galstaun had deposited an additional sum over a donation of half a million dollars to pay the debt owed to the contractors, which would pave the way for the opening of the school in 1991.

It was an equally complicated issue to receive permits to run an Armenian school. The founders hoped to draw from the country’s multicultural reality to convince the authorities that “they themselves could build better Australians and better Armenians,” as Sarian recalls.

The introduction of the Armenian language as a subject in the national HSC exams was something of a trick itself. “There was talk of expanding into global markets. We proposed entering the Soviet Union via Armenia and said: ‘The linguistic diversity of a country contributes to its wealth. Having learnt Armenian, our children would be able to communicate with the citizens of Armenia who also speak Russian and in this way we could open up to Soviet countries in the future.’ I wonder whether it was convincing enough for the authorities, but they accepted it,” adds Sarian and laughs, only to point out: “More than 5000 people attended the opening ceremony of the new campus. They respected the community. They thought we had control over 5000 votes.”

However, as the generational transition got underway, the day school experienced its share of shocks. “The school did not exist as a result of the community’s fervent need, but rather because of the atmosphere we had created,” explains Zaratian. “And today it has become an existential problem because of manpower shortage and budget issues,” states Heros Grigorian, the liaison between the Hamazkayin Regional Committee and the school board.

To the extent that the Galstaun College Board has subdivided the 60 thousand square meters of land surrounding the campus buildings and will lease the lots in the process of rebuilding trust in the school, while college administrators think they have to knock door to door in a publicity campaign for an Armenian day school in Sydney.

***“We met an Australian man named Smoky Dawsen, who offered his land at a convenient price. He was a philanthropist and loved kids. He wished to have a school built on his ranch.”***

***VAZKEN PAILAGIAN, a founder of the school***

The newly constructed multicultural hall will be named after the famous Australian singer Smokey Dawsen. The hall is being furnished and there are plans to rent it out as income-generating property. It will provide a much-needed venue for the school’s sports activities and especially for Homenetmen’s basketball teams.



## “WHAT DIFFERENTIATES US IS THE LANGUAGE”



The number of non-Armenian speaking students enrolling at Galstaun College has been rising in recent years. It has reached 60 percent in 2014. The classroom is the only place where children can hear Armenian, which is no longer used as the language of daily communication in the playground, households or clubs.

“About 70 percent of the students can express themselves in Armenian orally and in written form. However, the community lacks the environment to support the school’s efforts, even the best students forget their Armenian within a few years of finishing school,” says Asadour Shoukayan, the Ex-Head of Armenian Studies at Galstaun College, who has taught for 25 years. “To tell the truth, we are not able to fulfill our vision of Armenian upbringing.”

The teachers believe that using Armenian as a common means of communication should be the main goal of the college. “What differentiates us

from being cosmopolitan is the language,” says the high school Armenian teacher Arpy Tavitian.

“First we should encourage children to speak in Armenian. Then we should make use of literature and cultural references to help them feel more Armenian, develop Armenian perspectives and a stronger sense of Armenian identity. If our forefathers have found it necessary to preserve their language and traditions for centuries, then we, as an ancient people, carry a very heavy burden on our shoulders: ensuring the continuity of our millennia-old history and not to lose it,” adds Aida Sarian, the Eastern Armenian language teacher.

Galstaun College Principal Nishan Basmajian finds it necessary to cultivate a learning environment that encourages more people to learn Armenian; to offer Armenian language courses for parents and Armenian language conversation classes in the primary; as well as to promote the value of learning Armenian in the high school years, where the Armenian language can be considered as a means of boosting the average scores of the students, since it is a subject that is double marked in the HSC exams. Moreover, students are offered an Accelerated Armenian Language Program which enables them to sit their HSC exams in Year 11 instead of Year 12. A high score in Armenian can replace the low score of one of the 5 subjects required for the HSC exams in Year 12.

“The strategic importance of Armenian as a practical language has been underestimated. Whereas to understand a culture it is necessary to learn its language,” says Basmajian.

All over the Diaspora teachers work hard to adapt Armenian textbooks and instructional methods to meet the students’ needs and abilities. Teachers at Galstaun College do the same. Moreover, they are obliged to ensure that teaching strategies in their classrooms are aligned with the state-mandated requirements of teaching Armenian as a foreign language (See the next page).

Teachers are relatively free to set their own goals in teaching Armenian in the primary, until Year 6. Armenian language and history textbooks prepared by the Western Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church of North America are used with their specific guidelines for teaching comprehension, conversation, vocabulary, handwriting, spelling, grammar and reading, along with workbooks and exercise books.

## ARMENIAN AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ASL)

The Armenian as a Second Language program (ASL) is designed in 2014 to assist students in their first years of primary school. It is accompanied by the reinstatement of the English as a Second Language program (ESL) which helps weaker students acquire the language skills necessary to join their mainstream classmates.

ASL offers the non-Armenian speaking students the opportunity to learn Armenian. “The need for such a program was made apparent by the relative growth in the number of children who come from households where Armenian is not spoken. Teaching Armenian is not a priority for some parents, whereas for others it is so, but they lack the means to teach the language. It is relatively easier to work with the children of the second group because they are willing to learn Armenian and they just need guidance. It is a bit difficult to work with the children of the first group because they lack the will,” explains Irina Ghougassian, the ASL teacher.

“We have divided the students into groups based on their grade level. We have 4-5 students from each class (about 40 percent of the students in each class). Instruction is tailored to meet the needs of the students.”



## ARMENIAN HISTORY AND CULTURE

The college has introduced a new course in Armenian History and Culture through the Armenian Virtual College. Those Year 10 students who have not selected Armenian language as part of their HSC studies take this online course in English (the ones who have selected Armenian language do not take it).

The aim of this interactive course is “to equip students who are weak in Armenian with a wealth of knowledge about Armenian history and culture and to strengthen their sense of Armenian belonging,” explains Ghougassian, who teaches the subject.

*Year 10 trips to Armenia and Artzakh play a key role in fostering a sense of Armenian belonging.*



## STATE-MANDATED ARMENIAN PROGRAMS

*Teacher: What do we do in our leisure time?*

*Students: We play football, we watch TV...*

*Teacher: What do you think children should not watch on TV?*

*Students: Violence, improper scenes...*

*Teacher: What view of life do such scenes leave us with?*

*Students: They give us an unrealistic view of life.*

These are Year 11 students learning Armenian vocabulary through questions and answers. The teacher introduces new vocabulary about “Leisure Activities” in both Armenian and English. She adds the Armenian equivalent of the word “realistic” to a list of words on the whiteboard.



“We are obliged to follow the mandated method of instruction. It is designed in such a way as to make it possible for non-Armenian students, who enter the program in Year 7, to learn the language,” explains Arpy Tavitian.

Until a decade ago Armenian speaking children of Armenian speaking parents attended Galstaun College. Armenian textbooks that were used in the Middle East or North America were being used effectively in Armenian education classes. “There were no state-mandated requirements or regulations and we were able to organize instruction based on our perspectives,” recalls Asadour Shoukayan.

However, Galstaun College educators were confronted with the problem of developing their own new model in 2002, to meet the requirements of the new, state-mandated language education in high school.

“The prescribed syllabus has its merits and its drawbacks,” states Shoukayan. “On the one hand, it aims at improving the students’ fluency when speaking a language, as well as expanding their listening, writing and comprehension skills; on the other hand, the teacher has to choose from a set of predefined and mandated themes to plan the program.”

The idea of teaching Armenian and transmitting a sense of Armenian identity through the language was transformed as a result of this constraint, especially in the high school, where students learn Armenian as part of their HSC (Higher School Certificate) study program.

“The mandated themes were not of importance to us and they started to restrict us. It takes an ingenious teacher to choose appropriate themes to convey the Armenian spirit and knowledge as best as possible,” explains Shoukayan.

Tavitian, who has been toiling at writing Armenian lessons based on the state-mandated themes for years, tries to incorporate historical information into language instruction.

Thus, “Significant Events in Our National History”, a lesson written for Years 7, 8 and 9, introduces the students to the theme of the Armenian Genocide. The class kicks off with a question and answer session. Students learn new vocabulary words like domination, minority, second-class citizen and injustice, associated with the theme. The lesson, a one page text written by the teacher, is followed by a series of exercises in vocabulary building and practice, grammar, sentence construction, translation and comprehension.

“This can be an effective method of instruction in communities where Armenian is not the spoken language. However, the problem is the lack of resources,” stresses Tavitian. “Imagine the teacher first writing the Armenian program which needs to be approved by the NSW Board of Studies, then creating a lesson plan that matches the program’s needs, weaving a narrative out of theme words, recording dialogues with other teachers, teaching the lesson, and after teaching the lesson realizing the need for improvements... That’s a very heavy role; the teacher is the author of the textbook, the instructor, the planner and the examiner.”

Moreover, the lessons must be written both in Western Armenian and Eastern Armenian dialects in preparation for the HSC exams, in which students have to be able to understand both versions and answer in either one. This means that Tavitian has to transliterate the texts she writes in Western Armenian to Eastern Armenian (in classical orthography). Since spelling is not required in the program set by the NSW Board of studies, students are only taught some of the basic rules of spelling, such as the use of the negative prefix.

Tavitian “envies” Languages Other than English instruction programs in Australia and compares them to her own attempts to develop the high school Armenian program, deeming it “poor”.

“It is not possible to teach the Armenian language by using conventional models as a template. We need Armenologists, educators, philologists, who are good at English, to become familiar with the vocabulary used by members of the community; to visit the schools; hear the language spoken in the classes; study the needs; examine the Australian curriculum and tailor it to meet the needs of the community. It’s about bringing a flexible mindset,” she says. “It would be a dream come true, if that wish came true.”



*There is a particular need for Armenian books that interest children at the Chaprazian Library which holds around 12 thousand English books and 500 Armenian books.*

## “THEY LEARN ARMENIAN HISTORY THROUGH SONGS”



High school art students create their vision of Armenia. Their works will be on display in an exhibition at the school.

Armenian monuments and symbols will be reproduced on tiles to be installed on the façade between the two high school buildings.



Music is mandatory from primary to the end of Year 8. The college has instrumental groups- the string, percussion and wind ensembles. Armenian music is incorporated into the Year 7 and 8 curriculum. The administration has purchased Armenian traditional musical instruments through the Hamazkayin Armenia Office and is planning for distance learning via Skype. Students have started their duduk lessons with the school teacher.



Cultural performances and staged scenes at the Nalbandian Hall mark historical events. The Armenian Genocide is commemorated on ANZAC Day (the anniversary of the first major military action fought by Australian and New Zealand forces); Armenian Republic Day is celebrated on Grandparents Day.



Primary students learn the Song of Toast. In the musical Haik and Belus they welcome the legendary Armenian Patriarch Haik with this song. The teacher explains the meaning of the song and defines the words. It is an occasion to refer to other epic heroes as well, such as Ara the Beautiful, Brave Vartan, and to other battles, such as Avarayr and Sardarabad. “They learn and develop a sense of Armenian history through songs; they share the Armenian spirit through songs,” says Betty Marshlian, the Armenian language and music teacher.

Haik and Belus is an English musical with Armenian songs, dances and poems selected by Armenian teachers. “The aim is for each child to be given a part,” explains Sukli Barrel, the high school music teacher who has written the fictional plot. And the message? “The Armenians are struggling for freedom and to have their own laws.”



The college has taken the first steps to establish a polyphonic choir.



Many of the students have joined the Hamazkayin dance groups and the HMEM sports groups. They also participate in community events. “Those who are members of Armenian clubs have a stronger sense of Armenian identity and a broader exposure to general Armenian knowledge,” states Arpy Tavitian.



## A SAFE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

For Australian-Armenian parents sending their children to Galstaun College is more of a choice than a necessity. As Nishan Basmajian puts it, "Placing their children in an Armenian school is of less importance than making sure they are in a safe environment."

Nora Sevagian, the liaison between the community and the college further explains: "Sending their children to an all-Armenian school is considered an advantage by parents, as they are aware that we have a safe and clean environment, free from drugs, cigarettes and other social vices, which are quite widespread in Australia's schools."

How does the school manage to maintain a healthy social environment?

"There exists a set of punishments, but then again, we haven't had the need to use them, for the large majority of the children come from conservative families and they feel it is their responsibility to alert staff of any issues," explains Arpy Soghomonian, the school psychologist. "Students at other schools do not have a similar responsibility, nor do they have the means. Here they feel close and they trust. The small numbers of students allows the children to receive individual attention, and the parents are cooperative."



*Administrators at Galstaun College hope to attract students from the ARS Happy Kids, the only Armenian kindergarten for children aged 2-5 years in Sydney.*



*The college has its own basketball and football teams and takes part in interschool tournaments.*

The school environment is shaped by parents, while the connections parents make through the school play a role in ensuring the continuity of the Australian-Armenian community. "The families of the students value the sense of belonging to a community. After graduating many students keep the same circle of friends," says Soghomonian. However, she expresses a concern: "Student behavior indicates they belong to different generations of Armenians in Australia. The majority of primary students are third generation Australian-Armenians who are less aware of their Armenian identity and have a less strong sense of belonging to one big family."

Nevertheless the school continues to be a place where Armenian social and familial traditions are maintained, where close family relations are valued and teachers care about their students. Even though the Australian educational system expects more formal behavior from teachers and "takes warmth for weakness", as Arpy Tavitian puts it, there is a real sense of closeness between Armenian teachers and students. "They feel a sense of home when they see us. They even call us 'auntie' when we are not their teacher anymore," says Betty Marashlian.

In such an atmosphere, bullying is minimal compared to the majority of other schools in Australia. The college implements anti-bullying programs for students and parents. "Currently we are focusing more on cyberbullying than emotional or physical bullying," says Soghomonian. "Many parents are not familiar with the proper use of modern devices. It's important to raise awareness. If we are too strict we can lose control."

## HARMONY DAY

They call it Harmony Day in the primary, and in the high school it is called Respect, Understanding and Acceptance of One Another. This is when students from different backgrounds mix together and interact.

The program has come about following conflicts between Armenian and non-Armenian students. When Kaylar Michaelian, ex-principal of Galstaun College heard complaints, he decided to find an educational solution to the problem. "I said: let us provide the opportunity for our kids who have raged against one another, to meet and understand each other; to replace hostility with friendship," he recalls.

The program was immediately endorsed by Jewish, Islamic and Catholic schools and a Harmony Day was organized. Since then, each year a participating school puts on a program of activities and the children receive exposure to the cultures they come from.

"We succeeded in eliminating hostility; students made friends with children from other backgrounds and their attitude changed," adds Michaelian.



## TESTIMONIALS GIVEN TO THE HAMAZKAYIN NEWSLETTER

*"The survival and development of this institution, which was built with great sacrifices, is a vital necessity for the entire Armenian Diaspora...It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that without this school, it is unlikely that the Armenian community in Australia would survive for more than three or four decades."*

STEPAN KERKYASHARIAN  
Chair of Community Relations Commission of NSW

*"The role of the Galstaun College is two-fold: First, it is a symbol of the survival of our nation, of the complexity of our civilization, of our pride in our nation and the importance that education has had in Armenian communities. Second, it functions as one of the pillars of existence of the Armenian community in Australia. The school's role is even more emphasized in the present day climate, where it is becoming more difficult to maintain your roots and very easy to assimilate."*

Dr. ZORIK AVAKIAN

## STUDENT LEADERS TALK

*Teachers trust them, students trust them, and they are helpful, caring and understanding - these are some of the attributes of elected student leaders. What follows are excerpts from interviews with high school leaders - also with graduates- who talk about their experiences with the college in a mixed language: conversations often start in Armenian and change into English. One cannot but think that the struggle to maintain the status of Armenian as a spoken language takes an abstract turn due to the dominance of Australian culture.*

*"I like the small community aspect of the school, the chance of having Armenian friends, the close knit classes which are better for educational purposes."*

Daniel Nedel

*"It's important for my parents and me to preserve our Armenian identity, to learn our language, to be able to speak it through the next century as well. That's one of the best ways to maintain your identity as an Armenian. Also this school gives us an opportunity to go to Armenia, which is very beneficial; it helps us to better understand the history, culture and language we learn."*

Sarin Zaitounian

*"We learn in an Armenian atmosphere here and we feel like family. All my friends attend the same school. It's fun to learn together every day. We are very close to our teachers who have guided us for years to enable us to work at our best."*

Patil Sevagian

*"My parents have come from Armenia. Having moved to a foreign country they didn't want to lose their culture. It was important for them to send me to an Armenian school to make sure that we do not lose our self-awareness in a foreign country. We feel proud to attend an Armenian school and to educate people about who the Armenians are; we can tell them about our traditions, our culture and our music."*

Aida Lepedjian

*The "Voice of Students" monthly program is broadcast from the Sardarabad Armenian Radio Station. Students read 40 minutes of school news, holiday features and poems prepared by their teachers.*

## WHAT GRADUATES THINK\*

*"In the absence of an Armenian school our community would disintegrate very quickly, because Australia is a far away country and it is very easy to assimilate into Australian culture. I studied psychology and worked as a psychologist at the school for 6 years. The community would like to see things change at the school. But it is difficult to make changes without support. There is a lot of pressure to understand what the community is and to know where we come from."*

MELANIE KHACHADOURIAN (Graduate of 1998)

*"The school gave me the opportunity to establish important relationships and also the understanding of how important it is to be part of a community: it gives a sense of belonging and security; it is a very good anchor. However, the school should also expose the students to the rest of the world. Otherwise, once students get the opportunity to leave their close community for the outside world and experience freedom, they would break away."*

SHANT SAFARIAN (Graduate of 2008)

\*Galstaun College does not currently have an alumni association. However, graduates have provided mentoring services to senior secondary students as part of the College Mentoring Program.



## PARENTS ACT AS A BRIDGE



**WORKING BEE:** The Maintenance Committee holds a working bee each term with a team of volunteers - parents and friends, who have painted the interiors of the school in 2012 and have set up a safety fence around the kindergarten in 2014.



**A NEW PLAYGROUND:** Through the tireless efforts of the Parents' Committee and donors new playground equipment built to modern standards is installed for primary students in 2014. The college has recently added a computer room.

Parents act as a bridge between the community and the college. The Parents' Committee organizes fundraising events; runs the school canteen and the school uniform store. Compared to schools with high numbers of students, the committee generates four times more revenues. It has decided to expand its operations in 2014 and to realize an educational program.

*"We serve the school, we keep the children happy with our service."*

*Taline Parseghian*

*"We moved from Melbourne to Sydney for the sole purpose of enrolling our children in Galstaun College and giving them the opportunity to have classmates from Armenian background."*

*Natalie Boshnagian*

Natalie's children take a 40 minute bus ride to Galstaun College. Taline and Natalie provide volunteer service, catering food at the school canteen. They are originally from Lebanon and their main focus is to give their children an Armenian upbringing in an Armenian environment.

However, Australian-born parents have higher expectations. "In Australia now, education is very child oriented and focuses on the needs of the child rather than the wishes of the parents," stresses Melanie Khachadourian, a member of the school board and the liaison between the alumni and the college. "Parents invest in their children's education in the early ages. There is competition in parenting; there are feelings of guilt for not doing enough. Schools are compared and ranked. The Australian culture is very much like that today."

Australian-born Mark Atamian, who has an educational background in engineering and law and doesn't speak Armenian, has also moved to send his children to Galstaun College. He shares similar thoughts with Melanie and the women from Lebanon. "Location is something that people can design their lives around. When you look at the demographic pattern of the Armenian population in Sydney, it is always going to be a challenge to keep up an Armenian school, unless you have two schools: between east and west and between north and south," he says. "My kids are teaching me Armenian. It can be a very powerful message for a child that they are teaching the parents something."

But he also believes that the school can demand more of students academically, provide different programs to aid the learning process and instill the desire and motivation to constantly learn. "The chess lessons were an excellent start," says Atamian. "Trusted learning and development activities offer opportunities for children to explore their minds and to improve their mental skills."

Arpy Mouradian, a member of the school board and the liaison between the Parents Committee and the board, stresses the same point: "It's not enough to merely focus on success in the HSC exams, you have to serve as a guide to best prepare the student for life."

*"We have four children and we decided to send them to Galstaun College, so that they learn about their identity and culture. I am Armenian by choice."*

*Lea Hovivian (non-Armenian parent)*

*The existence of Galstaun College was a positive thing for us. I want my children to learn their language and culture, to know where they come from, where they want to go."*

*Sophie Petragian (a parent from Marseille-France)*

*"My children had an Armenian upbringing at Galstaun College and are attending the university."*

*Silva Nazarian (previous parent)*



*Primary students learning chess with a teacher from the Sydney Chess Academy achieve good results in interschool competitions.*

## WITH THE VISION OF IMPROVING STANDARDS

According to a 2014 Galstaun College Board survey 55 per cent of parents place top priority on academic performance.

"My main challenge would be to improve the academic standard," says Edward Demirdjian, a school teacher, who will take over the position of principal. He has decided to introduce some improvements focusing on the accountability of teachers, students and parents, based on proper communication, support and cooperation.

"Discipline comes first, followed by structure and routine. You have to create a learning culture and environment. With our small class sizes the teaching is very much focused on students who have difficulties, while students at the top are not challenged to work to their full potential," he says. "We have been working along those lines to change that."

Indeed, the school has been focusing on differentiation across the curriculum, teaching at different learning levels and varying teaching strategies to generate different levels of outcomes, helping everyone to achieve their potential. A focus group has been formed to implement a culture of thinking across the college, applying strategies for developing the critical literacy of the students. Another strategy has been to open the door between the two youngest classrooms, thus creating immediate contact between kindergarten children and promoting the development of basic skills. Students also take part in interschool math, debating and public speaking competitions. Parents can access the Galstaun College Edumate Portal to track their child's academic performance and attendance.



*New graduates.*

discussion rather than a source of facts. We do not envisage tech-based education, for the syllabuses do not lead to that path."

Dean of Primary Lauren Sciacca believes that teachers must strike a balance between expecting students to provide ready answers in exams and learning how to learn. "We are keen for teachers to take professional development courses," she says. "Teachers are constantly in contact with other schools and other teachers to see what everyone else is doing, because when we improve the teaching we can also improve the children's abilities."

"Very fundamentally, we teach holistically," explains Student Leadership Coordinator Vicki Vartanians. "We are a community school and therefore there is a big emphasis on values, attitudes and morals within our teaching and learning, as well as a mixture of student centered and teacher centered independent learning, utilizing technology, practical experiences, cooperating excursions, trying more and more to take the children out of the school walls to expand their learning experiences."

Improving standards at Galstaun College is a matter of top priority also for the Regional Committee of Hamazkayin in Australia.

In answer to the question as to what they would like to see achieved at Galstaun College, the committee affirms: "To ensure students reach their full potential academically and become familiar with their culture which has been in existence for thousands of years; to raise the responsible, productive, dynamic citizens and leaders of tomorrow, generations imbued with the national spirit, who uphold the Armenian language and culture, our national dreams and aspirations; as well as to preserve the environment that promotes a true sense of Armenian belonging, away from assimilation, alienation and corruption, where students can get acquainted with the history of Hamazkayin and its scope of activities."

"If the community fails to provide support for the existence of a day school, then the rest of all community functions play only a marginal role," concludes Vicken Kalloghlian, Head of the Galstaun College Board.



*Awards are part of education policy at Galstaun College.*

The college follows the mandated New South Wales Board of Studies curriculum which is related to the national curriculum. Strategies in teaching and learning, as well as styles of assessment are prescribed. Inspectors go through the programs and provide guidelines for improvement. The school meets national and state requirements for teacher accreditation.

"We have a bit of flexibility in the interpretation of the Board of Studies syllabus. Also, the nature of teaching and learning has become much more student centered in the mandated syllabus," says Gillian Forester, the Acting Head of Curriculum. "We try to make sure that knowledge is not received passively and we work to enhance the understanding and application of knowledge. Textbooks are becoming more and more of a source of



## HAMAZKAYIN SATURDAY SCHOOLS

### MESROB MASHDOTZ – MATHEOSSIAN SCHOOL (Melbourne)

The opening of the Armenian Centre, which houses the school, takes place in 2014, in the presence of benefactors Haroutyoun and Sonia Matheossians who have donated 250 thousand dollars to the project. Kindergarten and primary students, a total of 50 children, move from leased space to private classrooms. Using various Armenian textbooks, teachers develop instructional plans based on student needs. Eight volunteers teach Western Armenian and Armenian history; they try to imbue a sense of Armenian spirit through songs, recitations, dances and theatre related activities.

*"It is of great satisfaction to us that our graduates participate in the activities of different groups at the Armenian Centre," says Zvart Vahrijian, the school principal.*



### HOVHANNES TOUMANIAN SCHOOL (Sydney-Ryde)

Eastern Armenian (in classical orthography), Armenian literature and history are taught at this school, which has 160 students, 20 volunteer teachers, 14 classes from K-9 and additional 2 classes: one for non-Armenian speakers, the other for non-Armenian parents who would like to learn Armenian. The administration organizes writing and recitation contests between Hamazkayin schools, invites students to join classes and gain insights into different instructional methods.

*"We don't mind who comes from where. We should be able to convey the feeling to the students that their interaction contributes to the unity of the community," says Robert Krikorian, the school principal.*



### TARKMANCHATZ SCHOOL (Sydney-Willoughby)

The school has a total of 80 students (K-6) who do not have the opportunity to speak or hear Armenian 6 days a week. Lessons are culled from Armenian textbooks suited to conditions in the Western world. Students get into the spirit of Armenian holidays through songs, poems and preparations for celebrations.

*"It would be wrong for the school to expect anything from the parents. All work must be carried out by the teachers. Otherwise we will not be able to get our students where we want them to be. We have adopted this type of educational approach. Armenian is learnt as a second language here," says Kaylar Michaelian, ex-principal of Galstaun College who is invited to develop strategies for the school's educational policy.*



### SEROP PAPAZIAN SCHOOL (Sydney- Fairfield)

The school implements a bilingual teaching approach at the kindergarten and primary levels, with a total of 30 students between the ages of 4 and 12. They learn from the first three books of Shaké Der Minasian's My Armenian Textbook series. Volunteer teachers occasionally take courses in teaching a foreign language to children. As in all Hamazkayin schools, students take part in community events.

*"We have teachers whose dominant language is not Armenian, who are not trained to teach Armenian, but they have the enthusiasm to teach the Armenian they know," says Linda Egenian, the school principal.*



## ORGANIZING THE DIASPORA



The term “diaspora” carries a sense of dispersion. “Diasporas”, in their elemental state, are scarcely organized. They might function in a few centres of power, which in turn are relocated over time, as in the case of the Armenian Diaspora. Several differences set diasporic communities apart and gradually widen the gap between them. They do, however, share some traits, like ethnic language, culture and traditions, and a set of unifying factors associated with their common homeland; the very powerful gravitational force that draws all to itself.

The same is true for the Armenian Diaspora. Moreover, there are several “diasporas” within the Armenian Diaspora: the traditional Western and Middle Eastern Diaspora; the traditional Eastern European and Russian Diaspora; and engendered by the emigration from Armenia following the second independence, the new Diaspora that is being formed besides the traditional diasporas.

In its elemental state the Armenian Diaspora itself is disorganized and does not have an all-encompassing program and leadership.

And yet, the Diaspora has a very important role to play at this current juncture in the life of the Armenian nation.

First of all, the Diaspora is an important source of power for Armenia. It is the sea for landlocked Armenia, both in the sense of connecting the country to the outer world and in its capacity to act as a source of reserves and supplies. Indeed, the Diaspora is rich in financial terms, in human resources spanning various scientific and academic fields, in successful businesses and modern institutions, as well as in its capacity to exert political leverage in the countries where Armenian communities live. The Diaspora should greatly contribute to the process of stabilizing and strengthening Armenia in the following decades.

Secondly, we should not forget the intrinsic value of the Diaspora as an essential component of the Armenian nation that due to its worldwide dispersion has become the tangible proof of the violation of the nation's rights. The Diaspora is an integral part of the Armenian nation; it must survive and grow stronger.

In view of this anticipated role for the Diaspora as well as our national struggle for survival, is there a need for more organization? Is there a need for an all-encompassing leadership to coordinate the cultural, educational and social initiatives for the preservation of Armenian identity in the Diaspora, as well as the efforts in pursuing the Armenian Cause in the Diaspora?

On the other hand, is it practically possible or are there practical ways to create such a worldwide coordinating leadership?

It is important to address these issues today.

HAMAZKAYIN CENTRAL EXECUTIVE BOARD

Is there a need  
for more organization?

Is there a need  
for an all-encompassing  
leadership?



Is it practically possible  
are there practical ways  
to create a worldwide  
coordinating leadership?



\*The Hamazkayin Central Executive Board wrote emails to a number of Armenian intellectuals and cultural executives around the world, inviting them to discuss the issue. What follows is a compilation of their comments.

Readers are invited to join the debate and to post their comments at:  
[www.hamazkayin.com](http://www.hamazkayin.com)





The Diaspora's common existence is such that it is not possible for it to be governed from within. I cannot envisage such an organizational structure. Such structures are called states; the Diaspora is not and cannot be a state. Whether we like it or not, for the time being long-standing or present-day structures of local and regional governance of the Diaspora best correspond to the existing situation. On the other hand, it may be said that these structures should widen the scope of their activities, should undergo qualitative changes, gradually cross the communal (ghetto-like) boundaries and integrate into the political, economical and cultural life of the countries where they operate. The few positive examples that exist- we have members of parliament, ministers, mayors, high ranking and low ranking state officers, are splendid proof of the benefits of this approach. Armenian representatives defending our issues must be present everywhere- in the media, on TV, in publishing houses and think-tanks, and this needs proper preparation.

The vertical governance of the Diaspora or the coordination of its activities would suit only the Republic of Armenia, which, alas, is very far from fully taking charge of this important task for now.

Coordination means participating in activities; it means understanding, feeling, guiding, correcting, helping... Coordination means to consider the Diaspora the sea for Armenia, and not only for catching fish...

**ROUBEN HOVSEPIAN**

**Prose writer, director of Nork literary journal**



There is a vital need to coordinate the Diaspora-wide efforts and capabilities for the benefit of local communities, our homeland and the Armenian Cause.

I propose the formation of a democratically elected Diaspora-wide structure, entitling each adult Armenian to elect their representative by a majority vote. Duly elected representatives of Armenian communities will form the new elected body of the Diaspora.

This body will have the right to declare itself as being truly representative of the Diaspora and it will be entitled to make decisions on behalf of the Diaspora. It will address all the main issues concerning Armenian life, including cultural, educational, religious, financial, linguistic and political matters. It can serve as a bridge between Armenia and the Diaspora.

Thus, if anyone wants to know the Diaspora's stance on any issue of nationwide concern, they can simply consult this representative body.

**HARUT SASSOUNIAN**

**Founding editor of The California Courier**



In the last two decades the centre of Armenian political life moved from the Diaspora to Armenia. Following the earthquake in Armenia, the war in Karabagh and the economic crisis, the Armenian independence was a historic surprise that shifted the focus of the Armenian people's attention, as well as the best of human and financial resources towards Armenia. This resulted not only in the weakening of diasporan structures, but also in the rejection of the very concept of the Diaspora.

Appropriate measures should have been taken to preserve the old Diaspora, and furthermore, to integrate the new Diaspora into Armenian life, using such means as newspapers, schools and think tanks. But no measures have been taken. The world around us is changing rapidly. If we fail to reassess the Armenian identity and the cultural imperative, we will lose the best part of the coming generations.

It would be wrong today to try a new representational mode. But it is time to reevaluate the Diaspora and to renew its structures. After all, the Diaspora is home to the major part of the Armenian nation.

**VICKEN CHETERIAN**

**Faculty member at Webster University**



The creation of an all-encompassing leadership binding the Diaspora together, however desirable, could be a complex organizational process.

It is desirable, because an all-encompassing leadership can contribute to the process of strengthening Armenia's statehood by identifying the potentials of the Diaspora and harnessing them as practical resources for the sustainable development of the homeland. Indeed, in the Armenian Diaspora there are many specialists in various scientific and industrial fields, as well as organizations with long experience in different areas. They could make their services available to relevant state institutions in Armenia, to bring about reforms for improved performance, and also to make new advantages accessible to them.

On the other hand, for the creation of an all-encompassing Armenian leadership, while respecting the essentially dispersed and diverse functioning of its components, it will be necessary to find and bring together the commonalities, which in itself is a complex task.

Regardless, there is no doubt, that the creation of an all-encompassing Armenian leadership will contribute to the prosperity of the Armenian state and to the resolution of issues related to the Armenian Cause.

**VICKEN TUFENKJIAN**

**Member of Hamazkayin Central Executive Board**



From 1920 to 1990 the main obstacle to the realization of the aspiration to have a unified leadership in the “traditional” Diaspora was the divergent nature of the political aims of the various organizations. This conflictual aspect of relations among the political parties phased out from 1991. Another obstacle was the static nature of the political balance of power in the Diaspora, almost excluding any possibility of fluctuations in political influence, recurrent changes in the existing rivalries, or frequent shifts in alliances within the envisaged structure. Today, we are observing the unfortunate growth of a “new” Diaspora. However, there is an entirely new power dynamic in this new entity, which may lead to a relatively more effective Diaspora-wide parliamentarianism. Thirdly, because of demographic shifts in the “traditional” Diaspora, Armenians are gradually moving to countries with relatively more democratic political systems. Yet, despite all these positive changes, the creation of a Diaspora-wide structure, independent of the government of Armenia, is still far away. Toward this ultimate goal, it is necessary over the coming years (a) to (re)integrate within the organizations of the “traditional” Diaspora a great many Armenian people with specialist expertise and (b) to establish permanent links between the influential organizations of the “traditional” and “new” Diasporas, especially those in the United States and Russia.

**ARA SANJIAN**

**Professor at the University of Michigan - Dearborn**



There is no doubt in my mind, that we can all benefit from a well organized Armenian Diaspora. If we consider the Armenian Diaspora to be an important source of strength for our nation, a viable and real testament to the survival of our nation, then it is imperative for us to have a well organized diasporan community. In order to achieve this, a few key steps are deemed necessary. First, as a nation, we need to have a clear vision: where do we see our nation within the next 5-10-20 years and beyond. What is our mission and where does the Diaspora fit into the big picture? Accordingly, we need develop a clear strategy; this requires careful assessment of our own resources, our strengths and weaknesses and the geopolitical forces that surround us. Then we need an implementation plan, a plan that is dynamic, realistic and relevant to the needs of the diasporan communities. To achieve the aforementioned, we need charismatic leadership, we need a holistic approach, a mindset that rises above all barriers, leading Armenia and Armenians into a future we all deserve.

**TAMAR DONABEDIAN-KUZUIAN**

**Chairperson of Hamazkayin Regional Executive Board of Canada  
(Author's translation)**



Given the present state of affairs in Armenia and as a result of mass migration, the classical Diaspora is doomed to relative sterility and decay in terms of its goal orientation and strategies. The concepts of “ethnic language, culture, traditions, and the very powerful gravitational force of the common homeland that draws all to itself” can no more be considered “unifying factors”.

At this stage in our history how realistic is it to think the Diaspora can play a self-proclaimed role, especially in the fields that are emphasized in this article? I do not wish to sound pessimistic, but I believe Armenia, in its present state, does not need the help of “outside” Armenians, apart from their financial investments of course. I believe that taking into account the present state of the Diaspora and the experience of relations between the Diaspora and Armenia, it is not possible to create a central power or structure (many hopes were pinned on the newly formed Ministry for the Diaspora).

Is there a practical way to deal with the issue?

That will come through the efforts of the world conscious youth of Armenia and the Diaspora walking in step with globalization, when liberated from the enormous socio-economic worries of Armenia, they begin to struggle for the still dreamlike idea of an Armenia that is the homeland of all Armenians. This will entail the development of strategies that would work in the present geopolitical system in view of the realization of our ultimate national goals.

**RUBINA PEROOMIAN**

**Research Associate at UCLA**



Relations between Armenia and the Diaspora should be based on a new concept; they should not be based on narrow homeland-centered thinking. Armenia and the Diaspora should be regarded as a whole, taking the experiences of each into account. A new approach to the Armenian reality should be adopted to be able to understand our present. On the other hand, Armenia has territorial space, while the Diaspora does not. In today's world place and location do not have the same meaning as in the past, and since the Diaspora cannot be “undone”, we should think about an all-encompassing structure, otherwise our concept will have a national aspect only and this will render the Diaspora irrelevant, turning it simply into a structure that supports Armenia.

We should draw up a code of laws for the Armenian Diaspora to help shape the diasporan presence. We should also establish an inter-Armenian structure accepted by all parties concerned, to help resolve representational issues as well, since communities through their elected committees would form the basis of such a structure. In view of this, a great role is reserved for the Diaspora Ministry, which should deal particularly with the task of organizing and shaping the communities.

**MIHRAN DABAGH**

**Founding director of the Institute for Genocide Studies at Bochum University  
(Quoted for its relevance from an interview in the Nor Haratch newspaper in France)**



## THE NATION IN THE WHIRLWIND OF LETTERS

*Those were the years of the Armenian Genocide, the fall of the Armenian Republic and the Soviet persecutions which had scattered the Armenians, unsettled their intellectuals and undermined their culture. Issues of self-awareness and cultural survival were troubling Armenian intellectuals who were dispersed throughout the world. The letters they exchanged between 1920 and 1940 express frustration and regret, but also reassurance while looking for pillars of survival and doctrines of national ideology.*

*To decipher letters from the Hamazkayin archives is to stand in awe of an enchanting world, where figures emerge from the whirlwind of tight and tense letters sharing concerns about providing their daily bread, yet lit up with the feverish glow of those who set out to build a nation out of a dispersed people.*

*Their aspirations gained momentum 85 years ago when the Hamazkayin Publishing and Cultural Society was born on 28 May 1928. What do these men who were legends in their own lifetime tell us about the times they lived in?\**

On 13 March 1927 Vazken Shoushanian responds from Mamirolle (France) to a proposal by Simon Vratzian to write an article on “the socialist youth movement”:

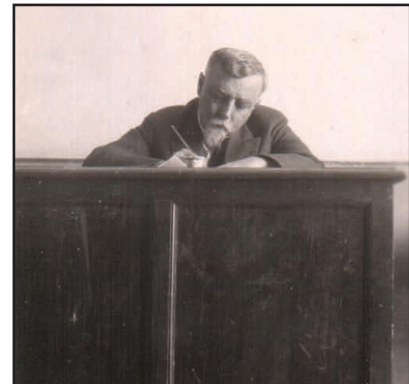
**“You have been courteous to ask about my mood. We, the Turkish-Armenians do not know how to have fun. Therefore our mood is always down, but we would be happy to work.”**

In a letter addressed to Hamo Ohanjanian from Dhour Shwair (Lebanon) on 28 August 1928, Nigol Aghbalian expresses his **“thoughts on building the spirit and on proper Armenian upbringing in school”**:

**“We aim at creating Armenian intellectuals and keeping the national spirit alive among our communities...When I say the Armenian spirit, what I mean is the Armenian political spirit...Ours is a political mission, not a cultural one; we should lay the cultural foundations of the Armenian political identity.”**

**“He seems to have come to us, by some miracle, straight from the fifth century...”**

*Undated photograph: from the Nigol Aghbalian archive*



In the meantime, Levon Shant was trying to convince Nigol Aghbalian to collaborate with him to launch the newly founded Hamazkayin Society. On 19 September 1928 he writes from Chavel (France):

**“And today, before taking any serious steps, I will wait for you to come, to discuss and plan together...Day by day I am increasingly convinced about the importance and broad benefits of our work. And as I have always stated dear Nigol, the success of this work depends on your determination and mine. No matter what “fears” our friends may have, surely they would not hinder it.”**

Three years later Levon Shant confronts Simon Vratzian with “determined” response. (And to think that Hamazkayin is an active presence in 17 countries today and continues to expand to the West). On 3 April 1931 he writes from Beirut:

**“I think, because you are away, you are underestimating Hamazkayin a little. Certainly it is a new organization; it hasn’t taken deep roots yet and its power is small. Most probably it may not expand beyond the borders of the East as you say, however, despite all this, it is an organization, and with good prospects of development. If it works hard enough, it may become an important financial and moral force relying on the ARF, and relying on the ARF as a political mentor. Whether Hamazkayin will prove to be of importance or not, depends on your attitude and mine and the like of us. If our fellow members and organizational bodies are convinced and are willing to work, then Hamazkayin can play a unique role in our national and political endeavors.”**

In a letter written on 20 December 1933, Garegin Njdeh brings Nigol Aghbalian’s attention to a series of speeches addressed to the “New Armenian-American generation”, published in the Boston based Armenian newspaper Hayrenik:

**“Elder brother, read my Tenth Speech addressed to the new Armenian-American generation and you will see the rationale I have proposed for the adoption of a belief in the race and what I expect from the new generation. Let me tell you this: this generation would not be capable of loving their fellow people, but they would be capable of believing in their race.”**

The letters Hamasdegh wrote from the United States were occasional cries of despair, but they also contain valuable depictions of characters and situations. On 7 January 1942, in a letter addressed to Simon Vratzian, he writes:

**“These days I often ask myself, what happened with our awesome Aghbalian? He seems to have come to us, by some miracle, straight from the fifth century; a complete embodiment of the Armenian to live among us.”**

\* The quotes are reproduced without any change and in their original phrasing.



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## THE HAMAZKAYIN REGIONS AND CHAPTERS





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