



Analysis Research & Planning for Armenia

ARPA Institute,  
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### Rapid Knowledge Growth & Institutions of Higher Learning

Scientific discovery, which is exponentially growing, is the main driving force of the future of education. This can result in knowledge fragmentation due to rapid knowledge growth, massive skills specialization and ever-more narrow career niches. Education and careers are also being impacted by rapidly changing business models; increased volatility in industry; shortened careers; emergence of new industries; and rapid knowledge obsolescence.

What is really driving rapid knowledge growth and its big impact on education? We are witnessing in the world today a dramatic increase in global connectivity. The minds of people around the world have been virtually connected. And the outcome is dramatic. For instance, the amount of medical knowledge doubles every eight years; furthermore, half of what engineering students learn during their first year is obsolete or revised by the time they graduate. Thus, universities need to teach students how to continue to absorb new knowledge in their future. The rapid rate of knowledge growth is leading to rapid career change - - hence, the Australian observation that *“65% of children in pre-school will be employed in roles and jobs that don’t exist today.”* The new generation needs a mindset that involves adaptability, flexibility and constant change; recently the Daily Telegraph predicted that *“Workers of the future will change jobs 19 times during their lives—and parallel careers will become the norm as people extract themselves from professions that are becoming extinct.”* Universities need to provide the skill of “just-in-time” knowledge. As stated in the journal Electronic Engineering Times in April 2004, *“Two decades ago, there were relatively few technology graduates from Chinese and Indian universities. Yet, those countries now individually award more science and technology degrees per annum than America.”* (*“Will off-shoring shift innovation-’s frontier?”*) *The challenge for institutions of higher learning is how to change their ingrained thinking, behavior, structure and outcomes, to adapt to this reality.*

How can universities become entrepreneurial? Enterprising academicians can stimulate cultural change to encourage innovation and learning across the university. This process needs organizational, pedagogical, systemic and behavioral changes and involves, as a minimum, the development of a modified curriculum and innovative teaching and learning methods. Recast curricula may go beyond just the cognitive mastery of disciplines, instead also facilitating the acquisition of communication ability, creative and critical analysis skills, independent thinking and team work. Using new pedagogical and didactical approaches creatively also involves combining traditional or local knowledge and know-how with advanced

science and technology. Teachers should be encouraged to use new learning materials and novel methods of testing, in order to promote not only memory but also comprehension, skills for practical work and creativity. Universities can help in this process by creating a vigorous policy of staff development, with clear policies that focus on teaching students *how* to learn and how to take initiatives, rather than being exclusively sources of knowledge. Constant innovation in curriculum, teaching and learning methods should be a goal.

It may be beneficial to place students and their needs at the center of concerns and consider them major partners and responsible stakeholders in their own education. Hence, innovation can be facilitated by including student involvement in issues that affect education, in evaluation, the renovation of teaching methods and curricula, and in policy-formulation and institutional management. This may call for in-depth reform to incorporate a new vision and paradigm that is student-oriented, and is also based on new types of links and partnerships with the community and with the broadest sectors of society. Universities need to fund projects for student and community entrepreneurship, practice-based research and the formation of networks of educators, practitioners and mentors. An entrepreneurial teaching team is a crucial factor in the cultural change process and in addressing the inevitable conflict with the ‘base culture’.

The breakthroughs in new information and communication technologies will further change the way knowledge is developed, acquired and delivered. New technologies offer opportunities to innovate on course content and teaching methods and to widen access to higher learning. However, new information technology does not reduce the need for teachers, but instead changes their role in relation to the learning process. The new role of teachers becomes facilitating the continuous dialogue that converts information into knowledge and understanding. Teachers and higher education institutions can do this by offering high-level knowledge and skills programs, using courses and content continually tailored to the present and future needs of society. They should provide opportunities for best quality learning, endogenous capacity-building, and for sustainable development. It is important to contribute to the improvement of education at all levels, by re-training teachers (if necessary), to promote inter-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary innovation. Universities can also help create and disseminate knowledge through research, and provide relevant expertise to ensure that all members engaged in research have appropriate training, resources and support. Research should be enhanced in all disciplines,

including social and human sciences, engineering, natural sciences, mathematics, informatics and the arts. Of course, to carry this out, universities also need to find the material and financial support required, from both public and private sources.

Higher education institutions should be leaders in making use of all the advantages and potential of new information and communication technologies. They can do this by creating new learning environments, ranging from distance education facilities to complete virtual higher education institutions and systems, capable of bridging distances and developing high-quality systems of education. Universities can also help adapt information and communication technologies to national and local needs.

They can sustain new technologies by securing technical, educational, management and institutional systems. Finally, academia should closely follow the evolution of the 'knowledge society' in order to ensure high quality and equitable regulations.

One very important role for academia, in this era of rapid change, is to help protect and enhance social values by training young people in the basics of democratic citizenship. Higher education institutions should provide students with critical perspectives to help them evaluate and develop strategic options for their future careers, as well as for the advancement of the nation and the world. They should educate students to become well informed and deeply motivated citizens, who can think critically, analyze problems, look for solutions to the problems and apply them with the full knowledge of national and social responsibilities.

Great benefit can be gained by strengthening and renewing the links between higher education, the market and society in the current modern economy. Ensuring the participation of the representatives of the market in the governance of educational institutions will help achieve this goal. However, care should be taken that this is done in a responsible and ethical manner, to ensure the integrity of knowledge and science over financial profit. Market forces and education can be linked through increased use of domestic and international apprenticeship, work-study opportunities for students and teachers, exchange of personnel between the industries and higher education institutions, and revised curricula more closely aligned with working practices. Updating and recycling higher education by systematically taking into account trends in the market and industry, especially in the scientific, technological and economic sectors, may contribute to the creation of new jobs. Students should be encouraged to develop entrepreneurial skills and initiative, in order to facilitate employability of graduates who will increasingly be called upon to be not only job seekers, but also and above all to become job creators.

As Vaclav Havel, the famous writer and politician, so aptly observed, "we live in an era in which everything is possible and nothing is certain". The future is also happening faster than any of us can imagine. These conditions predominate in world politics largely because power is being dispersed not only across nations but across cultures. Education is the medium of that exchange. It involves the broadening of a young person's cultural horizons, the increasing of their capacity to think and work globally, and the creation of

opportunities for them to participate in making the world a less dangerous place.

There is no doubt that higher education has profoundly changed in the past two decades, and those involved in the academic enterprise have yet to grapple with the implications of these changes. Academic institutions and systems have faced pressures of demands for accountability reconsideration of the social and economic role of higher education, and the impact of new technologies, among others. While academic systems function in a national environment, the challenges play themselves out on a global scale. Higher education systems have also been moving from elite to mass to universal access.

Education and work are activities that should feed one another. The links and transition points from initial education to the work force are usually weakly articulated. The formal structures by which educational systems prepare students for tomorrow are similarly not well developed. The internationalization of higher education, generally understood as the inter-country exchange of students and faculty, is also a new phenomenon and has many other facets. It has introduced new challenges that have yet to be resolved. These include the growth of international markets for educated manpower, and the corresponding challenge to equip students with transnational competencies so that they can compete in this market.

International partnerships have been forged for the advancement of knowledge; but this has resulted in the phenomenon of individual scholars as well as individual countries promoting their vested interests to the disadvantage of the larger endeavor. In addition, the marketing of courses by universities in countries other than their own has produced consequent issues of ownership, partnership, accreditation, acceptability, and accountability. These and a host of other issues have generated unprecedented turmoil and complex interrelated mechanisms that influence the natural and virtual universities and the centers of research and higher learning. The administrations of these institutions and the Government face a tremendous challenge that needs immediate attention and strategic and innovative approaches. We need to plan for the future or else we will be left behind. I am confident that we have the capacity, through our collective intellect, ambition, and talent, to succeed in paving a flourishing path into the future.

October 3, 2009, Yerevan State University 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

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**A scene from the Invention Competition Awards Ceremony**



**(Above) Mr. Yeritsyan hands out the Awards to Winners of the ARPA Invention Competition**



**A scene from the reception of the Invention Competition**

**Mr. A. Ashotyan, Minister of Education and Science of Armenia, w/ ARPA Dir., M. Tashjian & Pres. Dr. H. Panossian**



**Dr. S. Harutiunyan, Head of Science Office in Armenia w/ Dr. H. Panossian**



**Mr. V. Kirakosyan, Dep. Minister of Economy & S. Knyazyan, w/ L. Thorose & H. Panossian**



**Mr. K. Asryan, Dep. Minister of Sports w/ Dr. H. Panossian**



**Dr. H. Panossian w/ Dep. Minister of Energy A. Galstyan and L. Vardanyan (Deputy)**



**Mr. Artak Davtyan, Member of Parliament & Head of Education & Sc., Youth & Sports, W/ Dr. H. Panossian**





## Armenia Trip Report, by H. Panossian

During a recent trip to Armenia I had the opportunity to meet with the Minister of Education and Science, Mr. Armen Ashotyan, the Minister of Health, Hon. Dr. Harutiun Kushkyan, the Minister of Economy, Mr. Nercess Yeritsyan, the Minister of Diaspora, Ms. Hranush Hakobyan, the deputy Ministers of Education and Science, Energy and Natural Resources, Sports & the Youth and that of Economy, the presidents of the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia (NAS), Yerevan State University (YSU) and the State Engineering University of Armenia (SEUA) and members of the faculty and staff of the universities. Below is a summary of these meetings and discussions:

**On September 17, 09**, I had a meeting with the Deputy Minister of Economy of Armenia, Vache Kirakosyan, head of the High and Information Technologies department. Discussed were issues related to the high tech industry in Armenia, especially the “Strategic Plan” which was written by ARPA and sent to him some months ago. He stated that the written plan was very helpful for the Ministry to develop their own strategic plan. Moreover, Mr. Kirakosyan suggested that ARPA work with a few of the institutes that are under the Ministry who need help in presenting their “marketable” inventions for potential business ventures. He proposed to have several additional meetings whereby these institutes will present their findings.

**On September 18** I met with Gurgen Hakopyan, President of the Giumri Technopark and discussed the possible participation of ARPA in the Armtech09. Moreover, Grigor was very interested in the “distant learning” seminars and wanted to present a series of topics that their specialists and students will be interested in. We planned to meet again.

**On September 22** I met with the President of the State Engineering University of Armenia (SEUA), Prof. Vosdanik Maroukhyan in his office and had long discussions about the “Invention Competition”, as well as ways and means of cooperation and steps that need to be taken to make these events more encompassing. Also present were Prof. Laert Hovhannissyan, Pro-rector for financial and student activities and social programs and Prof. Norik Haroutiunyan, his chief of staff. It was suggested to hold the Invention Competition Awards ceremony in the newly renovated “Rector’s Hall”. They were all very cordial and showed a great deal of cooperation. Also discussed were the “distant learning” seminars and the need to expand the distribution.

**On September 23** Dr. Madeleine Tashjian, the ARPA Executive Director in Armenia and I had a meeting with the Minister of Education and Science, Hon. Armen Ashotyan, to discuss the “Invention Competition” awards ceremony and invite him to attend and hand out the awards. He said that he would not be able to attend but he will assign Mr, Ara Avedisyan, his deputy Minister in charge of the universities of Armenia to attend. Mr. Ara Avedisyan, was visited and the awards ceremony was discussed. The event was scheduled on September 28 at 3:00 pm in the SEUA (Polytechnic), in accordance to the availability of Minister Yeritsyan and Deputy Minister Avedisyan. The latter has been liaison of ARPA regarding the “Invention Competition”.

**On September 23**, another meeting was held in the afternoon with Dr. Mikael Abovyan, the head of the Material Science Institute. He wanted to help him find a coordinator in Material Science that will work with him to organize the special session on Materials in the Armtech09 congress in San Jose, CA. Moreover, he asked for help to “market” their newly developed polymer materials.

**On September 24 at 2:00 pm** I had a meeting with the President of the NAS, Dr. Ratik Martirosyan, in his office on 24 Baghramyan Blvd.. Also present was Prof. Vanya Barseghyan, the head of the Diaspora Division of the NAS. Discussed were the needs of NAS, the various institutes and their activities, the inventions that their permanent members have, etc. It was proposed to help one of the Academicians in preparing presentations and brochures to explain his findings to foreign companies. Also proposed was to try to help the Academy in modern communication equipment.

**On September 24** I also had a meeting with Dr. Aram Hajian, the deputy Dean of Engineering of the American University of Armenia (AUA). We discussed the “Invention Competition” and ways of cooperation between ARPA and the AUA and how the AUA can participate in these events.

**On September 24 at 5:00 pm** I had another meeting with the Deputy Minister of Economy of Armenia, Vache Kirakosyan. Also present were Dr. Patvakan Voskanyan and Dr. Alexander Vardabyan, both heads of Institutes under the Ministry of Economy. Discussed were issues related to presenting their “marketable” inventions for potential business ventures. Presented to me were various inventions that, according to these scientists, had potential market value and need to be shown/presented to foreign companies.

**On September 24 at 11:00 am** I met with Dr. Samuel Harutiunyan, the head of the Science Policy office. He presented his activities regarding the reforms he has initiated in the development and grant system of Armenia and wanted ARPA to help him develop policies similar to what exists in the US. He wants to base salaries and grants on results that each individual scientist produces.

**On September 28, 09** Monday at 3:00 pm over 60 university students, professors, press representatives and university staff were gathered in the Rector’s Hall of the SEUA (Polytechnic) for the awards ceremony of the ARPA Invention Competition. Hon. Mr. Nercess Yeritsyan, the Minister of Economy of Armenia was also present.. The day started with opening remarks by Dr. Madeleine Tashjian, the ARPA Executive Director in Armenia, and then I made a few remarks, thanked the Minister for his presence and congratulated all the students who participated in the competition and their advisors and discussed the way the competition was organized, evaluations were carried out and the winners were selected. I also discussed the rules and criteria for the competition, formally announced/launched the competition for next year and then announced the names of the participants and their advisors to come to the podium and receive their certificates. The awards for the winners were handed out by Minister Yeritsyan. Each student was asked to describe their invention and explain the innovation in their work. At the end some of the advisors made a few remarks and congratulated their students and thanked ARPA for this very important event. Mr. Yeritsyan congratulated the winners and all the participants and thanked ARPA for this very significant competition. He expressed hope that ARPA could organize such events in the future and promised that his Ministry will support the event fully.

**On September 30** I had a third meeting with Mr. Vache Kirakosyan. Also present was Dr. Razmik Malkhasyan, head of the Nanoamp technology, a privately held stock company. The latter presented his invention of nano-scale amorphous metals and wanted to find partners/investors. Vache asked me to work with him and try to help him out.

Several companies were found on the internet and information was sent to their technical staff to see if there was any interest. One company seemed to show interest. Dr. Markhasyan was asked to prepare a detailed description of his nano amorphous metals and discuss its technical merits, in order to send it to this company for further information.

In this meeting I realized that Armenia lacks the knowledge, expertise and even culture to carry out business marketing that takes an innovation from the laboratory and goes through the various “Technology Readiness Levels” (TRL), all the way to the market. This issue was discussed with Mr. Levon Thoros, who also happened to be in Armenia (he is a former President of the AESA). He agreed to work with me on this and help prepare a concept paper.

**On October 2-4** the Yerevan State University 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration was attended. This was a three day event, where I was invited to speak. The subject of my presentation was “Rapid knowledge growth and the institutions of higher learning”. There were representatives from 23 countries who were presidents of universities or distinguished professors. My speech was received very enthusiastically. The group of invitees visited St. Echmiadzin, the Catholicos of all Armenians, His Holiness Karekin II on October 4 where he made special remarks on the occasion of the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of YSU.

**On October 12, 09** the “Yergir Media” television station sent their crew to the SEUA to interview the first place and third place winners of the ARPA Invention Competition. I explained the invention criteria, who can participate and the procedure of evaluations and selection of the winners. The interviews were broadcast several times during the week. This was good publicity for the competition.

**On October 13** I met with Dr. Samuel Harutiunyan, the head of the Science Policy office, for the second time. He was asked if the creation of a new structure, that will deal with activities related to taking an innovative product from invention to marketing, to create of businesses was something his office would be interested in. His enthusiasm was tremendous. He thought that would be a very beneficial structure and admitted that they will need a lot of help in that field.

**On October 14** I met with Dr. Karen Ghazaryan and Academician Vahram Hakobyan, the head of the Institute of Mechanics of the NAS. Various issues were discussed and the needs of the institute were presented. They also seemed to be highly interested in organizing a system of marketing and business development for NAS applications.

**On October 16** I met with Mr. Areg Galstyan, Deputy Minister of Energy and Natural Resources and discussed issues related to energy efficiency and the plans of the Ministry to create incentives for people to reduce their energy consumption through various approaches. He invited the head of the Development department, Mr. Levon Vardanyan. They were especially interested to have seminars organized in the field of energy efficiency, auditing and alternative energy sources.

**On October 19, 09** I met with the expert on education of the Ministry of Education and Science, Ms. Melania Davtyan, who is in charge of the Government sponsored course on health education, a course similar to our “Health Education and Lifestyle Program”, that is currently being taught in all schools in Armenia. The course, according to her, is being taught to the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> graders in all secondary schools of Armenia for 18 hours during the months of February through April. She was very thankful of ARPA for starting the HELP program and stressed the

benefit that the Ministry has derived from our HELP textbook and all the advice and inputs received from ARPA. The course is taught based on handouts and they work with an international organization that provides them with material and videos.

**On October 20** I met with Mr. Khachik Asryan, the Deputy Minister of Sports and the Youth. He presented the organization he has founded, called “Syuniats Ardzivner” in the Syunik region. The organization has 28 different groups with over 7000 members between the ages of 17 and 25. The organization teaches the youth love for the nation, respect for each other, healthy lifestyle and sports, among others. He does not smoke or drink and he insists on all members of the “Syuniats Ardzivner” to follow the rules. He was very impressed with ARPA activities in Armenia and expressed interest in cooperating with ARPA.

**On October 22** I met with Mr. Levon Vardanyan, the head of energy development and Lina Babayan, director of renewable energy in the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources. Discussions were held on ways and means of cooperation between ARPA and the Ministry. Special interest was expressed in seminars/conferences that could be organized in the fields of energy through the satellite systems that Jora Manucherian has started.

**On October 23** Mr. Levon Thorose and I met with Vache Kirakosyan again, to discuss the issues related to initiating activities on innovation-to-market structures. Also present was Mr. Sarkis Gnyazyan. Vache and Sarkis were both enthusiastic about the creation of an organization/structure through training of cadre in the fields of marketing, business, management, etc and slowly establishing a working group in Armenia. It was agreed to start with a concept paper and help the Ministry of Economy develop such a system.

**On October 27** I met with the representative of “Armen Motor”, the company that used to have 3500 workers and produced thousands of motors of various kinds. The President of the Company, Mr. Carlos Bedrosyan and Mr. Raffik Srabyan (his deputy) presented the dire situation of the company. I presented the Seminar on Motors that will be taught by Ruben Nalbandian and which started on November 4, lasting 4 weeks. They were very interested to attend.

**On October 31** I, for the second time, met with the President of the State Engineering University of Armenia (SEUA), Prof. Vosdanik Maroukhyan and had long discussions on seminars via satellite, the “Invention Competition” and its non-perfect dissemination, and the need for teaching students about the skills of marketing, business and in general innovation to market strategies and approaches. Also present were Prof. Laert Hovhannissyan, Prof. Aghbalyan. New ways and means of cooperation were also sought and steps were suggested that need to be taken for successful outcomes.

A new plan to start a seminar on energy efficiency was received enthusiastically. Moreover, a proposed new venture to make a building, or part of a building, in the SEUA energy efficient was hailed as the most practical effort that can teach students all about energy efficiency.

**On November 1** I attended the opening ceremony of the St. Gevork church of Masis, where I met briefly with the Minister of Health, Dr. Harutiun Kuahkian. He indicated that Armenia is free of the swine virus.

**On November 2** I met with Mr. Ara Avedisyan, the deputy Minister of Education and Science. I presented to him the latest activities of ARPA, including the awards ceremony, the meetings with other Ministries and the institutions of higher learning.

He was very supportive of our activities and promised to continue to fully support them in the future. When presented with the idea of creating a structure that will help develop the skills/culture of taking an innovation to market, he was so enthusiastic that he proposed to talk with the Organization of the Institute of Higher Learning and have them create an group of young scientists that will work with ARPA and will learn the necessary skills for the activities related to business and marketing.

Thus, both the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Education and Science are willing to work with ARPA in creating this structure.

**On November 3** Dr. Madeleine Tashjian and I met with the head of the division of Education, Science, Sport, Youth, and the Media in the Parliament of Armenia, Member of Parliament Mr. Artak Davtyan. He was presented with the ARPA activities and our initiatives, including the "Invention Competition", the health education and lifestyle program (HELP), the seminars and our activities with the universities. He was very appreciative of what ARPA accomplishes in Armenia and promised to give the full support of his division for all ARPA activities. He also promised to act as a sponsoring organization for next year's Invention Competition.

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**Prof. Aghbalyan, Aghgashyan, Maroukhyan & Hovhannisyan with Dr. Hagop Panossian**

## **ARPA Lectures given from December 2008 to December 2009 in the Merdinian Armenian School Auditorium, Sherman Oaks, CA.**

1. Dr. John Tehranian, Professor of Law and Director of the Entertainment Law Program at Chapman University School of Law presented a lecture on "Whitewashed, "Whiteness" in American History, with a special focus on Middle-Easterners" on Thursday December 11, 2008. Throughout American history, racial classifications have wielded exceptional influence. For example, until 1952, federal law provided naturalization rights only to individuals who were white or black, but nothing "in-between." During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a wave of new immigration from non-Anglo-Saxon countries arrived on our shores. As a result, the American legal system was forced to confront the task of defining what or who constituted the white race for the purposes of naturalization. Litigation over the concept of whiteness resulted, yielding life-altering consequences. While the trials often grew senseless, with judges delving into the depths of antiquity, reconstructing history, and spouting rigid ideologies in order to justify their rulings, the reification of whiteness had a profound impact on shaping the immigrant experience in the United States.

Armenians played a central role in these cases. And the Armenian struggle for naturalization rights and 'white' recognition is critical to understanding the processes at play in the social construction of race. By drawing upon these cases, Tehranian's talk assesses the historical and contemporary relevance of whiteness in American society, with a particular eye towards the war on terrorism and the debate over immigration, assimilation, and our national identity, especially after 9/11. Specifically, he discusses the peculiar problems of race that continue to plague us and how they affect Armenian and Middle-Eastern Americans. He also addresses the unusual Catch-22 facing Middle-Eastern Americans: Although considered white by law, and therefore ineligible for any policies benefiting minorities, they have faced rising degrees of discrimination over time—a fact highlighted by recent targeted immigration policies, racial profiling, a war on terrorism with a decided racist bent, and growing rates of job discrimination and hate crime.

2. Dr. Rubina Perroomian, lecturer of Armenian language and literature and Research Associate at UCLA took on the following subject "And Those Who Continued Living in Turkey after 1915" on Thursday, January 22, 2009. The recent political developments in the world has created a new atmosphere whereby the events of 1915 and the plight of the Armenian survivors in Turkey, be they Christian, Islamized, or hidden, have been espoused and fictionalized in the literature of Turkey. Artistic expressions echo the continuing trauma in the life of these "rejects of the sword," a Turkish moniker for Armenians, having "undeservedly" escaped from death. The stories that Turkish writers unearth and the daring memoirs of Turkish citizens with an Armenian in their ancestry, as well as obscured references to these same stories and events in Turkish-Armenian literature, have unveiled the full picture of survival, with an everlasting memory of the lost ones, but also of forced conversions, of nurturing the "enemy" in the bosom, and of the dehumanization and sexual torture of men and women. A multifaceted image, an identity, of what is broadly generalized as Turkish-Armenian, thus emerges, a phenomenon that contradicts the long-researched and explored concept of the Diasporan-Armenian post-Genocide ethnic identity.

Nevertheless, the sociopolitical and religious impositions and the hegemony of Muslim identity have not been fully challenged yet. External pressures may influence the metamorphosis of the Turkish state, but the real change should come from within the Turkish society. That change may be underway. The recent book *And Those Who Continued Living in Turkey After 1915* addresses the issues of the psychology of the survivors of the Armenian Genocide who remained in Turkey, their lifestyle after the tragedy, and the struggle to preserve their identity. Dr. Rubina Proomian will focus on: What happened to the women and the children who were kidnapped during the massacre? What happened to those Armenians who were forced to adopt Islam? How does the Armenian community of Istanbul live, and what does it do to preserve its Armenian identity?

3. Պետրոս Թովմասեան, Միջազգայնի եւ Հայկական լեռնաշխարհի ժողովուրդներու պատմութեան մասնագէտ եւ ճարտարագէտ (B.Sc. in Civil Engineering) ներկայացուց “Հայկական լեռնաշխարհը եւ Միջազգայն”, Հինգշաբթի Ապրիլ 2, 2009 Միջազգայնի տարբեր տարածքը շնորհիւ Հայկական լեռնաշխարհին բխող Տիգրիս եւ Եփրատ գետերուն, պատմութեան սկիզբէն իվեր եղած է Հայկական լեռնաշխարհի եւ Արաբական թերակղզիի ժողովուրդներու գաղթածախը: Հայ ժողովուրդի պատմութիւնը սերտօրէն կապուած է Միջազգայնի ժողովուրդներու պատմութեան հետ, Հայ ժողովուրդի ծագման իսկ շրջանէն, ինչպէս որ ան խոստումը է Հայկ ու Բելի, Սասունցի Դավիթի, եւ կամ Արա Գեղեցիկի դիւցազներգութիւններուն մէջ: Խոսուեցաւ դարերէն եկած տարբեր ժողովուրդներու եւ քաղաքակրթութիւններու շփման եւ կապերու պատմութեան մասին. կեդրոնանալով ու ներկայացնելով Հայոց պատմութիւնը չափազանցական ցուցակներով, գծացուցակներով եւ ուրուագիծերով: Հայ ժողովուրդի վիթխարի մասնակցութիւնը Միջազգայնի հին քաղաքակրթութեանց ստեղծման եւ հիմնադրման գործին մէջ ակնարկելով այդ ժողովուրդներու պատմական կապերու վրայ հին մասնակիցներէն մինչեւ Բագրատունեաց հարստութեան անկումը:

4. John Ahmaranian, a graduate of the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, Italy, with a Masters Degree in Philosophy and Theology, is a specialist in Islam. He talked about “Islam Yesterday & Today” on Thursday, May 28, 2009. The lecture covered the Christian background of Mecca and its famous prophet Mahammad. The social and political implications on Mahammad's character and how it paved the road to the establishment of a political- moral-religious system called Islam was also presented. Mohammad wanted, at any cost, to relate himself to the BOOK (in its Hebrew version, given to Moses, and its Greek version, given to Issa). Islam needed a Judeo-Christian background in order to succeed. This book in its Arabic version which was given or revealed in the Holy month of Ramadan must have contained every aspect of Muslim life. The most important factor of Muhammad's success, mainly the Jihad and the Shari'a was discussed. These two elements are the roots which explain why Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world. Some ideas regarding the numerous teachings that are incompatible with our modern values were also discussed, as were some discrepancies and mistakes found in the Koran. Finally, the relationship between Armenia and Islam and the historical facts and data was presented in relation to Armenia.

5. Harut Sassounian, publisher of The California Courier newspaper, President of the United Armenian Fund, and Senior Vice President of the Lincy Foundation, analyzed the "Armenia-Turkey Negotiations and Armenia-Diaspora Relations" on Thursday, July 30, 2009. The lecture addressed the twists and turns of the Armenia-Turkey negotiations and the influence of the U.S.,

Russia and Europe in that process. The false impressions created by the Turkish Government during the, so-called border-opening talks, was analyzed.

Also covered was the question whether President Obama was tricked by Turkey to preclude him from saying genocide, or did he trick Armenia and Turkey? The Turkish attempts to pit Armenia against the Diaspora, was highlighted and counter-moves were proposed. The most recent Turkish trick was exposed in linking the border-opening talks to the Artsakh negotiations. Finally, it was stated that the Turkish preconditions in these talks are ironically having the positive effect of restraining Armenia from making further concessions.

6. Dr. Onnik Keshishian, a graduate of the Claremont Graduate University, lectured on "A Conversation on Armenian Education in the Diaspora", on Thursday, September 3, 2009. In 1964, the first Armenian Day school in the United States (US) was established in Encino California with twelve students. For years it had about a hundred students. In the following few years, a number of other day schools were established throughout the US and Canada. The lecture was a conversation concerning the purpose, need, efficacy and utility of the Armenian schools in the Diaspora, and a very cursory look into the Armenian schools through the post genocide era. The intention was to raise certain pertinent questions and suggest approaches to some solutions. Also discussed was the lack of a coordinated educational plan or activity in our school system, such as the Prelacy Schools. The latter has a Board of Regents, which organizes the school calendar; sets up teachers` orientation and appoints or “anoints” school principals. Each school runs its own affair independently/autonomously; with no coordination among the schools. Furthermore, there is a lack of communication between these schools, and especially none among the various Armenian schools under varying communities. (Prelacy, ABGU, Mekhitarist, Sisters Academy, etc). There does not seem to be even cursory contacts among the Armenian schools in different parts of the United State. Finally some comments on the future of these schools and the Armenian language in the Diaspora.

7. Dr. Levon Marashlian, Professor of History at Glendale Community College, presented the topic of "Responses from the Diaspora to the Dangers of the Protocols" on Thursday, November 12 2009. The premise of the presentation was that normalization of Armenian-Turkish relations is a natural and necessary goal, but the road to that good goal that is charted by the Armenian-Turkish Protocols will undermine Armenia's ability to survive as an independent state, impede efforts to move Turkey closer to recognizing its moral and material responsibility, and violate the Diaspora's fundamental right to participate in the formulation of policies involving the legacy of the Armenian Genocide. After an analysis of the alarming threats to Armenia's security and survivability posed by the Protocols, the presentation focused on responses from the Diaspora - especially responses from individuals and organizations that do not see, or do not want to see, or do not know how to take defensive action against the clear and present danger to Armenia's future.