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SPECIAL WORKSHOP ORGANIZED BY THE ARMENIAN STUDIES PROGRAM
AT UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN, ANN ARBOR

Considering the concept of 'Nation'

Ann Arbor, Michigan. As part of its expanding program of activities, the Armenian Studies Program at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, convened a special workshop that brought together senior scholars, advanced and newly graduated PhD students, and starting graduate students. The purpose of the workshop was to provide an opportunity for emerging scholars to discuss their work and consult with each other and with senior scholars.

The workshop, held from April 16 to 19, offered a special format for the gathering of some 21 participants. "We decided to go with a theme," explained Professor Gerard Libaridian, Director of the Program. "Rather than merely offer an opportunity for students to cover disparate topics, we invited those whose research involved or would have an impact of the concept of 'nation' in Armenian history. We also limited participation to those invited and allowed ample time for discussions, which we hope would help the new scholars as well as benefit the senior ones."

During the first two full days of the workshop presentations were made by the following: Dr. Rachel Goshgarian (PhD, Harvard University, 2007, currently Director of the Zohrab Information center in New York), "What is Ottoman History? What is Armenian History? Seeing Armenian Realities as Part of the Ottoman Story;" Joanne Laycock (PhD, Manchester University, 2005, currently Manoogian Simone Foundation Post-doctoral Fellow at the University of Michigan), "Imagining Armenia: Orientalism, History and Civilization;" Taline Papazian (PhD student, Paris), "Bringing the Nation Back In: The Armenian National Movement from Soviet Nationality Syndrome to Sovereign Nation;" Arus Harutyunyan (PhD expect, 2008, Western Michigan University), "Contesting National Identities in an Ethnically Homogeneous State: The Case of Armenian Democratization;" Sebouh Aslanian (PhD, Columbia University, 2007, recipient of Best dissertation Award, currently Visiting Lecturer at Whitman College, Washington State), "From Coalition to Nation: The Collapse of the Julfan Trade Network and its Transformation;" Sossie Kasbarian (PhD, School of Oriental and African Studies, London, 2006, currently Lecturer at SOAS and The Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva), "Rooted and Routed: The Contemporary Armenian Diaspora in Cyprus and Lebanon;" Kari Neely (PhD, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 2007, currently Lecturer at Middle Tennessee State University), "Diasporic Representations: A Study of Circassian and Armenian Identities in Greater Syria;" Talar Chahinian (PhD student, UCLA), "Constructive Nationalism? *Menk* as an Alternative Archive;" and Marylin Eordegian (PhD student at Vanderbilt University), "Israeli policies toward the Armenian Church."

Doctoral students from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, who have recently joined the program were given the opportunity to present their research interests on the third day: Richard Antaramian, Department of History, “Late Ottoman Armenian/Turkish Social Relations;” Semi Ertan, Near Eastern Studies, “An Ottoman Armenian intellectual of 17th century Istanbul: Eremya Celebi Komurcuyan;” Krista Goff, Department of History, “The Modern Caucasus and Azerbaijan, Nationalities Policies toward Non-titular Nations;” Jeremy Johnson, Anthropology/History Program, “Early Soviet Armenia-Gender, Language, and Literacy.” Anna Martirosian of Yerevan, currently at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, Political Science Department), discussed her proposed topic of dissertation, “Social Exclusion and Democratization in the Third Republic of Armenia.”

Each session was preceded by a short discussion of the general theme by a senior scholar and followed by a detailed discussion of the presentations.

Professors Khachig Tololyan (Wesleyan University) and Hourii Berberian (California State University, Long Beach) joined the five resident scholars at the University of Michigan and associated with the Armenian Studies program (Kathryn Babayan, Kevork Bardakjian, Gerard Libaridian and Ronald Suny, Ann Arbor campus, and Ara Sanjian, Dearborn campus) to assist in the workshop.

At the end of the workshop the participants paid a visit to the Armenian research Center of the University’s Dearborn campus to get acquainted with its facilities and resources.

“We are hoping this will be an annual event” said Professor Libaridian, “with a new theme and new participants every year.”

The workshop is supported by the recent gift to the program made by the Manoogian Simone Foundation.