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UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN UNVEILS ARCHIVE OF HUNCHAKIAN LEADER

Ann Arbor. At a special event organized on October 31, the Armenian Studies Program and Special Collections of the University of Michigan unveiled the archive of Hamparzum Arzoumanian, a leader of the Hnchakian Party from 1891 to 1909.

The Arzoumanian Archive, consisting of some 1200 pages of party related and personal correspondence, Hnchakian Center circulars and related materials, mostly in Armenian, had been donated to the University of Michigan by the granddaughter of the Hnchakian leader, Mrs. Marguerite Harms, and the Arzoumanian family, some time ago. The archive was organized and documents classified recently.

Hamparzum Arzoumanian was born in historic Gantzak; he started his political activities in Tabriz, Iran, as a field worker for the party and continued as organizer, propagandist and ideologue in Russia, Europe, and the United States until his death in New York in 1909, where his life ended at age 43 as a factory worker. His archive spreads light on a variety of issues, including the battles within the Hnchakian Party, the organization of chapters in places like Baku, Novorossisk and cities in the US. Throughout his life he remained a staunch believer in socialism and its relevance to the Armenian struggle for liberation. Throughout his career Arzoumanian had the full support of his wife Sona.

More than 60 faculty members, students, administrators and members of the family participated in the presentation of the archives. Fifteen grandchildren and their offspring had traveled to Ann Arbor from California, Pennsylvania and other states to attend the event and learn about the Arzoumanians.

Ms. Margaret McKinley, Director of Development of the University Libraries opened the evening with remarks on the value of special collections and archives. Ms. Peggy Daub, Director of Special Collections discussed the place of the Arzoumanian Archive in the Special Collections. Historian Dr. Nora Nercessian, special consultant for the project and organizer of the Arzoumanian Archive, presented the life of the Arzoumanians and the contents of the archive, while Prof. Gerard Libaridian, Director of the Armenian Studies Program, assessed the value of the archive for Armenian and regional history.

The Arzoumanian Archive is currently being digitized and placed on the website of the University Special Collections gradually. Information regarding the Arzoumanian papers and the documents

themselves can be accessed on the web (<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/f/findaid/findaid-idx?c=sclad&idno=umich-scl-arzoumanian>) or through the University Special Collections (History) and Armenian Studies Program websites; the archive is also open to researchers who wish to access them at the Special Collections.

“One reason we wanted to organize this event and present the Arzoumanian Archive is to encourage others to preserve family papers and prod organizations to open their archives to researchers,” stated Prof. Libaridian. “The Armenian Studies Program and the Special Collections at the University of Michigan are ready to assist in achieving these goals, including receiving papers, organizing them and making them available to researchers in a safe and professional environment.”