

BOOK REVIEW

An Architecture of Survival

By Dr. Garbis-Armen
Reviewed by Garo Chikchekian

A most timely book titled "An Architecture of Survival" by Dr. Garbis-Armen (architect, urban planner and geographer) has appeared on the market. The author's in-depth analysis exposes the uniqueness of the architectural designs of the Armenian monuments from the middle of the 3rd millennium B.C. to the medieval times, their geographic diffusion as far as the Balkans and Italy, the conscientious efforts of the Armenian architects to build earthquake-resistant structures, and finally, undoubtedly the most important of all, a call for an international endeavor for their preservation from premeditated vandalism perpetrated by the Turks.

The first chapter starts with a description of the physiography of the Armenian Highlands where the Armenian nation originated and developed some five to six thousand years ago, and where its architects came to realize the earthquake prone nature of their natural environment and learned how to cope with it. In the words of the author "many people came and left the territory of the Armenian Highlands, but it was the Armenians who accepted this environmental challenge". The rest of the chapter demonstrates how the Armenian architects combined various geometric shapes in the architectural design of Armenian monuments to make them earthquake resistant. The author also demonstrates that these structural innovations have been continuous for more than 3000 years, a testimony of the conscientious efforts of their designers to adapt to the uncontrollable and unpredictable forces of their environment. The second and third chapters are more of a technical nature concentrating on an attempt at classification and the examination of the proportions in architectural traits. It is also interesting to note how the author relates structural designs and proportions to Armenian national character. In the fourth chapter the author examines a number of structures in the city of Ani, the capital city of the Bagratid Dynasty (9th to 11th century A.D.) with its "1000 churches" and other famous monuments. His analysis reveals that Armenian architects and planners were very much aware of the necessity of design-terrain-function relationship. The fifth chapter is a critique of a voluminous work by a Polish architect and archaeologist, Joseph Strzygowski, titled "Armenian Architecture and Europe, 1918". According to the author this work consists of about 900 pages in two volumes, with more than 828 photographs and diagrams. It is the product of extensive surveys in eastern and western Armenia in 1889, 1911 and 1913 by the Art History Institute of the University of Vienna, Austria. The author points out that Strzygowski shows the originality of certain Armenian architectural designs, their diffusion to Europe, and their value as

an indispensable document in the history of Art.

Following this critique the author reviews a book by T.A. Sinclair titled "Eastern Turkey: An Architectural and Archaeological Survey, vol. 1, 1987". Dr. Garbis-Armen indicates that the value of Sinclair's work lies in the descriptions of the Armenian, Georgian, Assyrian, Greek and other monuments as they stand today. It is also pointed out that although Sinclair is careful not to offend the Turks, something which could impede his future archaeological pursuits in Turkey, nonetheless his opening statement "the rationale for this book is not that eastern Turkey is the better or the worse half of Turkey, but it is the half whose monuments need

justice to be done to them" says it all. Finally, in the epilogue of his book Dr. Garbis-Armen summarizes the continuous, conscientious and scientific efforts of the Armenian architects in building earthquake-resistant structures.

This volume by Dr. Garbis-Armen is rich in evidence and illustration, and he makes a significant contribution to a very important component of our history and civilization. Without any hesitation I strongly recommend that it should be read as well as diffused in other than Armenian ethno-cultural circles. In the last 25 to 30 years the human species has come to be considered one of the most powerful geomorphological agents acting upon this earth, often with catastrophic consequences. Earthquakes and volcanism are uncontrollable forces of nature. I do not believe that the same is true for premeditated vandalism by humans. For if I do, they become irrelevant to what we call civilization.

Washington D.C. Armenian Churches Raise Funds for Artzakh

Christian Solidarity Int. (C.S.I.) is an international benevolent union, with its headquarters based in Zurich, Switzerland. It is particularly interested in people who suffer and are persecuted and in desperate situation, like the Armenians in Artzakh.

The Diocesan Legate, Bishop Papken Varjabedian, and Legate's Council with the cooperation of two Armenian churches of Washington, D.C. (St. Mary's and Sourp Khach)

raised funds to help Artzakh. Recently, the Legate sent \$2,500 to CSI.

Baroness Caroline Cox is one of the co-presidents of CSI, and she visited Artzakh six times. From March to October, 1992, CSI sent 200 tons of food, medicine, and medical equipment, ambulances, flour, and ten tons of Nestle's powdered milk.

(From a Press Release by the Diocesan Legate in Washington D.C.)

Harout Fazlian Conducts L'Orchestre De La Joie of Montreal

Harout Fazlian conducted L'Orchestre de la Joie on November 13, in the second half of a benefit concert held at St. John the Evangelist Church of Montreal. A capacity audience enjoyed this beautiful vocal and musical program sponsored by the Maison Nazareth, a charitable organization helping the homeless and the sick.

In the first part of the program the well-known Orpheus Singers, conducted by Peter Schubert, presented the "Missa de Beata de Virgine", chants of a mass by the 15th century composer, Josquin de Perez.

In the second half of the program, Harout Fazlian of Montreal conducted the 20 musicians of L'Orchestre de la Joie in of Antonio Vivaldi's "The Four Seasons", with Angelique Duguay as solo violinist.

The finale of the program was a combined vocal and instrumental performance of excerpts from Pergolesi's "Stabat Mater". Harout Fazlian conducted the orchestra and the Orpheus Singers bringing this benefit concert to a very successful end.

Harout fazlian had just returned from Armenia where he was invited by Loris Jeknavorian, Artistic Director and Chief Conductor of the Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra, to conduct the

Yerevan Symphony Orchestra in a program of Smetana's Moldau, Mozart's Concerto for Violin and Orchestra No. 3, and Beethoven's 5th Symphony. This was part of a series of concerts by Armenian conductors from abroad sponsored by the A.G.B.U.

Harout Fazlian is an honors graduate of the Yerevan Academy of Music and has received his Master of Arts Diploma with honors from the Yerevan State Conservatory. In July of this year he participated in the International Competition of Czech music for Conductors held in Olomouc, Czechoslovakia. He won the 2nd prize in conducting and the special prize in interpretation of Dvorak's Symphony No. 8.

At present Harout Fazlian is organizing an orchestral presentation in Montreal to be held in January 1993, for the benefit of the Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra.

H.A.

Cont'd from page 9

Armenia has risen to 2,034,000,000 rubles, according to a statement issued by the Ministry of Finance on October 1, 1992. Within a period of one month - September 1, 1992 to October 1, 1992 - the deficit has grown by 920,200,000 rubles.

CANADA

Sunday Shopping Is Here

The Quebec government will allow most stores to open Sundays to give a boost to the depressed economy. According to a study, the new regulation will create thousands of jobs and will increase sales considerably. Until the declaration of amendments to the old law, only supermarkets and pharmacies were allowed to stay open provided they had no more than five employees on the floor. With the new shopping hours department stores, other major non-food stores and boutiques will be allowed to stay open on Sundays from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Tobacco Tax in Quebec Won't be Slashed

The provincial government will not remove the heavy tax on tobacco to fight contraband cigarettes. Revenue Minister Raymond Savoie said that such a move would cause the loss of hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue. He also stressed that if Quebec would ever move to slash its tobacco tax without Ottawa's participation, besides the loss in revenue to Quebec, the price of a pack of cigarettes would not change. The minister expressed hope that U.S. President-elect Bill Clinton would increase the taxes on American tobacco.

Canadian Honored in France

The French government has named Phyllis Lambert, founder and Director of the Canadian Centre for Architecture, as an officer of the Ordre des Arts et Lettres. The honor goes to people who have made considerable contributions to literature and arts. Lambert was praised for her work to preserve Montreal's architectural heritage. She received her award in a ceremony while in Paris to attend the Journée des Musées Québécois.

A Mini-City to Be Built in St. Laurent

Bombardier Real Estate Inc. has come up with a major plan to build a mini-city on the site of the former Cartierville airport. The city council of St. Laurent recently voted in favor of a number of bylaw amendments that would give the green light to the billion-dollar project. It is estimated that as many as 25,000 residents could relocate in the area to be developed. The price for a townhouse or condo would be \$110,000 to \$140,000.

Refugee Claims Backlog Being Completed

Employment and Immigration Minister the Honourable Bernard Valcourt has announced that the Backlog Clearance Program of refugee claims made before January 1, 1989, will be completed on time and within budget.

As of October 1992, of the estimated 95,000 backlog refugee claims, 92,000 cases had been decided, with an overall acceptance rate of 58 per cent.

People who arrived in Canada and made a refugee claim before January 1, 1989, and who have not had further contact with a Canada Immigration Centre, are advised to notify an immigration officer by December 11, 1992. Those who fail to do so will no longer be eligible for consideration under the Backlog Clearance Program according to proposed amendments to the Regulations.

WORLD NEWS

Karabagh Threatened With Terror and Oppression:
International Relief Group

Doctors Without Borders, an international medical group involved in relief work in war-torn areas, has compiled a list of eleven minorities and nationalities that are seriously threatened by the ongoing hostilities in their lands of origin. These eleven ethnic groups were singled out from the 60 countries to which the relief group, based in Brussels, provides medical and humanitarian aid. Armenians and Azerbaijanis of Nagorno Karabagh are included in the report which states that 400,000 Armenians and 100,000 Azeris have become refugees. The other nationalities considered are Kurds, Bosnians, Mozambicans, Peruvians, Burmese Muslims, Somalis, Sri Lankans, south Sudanese and Tuaregs.

Radioactive Leakage Expected
from Sunken Submarine

According to a Russian submarine designer, radioactive caesium and plutonium will start to leak from a Soviet submarine that went down off the Norwegian coast in 1988. Nicolai Nosov, the designer who led an expedition to inspect the submarine, said on a news report that caesium is already leaking from the damaged reactor and plutonium from the nuclear warheads could be released by 1994 or 1995. The submarine Komsomolets which sank with 42 sailors aboard rests 2000 metres below the surface, in an area known to be a most productive fishing ground.

Spanish Right-Wingers Attack Immigrants

Immigrants from the Dominican Republic who had made their home in an abandoned discotheque, were sprayed with bullets by four hooded gunmen. A 32-year-old woman died minutes after being admitted to a hospital. It is estimated that thousands of Dominican women have found work as nannies and maids in rich Madrid homes. According to a report for the European Commission there are some 750,000 immigrants in Spain, 40 per cent of whom have entered the country illegally. The Spanish Civil Guard said that the killing of Lucrecia Perez was Spain's first racially motivated killing, probably carried out by right wing extremists who demand a halt to immigration.