

THE EXPERIENCE OF MUSA DAGH ARMENIAN IMMIGRANTS IN THE UNITED STATES DURING THE 1910s-1940s

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Armenian migration from Musa Dagh took place in two main directions: the Arab Middle East and further south to Ethiopia in Africa¹ as well as the United States and a tiny fraction to South America.² This study focuses on the US. The westbound migration had begun in the late nineteenth century, intensified after 1908-09, continued to some degree during World War I, and assumed new proportions after repatriation from the exile imposed by the genocide. In the US, the new arrivals sought employment in factories and small businesses, stuck together while maintaining strong ties with the native soil, and gradually integrated in American society. What follows below is their prosopography in the New World based on individual stories. Certain features of that profile have been treated beyond the chronological scope of this study as a matter of natural progression, reinforcement, and/or culmination.

EMIGRATION

The earliest known Musa Dagh Armenian to set foot in the US was George H. Filian, from “a suburb of Antioch,” who arrived in New York in July 1879, studied theology at the Oberlin, Ohio, and Chicago, Illinois, theological seminaries, and became a Protestant minister.³ Only a few others followed him by the turn of the century. One of them was Bitias native Apraham Seklemian, who cofounded and became the first editor (1908-1913) of the *Asbarez* (arena) Armenian newspaper in Fresno, California.⁴ The bulk of immigrants from Musa Dagh left the Ottoman Empire as a result of the compulsory military service after the Young Turk revolution of 1908 and the Armenian massacres in Cilicia and north Syria that took place the following year. Many of the newcomers were young bachelors and married men who had left their families behind.⁵

During WWI contacts between the immigrants and their overseas families continued to some extent, but under different circumstances. In 1915, the Armenians of Musa Dagh, like the rest of their ethnic brethren across the Ottoman Empire, received deportation orders. One-third of the villagers obeyed the command and was deported to Hama, Syria. However, the two-third majority resisted and, in a fateful twist, was rescued by the French marines and settled in a refugee camp on the eastern bank of the Suez Canal near Port Said, Egypt.⁶ In both cases, the expatriates in the US succeeded in communicating with their relatives. Émigrés in Erie, Pennsylvania, for

instance, upon getting word regarding kins exiled to Hama, inquired about their fate through the intermediary of Rev. E.H. Shanks of the First Baptist Church, who contacted U.S. consul Jesse B. Jackson in Aleppo. Correspondence between the two men, and between Jackson and certain deportees, lasted for over a year, from October 1915 to November 1916.⁷ Further contacts became impossible after April 1917, when the US declared war on Germany and its allies and American diplomatic personnel departed the Ottoman Empire. But in late 1918, when the conflagration had ended, communications resumed revealing the scope of the losses that the Musa Daghians, among countless other Armenians, had sustained during the genocide.⁸

Contacts with Port Said took place in three ways. First, the refugees at Port Said sent letters to their relatives in the US and vice versa.⁹ Second, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF/*Hay Heghapokhagan Tashmagtsutiun*) on the East Coast raised \$1,000 that was distributed among the camp residents. In all likelihood, Musa Daghians actively participated in that drive.¹⁰ Third, a number of compatriots from New Britain, Connecticut, and elsewhere volunteered for the French *Légion d'Orient*, which was originally formed by some 500-600 Musa Dagh men at Port Said to fight the Turkish enemy in the Levant alongside the Allies.¹¹ In addition, a group of youths from New Britain organized fundraisers to support the legionnaires. At least five members of the group's executive committee were Musa Dagh natives.¹² It must also be noted that a number of Musa Daghians registered for the draft in the US army despite the fact that many were not yet citizens.¹³

As soon as the émigrés in the US learned of the Port Said refugee camp, they made arrangements to get their families to America. The first batch was reported to be ready for departure on 2 December, 1915. It comprised the Yegharians (Igarrians/Egarians) and the Seklemians from Bitias, sixteen in all, including three teachers of the camp's Sisvan School, namely, Nvart Yegharian, Adel Yegharian, and Elizabeth Seklemian; they would reunite with their twenty-two relatives living in the US. The police chief and the Italian consul at Port Said facilitated the impending journey the former by issuing passports and the latter promising transit visas free of charge.¹⁴ For some reason the trip was postponed, however, giving the press time to ponder the merits of emigration. When asked to dissuade the refugees from going, political activist, poet, and editor of *Arev* (sun) newspaper Vahan Tekeyian declined to advise them about their decision, and instead outlined the pros and cons of leaving and staying. It is true that living conditions in the camp left much to be desired and that a sheltered home with a meal awaited the refugees in America. Nevertheless, they would also be sequestered in factories for long hours among foreigners. Armenian national interests likewise behooved that the refugees remain in the camp for an eventual return to the homeland from a short distance after the defeat of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of law and order. Should the refugees argue that they had paid their dues by

fighting the Turks, they ought to be reminded that soldiers heed the call of duty as often as deemed necessary. Besides, by returning to Musa Dagh they would enjoy the fruits of their victory.¹⁵

On the western shores of the Atlantic, the Boston *Hayrenik* (fatherland) in an editorial characterized the pending arrival of Musa Daghians as “sad news.” It had actually anticipated the reverse to occur, that is, the Musa Dagh émigrés already in the US would hopefully go to Port Said and take the final “leap” to the homeland whenever possible. Although the newspaper expressed confidence that the Musa Daghians would not assimilate in America, it nevertheless criticized the Egyptian Armenians, especially the rich, for failing to create better conditions at the camp (thereby preventing the human exodus).¹⁶ But despite the ongoing public debate, a group of forty-five refugees—including the original Yegharians and Seklemians plus members of the Keosheian, Giragosian, Vartanesian, and Kelejian families—in February 1916 set sail for New York. After a stopover in Genoa, Italy, they resumed their journey on 21 February aboard the *S.S. America*.¹⁷ Upon their arrival in New York, someone took their picture, which later appeared in an American history book. The caption read: “FUTURE AMERICANS. The photograph was of a band of Armenians who landed at Ellis Island, March 9, 1916,—the advance guard of a body of 4200 who were rescued at one time from Turkish massacre during the World War by a French cruiser off the coast of Syria.”¹⁸ Three of the new arrivals further disseminated this story: Ohannes Klijeian (Hovhannes Kelejian, nicknamed “Saba”) shared his experience with the *New York Times*;¹⁹ Nvart Yegharian published her eyewitness account in the *Asbarez* newspaper of Fresno;²⁰ and Elizabeth Seklemian contributed an article (translated into French) to a tome devoted to Armenian women.²¹

Other groups from Port Said followed suit. Bedros Der Bedrosian (“Ashkar”) in America “sent enough money for fare and a ticket so [his] young [son,] Paul, along with his two uncles, some cousins, and his grandmother took a boat to neutral Greece in early March, 1916. After almost a month in Greece, they took a Greek ship across the ocean and arrived 16-20 days later at Ellis Island, in April 1916, just as Paul turned 16! His mother, however, did not want to go to the US but preferred to return home to their village [Yoghunoluk] after the war.”²² Mary Vartanesian Dabbakian likewise writes: “Sometime in the spring of 1916, my father [Oskan] had saved enough money to get passage for his mother, Elizabeth Hovagimian-Vartanesian, his brother Alex, sister Mary Vartanesian-Skenderian, her son Alex, and his sister Isgoohi Vartanesian-Kalamian, and her daughter Elizabeth. My father’s brothers-in-law were both in the Turkish army and never got to America.”²³ Another family reunification took place in the following manner, as recounted by Aurora Adajian Lehmann: “Nana [Sarah Magzarian Phillian] wrote to [her husband] Baboo [Hovhannes Phillian] that they were alive and in Egypt. He was so happy, he immediately sent them boat fare and they traveled to America to join him. My mother [Sarah] and Uncle Alex, Baboo’s children,

had been separated from him for ten years. They did not recognize him when...they disembarked”²⁴ on 26 May 1916.²⁵ Sarkis Soghomon Adajian sent for his fiancé, Elmas Oflazian and her brother, Movses. They arrived in New York in July 1916, and the couple married in early 1917.²⁶ Other survivors at Port Said may also have joined their loved ones in the US.²⁷

Also in 1916, a second, albeit smaller, group of Musa Daghians traveled to the US from Buenos Aires, Argentina. They were actually young Yoghunoluk men who had left the Ottoman Empire for South America in 1911 to avoid the military draft. After staying there for about five years, they had decided to settle in the US permanently.²⁸ Missak Aprahamian’s journey from Buenos Aires to Ellis Island aboard the *S.S. Vasari* lasted three-and-a-half weeks, from 27 July-20 August 1916.²⁹ Six others including the Hanisian brothers embarked on their trip from Las Palmas harbor aboard the *S.S. Vauban* on 19 October, 1916, arriving in New York on 11 November. Their average age was twenty-nine, and all but one mentioned “laborer” as their occupation and South Manchester, Connecticut, as their destination.³⁰

Emigration from Musa Dagh proper—where the survivors from Hama and Port Said had returned in 1919—resumed in 1920 after a hiatus of six years. Economic hardships, marriage plans, and the desire to reunite with loved ones in the US constituted the main factors for leaving the native soil. Although statistics are lacking, the following cases reflected the trend. The brothers Yeremia and Sarkis Renjilian in 1919 returned from the US to Bitias, where the latter died due to a contagious disease he had contracted earlier.³¹ Yeremia did not stay long; he took back to the US with him his sister, Victoria, her fiancé, Krikor Sarafian of Aintab, and two other female relatives in late 1920.³² At about the same time, Marie Igarian and her eleven-year-old daughter, Sara, left for South Manchester to be with their spouse/father.³³ Similarly, writes Mary Vartanesian Dabbakian: “In 1920, Uncle Alex sent for his fiancée, Mary Markarian, so they could be married. In 1921, my father sent for Mary Markarian’s cousin, Yeranuhe Genjian, to be his wife.”³⁴ Ohannes Atamian, Maritsa Ohanessian (Hansian) and her son, Antranik, all three from Yoghunoluk, arrived in America from Piraeus, Greece, aboard the *S.S. Megali Hellas* on 25 November 1920.³⁵ Co-villagers Armenag Ohanessian (Armenag Hansian) and his friend, Stepan Panossian, set sail from Patras, Greece, aboard the *S.S. Pannonia* on 21 December, 1920, reaching New York on 10 January, 1921.³⁶ Maritza Boyadjian of Kheder Beg journeyed to Philadelphia to marry Kapriel Emlikian in March 1921.³⁷ Marie Subkyan (Siubkiukian) of Haji Habibli joined her fiancé, Garabed Hovagimian, in Manchester, CT, later that year.³⁸ Nouritza Miratoutian (Melaytutian) entered the US at Providence, RI, aboard the *S.S. Roma* on 16 September, 1921.³⁹ Mihran Serekian in 1923 sent for his mother, Mayrum, brother Armen, and sister, Sara.⁴⁰ The office of V. Morlian in Boston, which handled the travel formalities, in addition to requesting pertinent information and supporting documentation, charged \$10

cash per person for the various tasks and a \$50 deposit per person to be cashed upon their arrival.⁴¹ These expenses did not include the ticket fares.

It appears that not all immigrants entered the US directly. For example, Mihran Serekian had to travel to Cuba in 1931 to pick up his sister-in-law, Azniv Melidonian.⁴² Cuba served as a conduit for others as well. After arriving in Cuba, Hagop (“Aguna”) and Gulenia Egarian of Bitias had to split up, because while Hagop was allowed to proceed to the US, Gulenia had to wait until her papers were approved. The song below, composed by the lonely husband one cold New Jersey night, relates their experience:

*[In May we took the road]
In July we arrived in Cuba
Send me my fur coat
And in my place hug the pillow
La la la, La la la.*⁴³

The overwhelming majority of Musa Dagh immigrants in the US lived on the East Coast. They were concentrated in Hartford, New Britain, New London, and Manchester, Connecticut; Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Erie, Monessen, and Williamsport, Pennsylvania; and Paterson, New Jersey. Smaller numbers settled in Holyoke, Massachusetts; Niagara Falls, New York; Fort Myers, Florida, and so on. In Paterson especially, they clustered in the southern sector of the town, on Main, Atlantic, Pacific, Day, Paxton, and Sussex streets, as well as Getty, Madison, and Montclair avenues. Only Movses Hachigian’s family lived downtown, on Market Street.⁴⁴ But changing addresses frequently within the same enclave was quite common. Movses/Norman Balabanian details his family’s peregrinations between 1932 and 1935:

In those years, we moved often; from Main Street, we moved 2 or 3 blocks south to Getty Avenue, next door to the Sam Magzanians, across the street from School Number 9. A year later, we moved just a block or two to the street parallel to Getty Avenue and Main Street, just North of School No. 9. Within a year we had moved again, this time to a street a few blocks north of Main Street. We lived on the first floor of a 3-story house. Tony Soghomonian lived on the second floor and Armen Hanessian and family lived on the third floor... This constant moving was the result of seeking cheaper accommodations.⁴⁵

Owning a house proved elusive for a number of years. In fact, only the Chaparians and Mardiros Hachigian co-owned a house, on Day Street, which they nevertheless lost during the Depression when they moved to East 18th Street. Purchasing private homes became possible beginning in the 1940s, when families gradually moved out to other parts of Paterson, nearby Clifton, and elsewhere.⁴⁶

On the West Coast, a 1919 census of Armenians in Fresno listed six families plus fourteen persons from Antioch (most probably from Musa Dagh).⁴⁷ In addition, two known individuals, namely, Hrant Igarian from Bitias and Paul Bedrosian from Yoghunoluk, lived in Los Angeles in the 1930s.⁴⁸ The families of Rupen Hayrig/Harry and Rose Igarian Phillian and Hovhannes/John and Rahel Seklemian Igarian resided in West Riverside, California⁴⁹—they had all migrated from the East Coast.

The total number of Musa Daghians in the US may never be determined due to the lack of statistics or censuses. Notwithstanding, as a very rough estimate, they may have counted a few hundred. As for their provenance, the largest single group came from Bitias (probably because of their adherence to the Armenian Protestant/Evangelical church, which was established in that village thanks to the proselytizing efforts of American Protestant missionaries beginning in 1840); in fact, hardly any family there had no close or distant relative in America. The rest hailed mostly from Yoghunoluk, Haji Habibli, and Kheder Beg.

OCCUPATIONS

Most Musa Dagh immigrants, who were expert sericulturists and weavers, plied their profession in large industrial settings. In South Manchester in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the Cheney Brothers Silk Manufacturing Company “actively recruited both skilled and unskilled immigrant labor. By the 1920s, foreign worker[s] dominated the labor force.”⁵⁰ Virtually all Musa Dagh Armenians living in the area, men, women, and teenagers alike, thus worked for that company, thereby constituting a tiny fraction of its labor force.⁵¹ But after 1923 the company “quickly declined due to industry wide over production and competition from other synthetic fibers such as rayon” and filed for bankruptcy in 1937, forcing many an employee to seek a job elsewhere.⁵² Accordingly, during the 1920s a number of Musa Daghians relocated to Paterson, dubbed the Silk City and the Silk Capital of the World. “Most of the men worked in the silk mills... They were proud of their skills and managing 6 and 7 looms at a time.”⁵³ But that contentment came at a cost: A youth working a loom, for instance, “was unable to hear the bus driver on a trip home after being exposed to the deafening sound of so many looms running simultaneously.”⁵⁴

South Manchester and Paterson were not the only silk centers that lured these Armenians. Movses Sherbetjian worked in the Holmes Silk Company in Williamsport, PA. Others tried their fortunes in Holyoke, MA. Yeprem Frankian of Bitias, a graduate of the prestigious Silk Institute of Bursa in Ottoman Turkey, labored at the William Skinner and Sons silk mills from 1923 until his retirement in 1956 at the age of seventy.⁵⁵ A fellow countryman named Sarkis Mateos Renjilian joined him in the early 1930s at the same place for some time.⁵⁶ Mihran P. Serekian of Yoghunoluk likewise labored at Skinner and Sons, and at the Prentiss Wire Mills Division of H.K. Porter

Company, Inc. for twenty-two years beginning in 1933, thereafter, retiring in 1966.⁵⁷

Satenig/Sallie Phillian captured the transitioning of weavers from rural Musa Dagh into the urban, industrial American East in a poem dedicated to her uncle, Hovhannes K. Phillian:

*The highest he had been was Musa Dagh
A secret strong-hold.
Always to the ground, in heavy boots,
He walked or rode a mule
With a pack on his back.*

*He wove the silk-worm string
Into sheen-full silk
Came here circuitously by boat
And spun and wove
Not at home
But under a boss.*

*Now there was no mule
His boots were not heavy
Earth no longer needed boots or mule
Feet felt no longer
Buses and Cars, flights to Mars
Higher and higher
Than Musa Dagh and Ararat.⁵⁸*

Other compatriots occupied jobs in a related field, that of apparel. Stepan Panossian, beginning in 1928, ran a dry-cleaning business in the Philadelphia area for about a half-century.⁵⁹ Movses/Moses and Aghsapit/Elizabeth Hachigian opened their own successful cleaning and tailoring shop during the Depression years in Paterson.⁶⁰ The brothers Movses/George and Sarkis/Albert Sherbetjian/Shirn (“Azizints”) managed the Liberty Cleaning & Dyeing Company in Philadelphia.⁶¹ Movses died circa 1932 of tuberculosis at a young age, and Sarkis later opened his own store at 250 Pine Street in Williamsport. His business card advertized: “ALBERT’s Fur Repairing and Restyling. All types of Tailoring. WE ALSO BUILD NEW FUR COATS.”⁶² Mary (m. Alex) Vartanesian circa 1940 worked at the Novelty Shawl Company on Getty Avenue in Paterson that also manufactured baby blankets. In addition to her regular tasks, she distributed unfinished bundles among fellow Musa Daghian housewives for them to tie end knots and hand-embroider certain segments. The finished products would then be taken back to the factory. As this arrangement was only on a trial basis, those women ultimately ended up working in the factory for about fifteen years.⁶³

The rug business attracted some immigrants. Oskan Vartanesian, for one, after losing his job at a Paterson silk mill due to poor eyesight, installed a loom in his house and manufactured rag rugs.⁶⁴ In Holyoke, Sarkis Mateos Renjilian started “a rag rug business in a small shop” and subsequently “an Oriental and Broadloom business” during the 1940s. As this enterprise “was modestly successful,” he and his wife, Azniv/Agnes, supplemented their income through other means. He became “a smash fixer at the Bay State textile mill” while she “worked for the American Pad and Paper Company where she won prizes for finding more efficient ways to perform the various tasks.”⁶⁵ The Kalamian family business can be singled out as the most successful one. “Our History” reads:

Kalamian’s Inc. is a locally owned third-generation family business that was founded in 1925 by Armenian immigrants David and Mary Kalamian. They started a small business in the basement of their New London home washing and repairing Oriental rugs. David used the little bit of cash their hard labor generated to buy rugs he admired from local estates. These he took door to door. Soon they moved the business from their home to a small storefront at the base of Town Hill... The business now [2009] occupies a building further up Rte 1, closer to the Waterford town line.

When David’s son Alex returned from World War II, he took over the reins of the family business. With the help of his wife Mary, they grew the business over the next 50 years, officially retiring in the early 1990’s. However, Alex was often on the scene, ready to share his general knowledge of flooring and his specific love of Oriental rugs with the friends he had made over the years. He died in October of 2006.

Today Kalamian’s is proudly run by two of Alex & Mary’s daughters. Third generation owners Mimi and Lisa Kalamian learned the business from the ground up as teenagers by working in the family business after school, on weekends and during vacations. Together they have 45 years of experience.⁶⁶

In New Britain especially, an industrial center known as the Hardware City, Musa Dagh men labored in metal factories. Hovsep Adajian was a lock maker at Russell & Erwin, a division of American Hardware Company.⁶⁷ His sons, Armen/Jack and Vartan, as well as future son-in-law, Edward Tanguay, made tools and dyes at the Fafnir Bearings Company.⁶⁸ During WWI Hovhannes Hanisian manufactured “‘Universal’ appliances i.e. electric irons, percolators, toasters and electric ranges” at the Landers Frary & Clark Manufacturing Company.⁶⁹ Toward the end of the conflagration Rupen Hayrig Phillian indicated the American Brake and Shoe Foundry Company in Erie as his employer.⁷⁰ His brother, George, declared himself to be a molder in 1920 and a foreman in an iron foundry in 1930. Their father, Levon Barkev, worked as a plank roller in a tin mill in Monessen, Pennsylvania in 1920.⁷¹

Some émigrés, like many of their migrant brethren in Beirut, Lebanon, at the time, charted their economic course toward the restaurant, hotel, and/or food business. Kheder Beg native Sarkis/Joseph Soghomon Adajian appears to be one of the most successful entrepreneurs among them. After studying at the St. James Armenian Brotherhood seminary in Jerusalem and the Syrian Protestant College (renamed American University of Beirut after 1921) for a total of twelve years, Adajian emigrated to the US in 1913 at the age of twenty-one and took up a job as a waiter at Longley's diner in Hartford, earning 10 cents per hour. Since he was proficient in English and had beautiful penmanship, he was assigned the additional task of scripting the menu and eventually became the manager. In 1920 he opened his own restaurant, called the Dixie Lunch, at the corner of Park and Lawrence streets. To achieve this end, he rented a vacant space by the Winkler's auto parts store and began charging customers, mainly factory workers, 35 cents per meal. He and his wife, Elmas/Pearl, "baked 40 to 50 pies a day in a coal stove." As the business catapulted, Winkler wanted to increase the rent while the lease was still in effect. In 1925 a reluctant Adajian relocated to a new spot by a bank on Park Street, renaming the restaurant the New Dixie Lunch. In 1935, he rented the place to an Armenian couple, Mr. and Mrs. George Atamian, to take his family on an extended tour to the Middle East, including Musa Dagh and Europe. Two years later he opened a new restaurant, the Round Table, at 15 Asylum Street. Despite the good income, Adajian had to close the business in 1943 due to his participation in WWII as a member of the US armed forces. After his return, he bought a hotel near the Capitol Building in 1947 and named it The Adajian's.⁷² With "full creative license," he commissioned artist Thurston Munson to design and decorate the interior: "The result was four art-deco rooms full of exotic murals with a Near East motif." The establishment drew "a steady clientele of politicians, entertainers, athletes and artists" including then-presidential candidate Jimmy Carter, who in the 1970s held one of his campaign fundraisers there. In this family business, "son, Eddie, could be found on any given night behind the bar, reciting Kipling, while his daughter, Regina, was hostess." This Hartford landmark finally closed its doors on New Year's Eve 1986.⁷³

John Adajian ("Jarjar Ammo"/Uncle), a distant cousin of Sarkis', had a coffee house in the second-floor lobby of the Palace Theater on Main Street in New Britain. It served as a popular hangout for Armenian bachelors, who gathered to eat lunch, drink coffee, and gamble. Unfortunately, at some point he was arrested for selling liquor without a license.⁷⁴ A certain Movses (or Misak) Magzarian, originally from Bitias, ran Hotel Washington in Niagara Falls in some kind of a deal with Hovhannes K. Phillian. That collaboration, however, fell apart because of a dispute between the two men.⁷⁵ Also in Niagara Falls, Hagop Keosheian ("Kusheye") owned a popular restaurant with a good income.⁷⁶ Serop Hagop Adajian, for about twelve years beginning in 1935, managed his own Reliable Diner (later renamed Sam's Diner) on

Bloomfield Avenue in Newark, NJ. This was essentially a one-man operation, as daughter Aurora Adajian Lehmann testifies: “My father cooked all the soups, the roasts, the side dishes, made all the sandwiches and was also the short-order cook. He was the waiter and he washed all the dishes (until he could afford a man to wash them) and he also cleaned the restaurant after closing, i.e. he did everything.” As for the people he served, “he had a very loyal clientele who were mostly people who worked in the area and came in almost every week day. Because this was an area filled with Italians, most of his customers and his specials were Italian. Occasionally, he would sneak in an Armenian dish...” Heeding the advice of brother-in-law Alex J. Phillian, in 1947 Serop opened a “fancier” eatery, called The Tower Lunch & Restaurant, a few blocks away at 396 Bloomfield Avenue. Given Serop’s exhausting schedule, he suffered a heart attack, sold the place, and in 1952 moved to California, where he died a year later.⁷⁷

A few compatriots ventured into other aspects of the food industry. After working in various silk mills on the East Coast from mid-1916 until December 1927, Paul Bedrosian relocated to California to start a new life. He “soon ended up working for an uncle, a date producer, in Indio, California. There he gained experience growing dates, grapefruits, and tangerines.” He then earned his living at the produce departments of the McMoore Grocery chain store in Los Angeles and the Safeway store in Beverly Hills, respectively. This phase ended when “A friend helped him convert the rumble seat of his 1929 Chevrolet Roadster into a truck with sides and he went into the grocery business for himself peddling fruit and vegetables from his truck in the neighborhood of Santa Monica & Sunset Blvd. This was from about 1931 to 1934.” He was compelled to change venue after he married a fellow Musa Daglian by the name of Sally Egarian in August 1934 because his income from peddling vegetables was not sufficient to support the family. So he became an independent gardener from 1936-1940 for \$3 per day. He continued that career as an employee of the Los Angeles Unified School District until his retirement in 1965.⁷⁸

John Adajian sold fruit at 17 Lafayette Street in New Britain from about 1924 until 1930.⁷⁹ Hrant Igarian, who lived in Los Angeles County after October 1930, managed a produce market.⁸⁰ George and Mary Phillian owned a grocery store at 540 Mission Boulevard, West Riverside (Rubidoux), California.⁸¹ After marrying in 1917 and constantly moving from one place to another and losing money in the process, Rupen/Hayrig and Rahel Igarian Phillian finally settled on a ranch in Indio, Riverside County, California, on a four-year labor contract with the proprietor. In 1929 with some saving, they purchased a grocery store at 902 Mission Boulevard in West Riverside. Rupen died in 1940, and Rose sold the business in 1948.⁸² But the way Rose started the market—as her husband was busy making rounds to deliver vegetables to other customers—perhaps exemplifies the language barrier that many of the

immigrants had to surmount. She describes her experience, in broken English, as follows:

So we bought the store, and they took me to the store, and the very next morning, and just, I had to operate the store, mind you... No experience whatsoever, no ever had done anything like that. I can't even speak English. Don't even know the articles' names... All right then, I stand, I stood behind the counter and supposed to run that store. And I'm scared to death, I'm so bashful, I could die... And here comes my first customer...she says, "I want a package on None Such Mince Meat." Package of the mince meat, that was the brand name. So I stood there like a statue and didn't move, because I didn't even know there was such a thing, mince meat, in the package! Never heard the name before. And she gave me a warm smile, that said, "I know you don't know what I'm talkin' about, but it's all right." She went around the counter, she took off the package of mince meat, she said, "It's 15 cents, here, dear." I'll never forget that corner and that package of mince meat... So, that customer was my good friend later on. And so that's the way I started running the store.⁸³

The rest of the immigrants earned their livelihood by pursuing other careers. Yeremia Renjilian was perhaps the only physician (osteopathic) in the entire lot.⁸⁴ Alex Gregory Phillian practiced law and became a judge in New York and New Jersey after WWII.⁸⁵ Alex Hachigian engaged in carpentry, Alex Iskenderian in photoengraving, and Leon Hagopian in jewelry.⁸⁶ The Taminosians in Fort Myers were cobblers.⁸⁷ Armen Serekian in Manchester, CT, likewise mended shoes.⁸⁸ Jack Ayarian and Mardiros Tumberian worked as a washer and an assistant, respectively, at a South Paterson laundry owned by an Armenian from Dikranagerd named Tashjian. Khachig Keoseian manufactured roofing tiles at the Flynt Coke Co. in Rutherford, NJ,⁸⁹ and so on.

Like everyone else in the US, the Musa Daghians fell on hard times during the Great Depression beginning in 1929. Paterson resident Armenag Hanisian states that "lucky was the person who had a job for a weekly wage of 15 dollars."⁹⁰ The immigrants certainly looked for ways to be able to weather the crisis. A small group returned to Musa Dagh in umbrage,⁹¹ but the bulk stayed and struggled. Oskan Vartanesian, for one, "survived...by brewing Arak (a spirit akin to the Greek uzou or the Turkish raki – V.Sh.), selling it for \$5.00 a gallon[.] Ouskan [sic] didn't make a lot of money, just enough to avoid the Relief rolls for his family."⁹² His daughter, Mary, provides additional details: "Our families were very careful with every penny earned. We walked everywhere, and when we could afford it, we rode the bus. Only four of the Suvediatsi (Musa Daghian – V.Sh.) families we knew owned cars."⁹³

Mutual support also carried people through. Jack Hachigian elaborates: "The Armenians in Paterson were proud, virtually, no one accepted

government aid. These were mountain village people and believed in self-reliance. Friends would support friends.”⁹⁴ He further recalls: “Growing up in New Jersey during the Depression was a depressing experience! My parents did what they could to shelter us from the misery. Our family was like an island spared from a tumultuous sea. My father gave up being a silk weaver and opened a cleaning/tailoring shop. It was a success... We supported several families. We were relatively well off: we had a car and a telephone.”⁹⁵ One of the beneficiaries of the Hachigians’ altruism was Sarkis Phillian, their best man and godfather. As the guest of their house for three years, “he slept on a cot in the kitchen, having neither job nor family of his own.”⁹⁶ Those relatively better off assisted the less fortunate by paying their utility bills, especially that of electricity.⁹⁷ But not everyone seems to have received the same attention. Gerald G. Gemian (Hovagim Hovagimian), then a young boy living on Sussex Street in Paterson together with his father, uncle, and cousin (both wives were dead), writes: “The Armenian community drifted apart from us when we needed them the most as we were going into the Great Depression... We finally went on Relief (welfare as it is known today). Nobody in the Armenian community came to help us. As a result I became angered and said ‘...who the hell needs them!’ I became a renegade...”⁹⁸

Besides distributing relief, one of the measures that president Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s administration took to alleviate the economic hardship and also improve working conditions was the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA). Before its introduction in 1933, laborers used to work Monday to Friday 8 hours per day plus 4 hours on Saturdays, for a total of 44 hours per week. With the new Act, they had to work only 40 hours a week with a guaranteed earning of \$13 per week. Obviously, the Musa Daghians, too, benefited from this salutary change.⁹⁹

COMPATRIOTIC BONDS

The geographical distance between the US and Musa Dagh did not prevent the immigrants from maintaining strong ties with the homeland. Several channels connected the two sides. Correspondence constituted a common mode of communication. Usually written in Turkish with Armenian characters, the letters exchanged greetings, family and general information, pictures, queries, instructions respecting monetary transmissions through banks, etc. The latter category, besides assisting families financially, enabled immigrants to purchase land in Musa Dagh via relatives.¹⁰⁰ Actual visits also took place. Movses/George Sherbetjian, for instance, who had not seen his parents Kevork (“Aziz”) and Vartir nee Maghzanian as well as four sisters for about twelve years, crossed the Atlantic and the Mediterranean in 1925 to meet them once again.¹⁰¹ Similarly, after a twenty-two year absence, Sarkis/Joseph Soghomon Adajian took his family of seven to a six-month tour to Europe and the Middle East in 1935. They spent half of the trip with father-in-law, Boghos Oflazian’s

family at Svedia, making frequent excursions to adjacent Musa Dagh during their stay.¹⁰²

Supporting organizations and institutions in Musa Dagh remained a fixed objective for certain individuals and groups. Isgender/Alex Khachig Phillian, a member of the Social Democrat Hnchagian Party in Paterson, often corresponded with and assisted the party's Musa Dagh branch. One of his parcels, sent in late 1930, contained a check for raffle ticket sales, twelve coats of arm, some fourteen books, and enlarged pictures depicting the party's 40th anniversary celebrations (1887-1927). The recipients thanked him for his generosity, but also regretted that others in the US, France, Egypt or elsewhere disregarded their requests.¹⁰³ The ARF in Musa Dagh likewise communicated with its counterpart on the East Coast during 1921-22 with requests of money for the establishment of a central school in Musa Dagh and books for the enrichment of a newly-founded library. While information on financial support is lacking, books were in fact gifted.¹⁰⁴ Movses Hachigian, in turn, collected and sent money for the completion of the Apostolic church in his native Bitias.¹⁰⁵

Sometime between 1908 and 1910 concerned individuals in Yoghunoluk formed an educational society to sustain the local parochial school through interests accrued from a fixed fund.¹⁰⁶ Émigrés in Buenos Aires established a branch after their arrival in 1911 and joined another one, formed in 1914, following their relocation to Connecticut in 1916. Given the enlistment in the US army, death, and dispersal of some members, the chapter ceased to exist in a few years. Of the \$1,400 raised by then, about \$400 was loaned to two sick comrades but never reimbursed. The balance remained in a bank account in the name of three ex-members. After WWII Armenag Hanisian and others in Paterson as well as in Philadelphia resuscitated the association, raised money through various functions, and supported the Harach High School in Anjar. As for the original bank deposit, now \$1,114.10, in 1961 Hanisian personally delivered it to the board of trustees in Anjar, with the understanding that two classrooms would be added to the school facility in the name of the Educational Society of Yoghunoluk.¹⁰⁷ A plaque posted atop the two adjacent chambers stands as a testament to the immigrants' attachment to Anjar, i.e., their new Musa Dagh.¹⁰⁸

Non-Musa Dagh Armenian immigrants of some import contributed their share in alleviating penury in Musa Dagh. The following were two cases in point. In 1935, Rev. Sdepan Asadurian (Yarpuzlian), who had served the Yoghunoluk Protestant congregation during the 1890s, sent \$3,000. It was distributed among the needy as follows: \$750 in Yoghunoluk; \$625 in Bitias; \$500 in Haji Habibli; \$500 in Kabusiye; \$375 in Kheder Beg; \$250 in Vakef; and \$250 in Antioch.¹⁰⁹ Similarly, in 1936 Prof. Manase Sevag of Philadelphia made an urgent appeal to fellow Armenian Americans to come to the aid of their heroic compatriots in Musa Dagh by raising \$20,000-\$30,000 within a

year.¹¹⁰ There is no record to indicate whether or not this call produced any results.

The New and Old worlds were similarly bridged nostalgically through the immigrants' adoration of nature. Jack Hachigian reminisced about the bygone days as he was growing up in Paterson in the 1930s and 1940s:

On occasion, during the summer, we would go to Bridgeport, Connecticut to enjoy the beach at Barnum Park with the Roomian family. What I remember most are the short trips we used to take out to the Garret Mountain and nearby farms. We would take 4 or 5 empty glass gallons to collect spring water.

The environment on Garret Mountain was pristine and the water was not polluted. Spring water trips were one of my father's favorite pass-times. It reminded him of his youth in the village of Bitias where mountain springs were famous and attracted tourists from nearby Antioch, Syria and as far away as Latakiya on the Mediterranean Sea.

...

The spring unfortunately does not exist as Highway #46, a four lane super highway, was built right over it. My father was livid and sad. He thought Americans were fools to ruin the environment.¹¹¹

Samuel Magzarian's life-long travails reflected love of nature, albeit at a later period. A native of Bitias, Magzarian had emigrated to the US in 1910 but had repatriated in 1924, only to leave the native soil once again as a result of the Sanjak of Alexandretta's cession to Turkey in 1939. Recounts daughter Alberta as to what transpired afterwards:

Pop's love and devotion for Chaghlaghan (spot near Bitias – V.Sh.) didn't end when we left Turkey in 1939. Almost twenty years later, he began building walls and planting gardens on the half acre of our New Jersey home. We watched as he transformed our rocky hillside into a miniature Chaghlaghan orchard with its peaches, apricots, cherries, grapes and vegetables. He used strings and sticks, to create the perfect arcs for his level, stone walls, some of which stood five feet tall. He himself did not stand much taller! He left just enough room on the land to build our house.¹¹²

Interestingly enough, whether Musa Dagh-born or American-born, children too seemed to have inherited that fascination with nature. For example, Stephen H. Taminosian, who was born in Bitias but grew up and spent the rest of his life in Fort Myers, "reveled in the area's natural environment." As such, "he hunted in the surrounding area for turkey, deer, dove and hogs, enjoyed fishing in fresh and salt water, and owned a hunting camp in the Everglades." According to one of his sons, "he was so in tune with nature and plants, trees and animals," that "he would rather hunt than eat when he was hungry."¹¹³ In the same vein, Hartford-native but Paterson-resident

Alexander M. Phillian's "real love was the outdoors and its accompanying freedom, which led to a job with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, inspecting and maintaining forest trees in northern New Jersey." Indeed, "trees were a lifelong passion for Alex, and he surrounded his home with sycamores, maples and mulberries, taking care to prune them just the right way with the right tools." Later on, as a lineman in the New Jersey Bell Telephone Company, he was able "to continue to work outdoors, climb telephone poles and secure a good standard of living for the rest of his working life."¹¹⁴

With very few exceptions, the immigrant generation remained endogamous. Some bachelors went back to Musa Dagh, got married, and returned to the US.¹¹⁵ A number of marriages were arranged locally and/or through acquaintances in the New and Old worlds. In addition to other family members, for instance, Mihran Serekian brought over sister-in-law Azniv Melidonian, who was supposed to wed a man from New Jersey. But because "the meeting didn't go well," she lived with her sister's family in Holyoke until another suitor, Sarkis Mateos Renjilian, asked for her hand in 1936.¹¹⁶ The following interesting situation involved Jack Hachigian's parents:

In the US, my father had saved enough money to send for his brothers and sisters. The letter containing one-way tickets...also contained a round-trip ticket. In this letter to his mother, he wrote that he was unable to find a "suitable" (read 'Armenian') woman to marry (at age 35!). If there was a woman whom she felt would make a suitable wife, then enclosed was a round-trip ticket for this woman to come to the US. The conditions he offered were: 1) She could live with his brothers and sisters with all expenses to be borne by him, 2) She would be free to choose another man to marry if she so wished, and, 3) If after nine months she found that he was not suitable, or found no one else to her liking, she could return home to Bitias. The ticket would always remain in her possession.

My mother and father were married in 1922 and had been happily married for 40 years when my father died.¹¹⁷

Jarjar Ammo's daily interactions with customers at his coffee shop enabled him to act as a matchmaker between eligible Musa Dagh men and young women on his list of acquaintances ("he knew all their family details").¹¹⁸ A number of successful outcomes can be credited to him. Illustrates Aurora Adajian Lehmann: "Uncle Jarjar decided to try to match my father [Serop/Samuel Hagop Adajian] up with a fine young woman named Mary Mikaelian... When Jarjar discovered that Mary was older than Sam, he introduced her to Sam's brother Joe. They decided to marry and had a long and happy marriage. Their union produced my only first cousins..."¹¹⁹ But Jarjar persisted and found Serop another girl, named Sara Phillian. The couple tied the knot on 7 March, 1925 in New London and had five children.¹²⁰ With this next generation things began to change as a number of men and women

entered matrimony with *odars*, that is, non-Armenians.¹²¹ The assimilation had commenced.

Altering names to fit in the American mold was a common practice even among the immigrant generation. The American versions replaced original Armenian Christian names as follows: Serop became Sam, Hovsep became Joseph, Boghos became Paul, Manase became Mac, Elmas became Pearl, Azniv became Agnes, and so on. Some surnames were simplified or changed altogether: Filian was spelled as Philian or Phillian; the initial “K” was deleted from Khachigian to read Hachigian; the “Der” vanished from Der Bedrosian; Hrant Yeghiarian/Egarian/Igarian applied for citizenship preferring a new identity under the name Henry Vance Garian; Yeprem Frankian reintroduced himself as John E. Franklin; Sherbetjian was transformed to Shirn.¹²²

One thing, though, remained true to tradition—nicknames. Jack Hachigian states: “Suvediatzis (Musa Daghians - V.Sh.) have a quaint tradition of nicknaming everyone... Nicknames were always used with affection. My nickname was Agyup, actually I was called “Bizdag Agyup” since I was the younger of two Jacks. The other Jack was the son of Armenag Antablian...”¹²³ Other sobriquets included the following: “Mr. & Mrs.” for Movses Chaparian and his wife; “Gunk” (*g(u)nkahayr* or godfather) for Sarkis Phillian; “Khoshor” (big) for Armenag Antablian; “Jackie-ou-Nes” (Jackie-and-a-Half) for Hagop Kbburian; “Aguna” (a corruption of Hagop?) for Hagop Igarian; “Pij” (bastard) for a certain Bitias native; “Talaf” (destruction/ruin) for Tateos Shirinian’s brother; “Aslan John” (lion) for Hovhannes/John Atamian; “Tupal Jack” (lame) for a certain Bitias native;¹²⁴ “Captain” for Hovhannes/John Phillian, who at one time had worked in a shipyard. People also called him “Vando” or “Vandig,” a corruption of Hovhannes.¹²⁵ Garabed Hovagimian became known as “Charlie Brown.”¹²⁶ Last but not least, the customary practice of naming first sons after their grandfather continued in the US. Nicknames, in addition to middle names, dissipated the confusion when there were several grandsons by the same name. Writes Adajian Lehmann:

I believe that “Krikor Phil” was my grandfather’s grandfather. One of his sons was my grandfather’s father, Iskander (Alexander) Phillian. He had several sons. Krikor (named after his father), Hachig, Hovanness and Moses are the ones that I am aware of... All four of the above named son’s [sic] named their first born sons after their father Iskander. In America they became Alexander. They were all Alexander Phillians. To differentiate themselves from each other, they used their fathers’ names for their middle names. Hence, Krikor’s son became Alexander G. (Gregory, Krikor?) Phillian. His nickname was Karkour.” Hachig’s son became Alexander H. (Hachig) Phillian. He was called “Phil.” Hovanness’s son (my uncle) became Alexander J (John) Phillian. His nickname was “Abie.” Moses Phillian’s son was Alexander M. (Moses) Phillian. He was called “Goldie.” I knew “Uncle” Phil, “Uncle” Goldie

and, of course “Uncle” Abie very well. [“Uncle”] Karkour I didn’t see very much.¹²⁷

It appears that some of the immigrants who repatriated to Musa Dagh earned or ascribed monikers having to do with their American experience directly or indirectly. For example, a certain Janbazian was labeled “Alright” for using the expression “everything [is] alright” profusely.¹²⁸ Yoghunoluk native Setrag Sulakian was simply recognized as “Amirikitsen,” that is, the American.¹²⁹ When Samuel Magzarian returned to his native Bitias in 1924, upon entering the village curious people asked him about life in the US, but he deferred his answer by saying, in the local dialect, “hamo mashghulim” (now I am busy). From then on the adjective “Mashghul” stuck to his person. His cousin, Hovagim Maghzanian, was called “Meteryoz” (*mitrailleuse* in French) for having claimed that he had brought a machinegun from the US. Yeremia Balabanian branded Sarkis Dadushian as “Crazy” for ostensibly behaving as such after consuming some alcohol.¹³⁰

Social life revolved around frequent, unannounced visits. Cooking and sharing authentic Musa Dagh food, often consumed with home-brewed *arak*, was the norm. Traditional customs, such as preparing boiled wheat (*hadig*) sprinkled with sweeteners on teething, persisted. Playing cards, especially pinochle, constituted a major pastime.¹³¹ Violet Skenderian captured the times through her prism:

As a young child growing up during Paterson, NJ days, I remember hearing some stories from my grandmother and other Musa Dagh survivors of her generation. I remember hearing names such as Ataturk, Abdul Hamid, French ships, Port Said and, of course, the silk industry in their villages. At that time, I was too young to understand any of it, but living in Paterson, NJ during the 1940s was like living in Musa Dagh, and not in the US.¹³²

Aurora Adajian Lehmann paints a soberer picture in recollecting conversations among her grandparents and parents:

Though they only spoke openly of the things that they missed, I always sensed (probably because I over-heard conversations) that there were some dark aspects of living in these small [Musa Dagh] villages. Problems, common to all small, contained rural populations (violent disagreements between families, honor killings, hunger, the result of nature’s fickleness..., lack of educational facilities, dishonest clergy, etc.)... I believe that my people tended to exaggerate the good parts as time passed and the bad parts, too painful to be remembered, tended to be forgotten.¹³³

If some immigrants spoke selectively about the bygone days in their homeland, others maintained nearly complete silence. Such was the case with

Yeprem and Marta Sherbetjian Frankian, both born in Bitias and living in Holyoke. Wrote their eldest daughter, Elizabeth: "...We don't know too much about what happened [in the old country]. The reason for this is that every time we would approach the subject to our dear parents, they would say...'zat shoreera gudreetzeek'...meaning...let's not talk about things/or/ [sic] happenings. They just did not want to talk about the past, we believe, because it was too painful and sad for them to do so."¹³⁴

Besides seeking each others' company within a particular locale, immigrant families residing in different places made every effort to gather together and socialize on every conceivable occasion. According to Sarah/Sally Renjilian Peeke,

During the period of 1919 to 1939,... there were only three or four Armenian families in Holyoke but they interacted with the Armenian communities in Springfield and Indian Orchard, Massachusetts. They also kept in touch with the Musa Dagh Armenians in Connecticut and attended many gatherings in New Jersey where they reunited with others from the villages they had left in Musa Dagh. At these weddings, funerals, and picnics, experiences were shared, and news of others' fates was discussed. There was dancing, poetry reading, and shedding of tears, along with enjoying traditional foods.¹³⁵

Whether at home, on visits, or in public gatherings, the Musa Daghians communicated with each other in their distinct dialect, called *Kistinig*, meaning, the language of Christians. Children, too, spoke the language, without necessarily knowing the Western Armenian vernacular. When Mary Vartanesian M. Dabbakian attended kindergarten in Manchester, CT, in the second half of the 1920s, she was totally ignorant of English, so the teacher made her speak her dialect to show other students a foreign language.¹³⁶ My own experience with Elizabeth Frankian Standen, a third cousin born in Holyoke in 1916, further elaborates. In the summer of 1982, while on a visit to Boston, I received a phone call from a stranger (Elizabeth) who communicated in perfect *Kistinig* without an accent. As it turned out, her mother and my paternal grandmother, both named Marta Sherbetjian, were first cousins. Subsequent contacts between Elizabeth and me revealed that while she spoke *Kistinig* fluently, as if uprooted from Musa Dagh only recently, she was ignorant of standard Armenian.¹³⁷

A memorable formal event conducted strictly in *Kistinig* excited the community and marked the beginning of an annual tradition. In September 1949, a group of four compatriots staged a drama in the basement of Saint Leon (*Srpots Ghevontants*) Armenian Apostolic Church in Paterson in observance of the 1915 Musa Dagh resistance. Authored by Elizabeth Seklemian Balabanian, the story depicted the mass exodus of Musa Dagh Armenians from the Sanjak of Alexandretta in the summer of 1939 and their seven-week miserable sojourn at Ras al-Basit on the Mediterranean en route to

their final destination of Anjar in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley. "All the Musa Daghians of New Jersey were present, and others who had received announcements came from New York, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Massachusetts and Ohio. Several hundred attended the celebration." The plot revolved around a family of four: Armenag Hanisian as the father; Elizabeth Seklemian Balabanian as the mother; Michael Matosian as the son; and Alberta Magzarian as the daughter. Like the rest of their uprooted countrymen, this household lived in a shack made of tree branches and had to cope with a devastating torrential rain one midnight. The entire camp reacted instinctively and defiantly, by dancing till morning to the tune of traditional musical instruments, thereby boosting their own morale. With the exception of Hanisian, who was in America at the time, the performers had actually witnessed that sight as refugees at Ras al-Basit. As for the scene on stage, it portrayed "the early morning after the rain storm where the mother is calling on the children to spread the wet bedding, clothes, etc. on rocks and dry branches, hoping to save some things from the night's disaster. She knows some of her food, such as sugar, salt, flour have turned into mush." When at some point the four actors joined hands and began to sing and dance to the signature Musa Dagh folksong, "*Garmer Fstan Hakudz e, Hele, Hele Nimmaye*," (she has worn a red dress...), the audience accompanied them "while clapping along with several verses." Similarly, the playwright "had replaced family surnames with corresponding nicknames that were well known in Musa Dagh." So that, "with every nickname mentioned, the audience roared in loud laughter."¹³⁸

This activity left a lasting impact for many years to come, as explained:

After this party, the Musa Dagh celebration became an annual event but with less fanfare. The party was held in the same church hall in Paterson. Children recited poems and sang songs, and some adults delivered multi-lingual speeches in kistinik, in standard Armenian and even in Turkish. Each year, everyone enjoyed fantastic Musa Dagh dishes...all prepared by the Musa Dagh ladies of Paterson, NJ... The ladies deserve much praise for their hard work and effort for keeping the celebration alive and the Musa Dagh community together.¹³⁹

ON THE ROAD TO INTEGRATION

As hinted above, many fresh immigrants, although at least bilingual (they knew Armenian/*Kistinig* and Turkish at a minimum), lacked knowledge of English. For example, Serop/Samuel Hagop Adajian, who was polyglot, did not speak English and accordingly enrolled at the American International College in Springfield, MA, an institution chartered in 1885 to educate new arrivals in the US.¹⁴⁰ Interestingly, some of the composition assignments that he wrote dealt with his native Kheder Beg, more specifically, the nurturing of silkworms and the landmark plane tree in the village center.¹⁴¹ Paul Bedrosian in the early 1930s took "afternoon classes in business and evening classes in

English at Thomas Starr King School” in Los Angeles.¹⁴² Things differed with children, who attended local public schools, integrated with their American peers, and got involved in extracurricular activities such as sports. In Paterson, for example, youngsters residing in the southern sector of town—and they were the majority—attended School No. 9 on Getty Avenue and subsequently the Central High School. Those living in downtown enrolled at the East Side High School.¹⁴³ Alexander M. Phillian, a graduate of the latter institution, played on its football team.¹⁴⁴ Similarly, Stephen H. Taminosian, who went to Fort Myers High School in Florida, “played football and baseball, and was a prospect for scholarships or the professionals.”¹⁴⁵ Higher education became possible essentially after WWII. Details Jack Hachigian:

When the war was over everyone attempted to return to a normal life with a number of the veterans going on to college before getting married. Because I was four years younger I went to college at the same time that the WWII veterans... During the 1950s, from 40 or so families of Musa Dagh decent [sic], five of the children went on to get Ph.D.s. [sic] and achieved some form of prominence. For example: Norman Balabanian, became a professor in Electrical Engineering writing several books on Switching Theory which were translated into many languages including Russian. Arshag Berj Hajian became a professor of Mathematics at Northeastern University specializing in Ergodic Theory. Besides myself there were two others who received PhDs in mathematics or engineering. Five advanced degrees from some 40 families attest to the importance of education among the Musa Daghtzis.¹⁴⁶

Many immigrants joined Armenian and non-Armenian churches to burnish their Christian faith. Moses Hachigian in 1933 partook in the founding of the Saint Leon Armenian Apostolic Church in Paterson (presently in Fairlawn), which became the hub of Armenian activity.¹⁴⁷ Until then, the Armenians associated with one another based on their places of origin such as Kharpert, Dikranagerd, Van, Marash, Kesab, and Musa Dagh. Once the church was established, however, people of various backgrounds began to intermingle.¹⁴⁸ Moreover, on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays small children attended after-school Armenian classes at the church, taught by a certain *Oriort* (miss) Nvart, from 4-5 p.m. and older children from 5-6 p.m. Throughout the year they held several cultural programs called *hantes* (plural *hantesner*). In 1938, for instance, they performed the Armenian national opera, *Anush* (the heroine’s name), together with Newark, NJ Armenian children. Friday evenings were reserved for choir rehearsals.¹⁴⁹ Gerald C. Gemian shares his recollections: “We were attending St. Leon’s Armenian Church on Bloomfield Avenue, and many times during the year we had picnics, hontess (hantes – V.Sh.), etc., and at one of the ‘hontess[ner]’ I was duly sworn in at the age of 12 into the Dashnag Society (ARF – V.Sh.)!”¹⁵⁰

Since the majority of Musa Daghians in Paterson adhered to the Armenian Protestant/Evangelical denomination, they had their separate Sunday evening worship services at a local American Protestant church led by an Armenian pastor from a nearby town.¹⁵¹ In places where an Armenian church did not exist, the immigrants, especially of the Protestant/Evangelical denomination, attended American churches. Wrote minister P.H. Welsheimer in a letter of verification: "This is to certify that Samuel Magzarian took membership with the First Christian Church, Canton, Ohio on April 20, 1924. He has been faithful to the church, and we commend him as a Christian gentleman."¹⁵² Alexander M. Phillian, who in 1935 was baptized at the First Baptist Church in Paterson, served on its council while a life-long member.¹⁵³ The Frankians and Serekians worshipped at the Second Congregational Church in Holyoke.¹⁵⁴ After attending the Community Church in West Riverside for some time, the Igarians and Phillians switched to the Church of Christ, where they found more fulfilling spiritual nourishment.¹⁵⁵ The list went on.

Besides churches, Musa Daghians got involved in Armenian and non-Armenian voluntary associations and social-political movements. Certain immigrants joined the three Armenian political parties, namely, the Social Democrat Hinchakian Party, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, and the Democratic Liberal Party.¹⁵⁶ Yeprem Frankian was admitted into the Young Men's Christian Association in Troy, NY.¹⁵⁷ Sarkis Phillian carried a Communist Party membership card.¹⁵⁸ John Atamian volunteered in the International Brigade to fight Fascism in Spain in 1938.¹⁵⁹ John Renjilian wrote: "The sheet entitled 'Fairfielder Planned to Record Thrilling Account of Musa Dagh' is apparently a summary of a speech my father [Yeremia] made to the Fairfield (CT) Rotary Club of which he was a most loyal member, not having missed a meeting for over twenty years."¹⁶⁰ In 1938 Sarkis Mateos Renjilian became a Free Mason with the Mount Tom Lodge, whereas Mihran Serekian belonged to the William Whiting Lodge, both in Holyoke.¹⁶¹ Paul Bedrosian, a weaver in textile factories in Connecticut, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania for about eleven years (1916-1927), "on at least one occasion,...got fired from his job for attempting to organize workers against long hours and unfair labor practices!"¹⁶² Alex J. Phillian, Paul's cousin, was also a union activist: "When Labor Unions [sic] were starting to form [in Paterson in the 1920s], Alex and other workers began to picket for better wages and conditions. Many, including Alex, were dragged off to jail many times because picketing was not yet legal. Alex later joined the march for Social Security in Washington and even had a 10 minute interview with Eleanor Roosevelt."¹⁶³

Alex similarly aspired to become an actor and a playwright and accordingly took classes in theater and writing in Los Angeles (1927-29). It was at this time that he began to write a play about the Musa Dagh resistance. When he finished the draft after returning to the East Coast, "it was accepted to be played on Broadway and casting was begun. Alas, it was 1929 and the crash

occurred and the play was cancelled. Either he never tried to have it played again or could not get anyone interested later on.”¹⁶⁴ In the same vein, Sarkis Igarian (“Chakest”), also known by his stage name of Emory Dennis, hoped to become a screen actor. He ultimately fulfilled his dream by appearing as an extra in the following movies: *Androcles and the Lion* (1952), *The Greatest Show on Earth* (1952), *The Ten Commandments* (1956), and *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1956).¹⁶⁵

Health and safety issues concerned the immigrants as much as the American public at large. Those who could afford it purchased health insurance—an unknown commodity in Musa Dagh. A relevant anecdote: In the process of filling out an application form, when asked by an insurance agent whether a history of mental illness existed in the family, Hovhannes Phillian responded, through a translator, that he was the sanest of them all.¹⁶⁶ Pandemics and contagious diseases felled a number of people. A devastating diphtheria epidemic in 1923-24 swept the country, killing many children especially. One of the victims was Jacob Magzarian. His grieving mother suffered a stroke and was paralyzed until her death at a very young age.¹⁶⁷ Similarly, Gerald C. Gemian writes: “My mother contracted tuberculosis and suffered terribly dying in December 1929, leaving a 7 year old child (me).”¹⁶⁸ Car accident injuries or deaths resulted in part from the newcomers’ lack of awareness about the dangers posed by urban traffic. Norman Balabonian relates an incident involving his brother:

In December 1932, a few months after our return [from Bitias] to Paterson, when returning home from Sunday School at the Methodist Church one Sunday – before Armen and I had been re-educated to automobile traffic, nonexistent in Bitias – Armen ran ahead of me across Main Street toward our house, without looking out for traffic, oblivious of the New York bus bearing down the street, traveling from Clifton to downtown Paterson. The bus hit him and dragged him for about a block. It was a shock for me as I ran home to tell my parents. He still carries the evidence, a scar on his forehead.¹⁶⁹

Men and women of Musa Dagh descent also served the adopted country in various capacities during WWII. Alexander M. Phillian took a leave of absence from his work to join the Merchant Marine “as a radio operator on ships that included the Caesar Rodney, which ferried supplies across the Atlantic under treacherous conditions to the port of Murmansk, USSR. He received the Atlantic, Pacific and Mediterranean Middle East War Zone Bars for his service.” His future wife, Victoria Renjilian, was one of the Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES).¹⁷⁰ Mary Magzarian entered the Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC).¹⁷¹ Shushanig/Suzie Phillian contributed as a nurse.¹⁷² Albert Egarian “worked for Curtis Wright in Fairfield, New Jersey, manufacturing propellers for the B29 bombers.”¹⁷³ Paul Hachigian participated “as a flight mechanic in the Air Force. Jack Antablian

and the Egarian brothers, John and Jim, all served.” Sarkis Philian “saw action as an OSS operative behind Nazi lines.”¹⁷⁴ Stephen H. Taminosian “was drafted into the U.S. Navy and served in the Atlantic and Pacific oceans...”¹⁷⁵ Aram J. Adajian “was stationed on several South Pacific islands. Serving with an anti-aircraft gun battalion, Adajian helped protect air strips being bombed by Japanese planes.” After being discharged in 1945, he joined several veterans’ groups in New Britain and assumed leadership roles. He likewise founded the Armenian-American veterans post.¹⁷⁶ The list went on.

An interesting situation involved Alex J. Phillian. A zealous pacifist, he nevertheless volunteered for the US Army after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on 7 December, 1941. Initially considered old for military service (he was thirty-seven years of age), he was accepted after performing twenty pushups with great agility. During his stay in Europe, where he saw action in the Battle of the Bulge and the liberation of Paris, he regularly received packages from home containing onions, nuts, and “camel candy” (ground raisins and raw peanuts in small egg shape) that satisfied his strict vegetarian diet.¹⁷⁷ He also asked for the Musa Dagh version of molded, spicy cottage cheese as he wrote to his sister, “Send me some Sourki and olives when you get a chance.”¹⁷⁸ In turn, Alex’s father, Hovhannes, planted a vegetable garden in a large vacant lot near his house on Pacific Street in Paterson. “During WWII, citizens were encouraged to plant gardens to help the war effort and these were called Victory Gardens. Baboo [Hovhannes] even had a sign saying it was a ‘Victory Garden’.” Interestingly enough, “around the edges of the garden Baboo planted Hollyhocks to remind him of Bitias.”¹⁷⁹

Unfortunately, not all soldiers returned from their overseas mission alive. Paul Frankian, an only son, was killed at the age of twenty-one,¹⁸⁰ and so was the seventeen-year-old Harold Sarafian in the Battle of the Bulge.¹⁸¹ Other men and women in uniform may also have made the ultimate sacrifice. For most veterans, however, a new life would begin with opportunities in higher education and promising careers, as well as with the formation of young families.

CONCLUSION

The Musa Dagh immigrants continued to network with one another and celebrate the 1915 resistance through the 1970s. The 40th and 50th anniversaries in 1955 and 1965, respectively, were marked with noted enthusiasm, as compatriots gathered together in hotels to cherish their common ancestry with pride. As the immigrant generation faded and their progeny moved out of areas of concentration and gradually assimilated, however, the disconnect with Musa Dagh—and things Armenian in general—became more and more evident. But this sobering reality coincided with a new development—the arrival of fresh waves of immigrants from Soviet Armenia beginning in the 1970s and independent Armenia since 1991, as well as from Lebanon as a result of the 1975-90 civil war. Unlike their predecessors, most

newcomers settled not on the East Coast but rather in California with concentrations in greater Los Angeles, Fresno, and the San Francisco Bay area. The Musa Daghian vibrancy thus shifted to a new locus and era. At present the workforce is no longer employed in large-scale industries; instead, people earn their livelihood as technicians, professionals, artisans, educators, entrepreneurs, and so on. From a social, cultural, and psychological perspective, formal compatriotic associations established since 1980 have served as safety nets for the preservation of the peculiar fabric of this ethnic subgroup. But such entities do not function in isolation; rather, there is an apparent interconnectedness between them and Anjar in Lebanon, the current spiritual home of Musa Daghians worldwide, which is achieved through various venues including an official website (mousaleranjar.com).

ENDNOTES

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- ¹ See Vahram L. Shemmassian, “The Socioeconomic Life of Musa Dagh Armenian Migrants in the Middle East During the 1920s-1930s,” *Haigazian Armenological Review*, Vol. 30, 2010, pp. 205-230. As the title suggests, this article does not deal with the migrants in Ethiopia; that group will be studied separately.
 - ² The paucity of sources does not allow for a meaningful discussion of the situation of Musa Dagh migrants in South America at this stage. For references to a few cases in Argentina and Brazil, consult Serop Sherbetjian, *Badmutiun Svedahayeru* (History of Svedia Armenians), Beirut, Hamazkayin “Vahe Setian” Press, 2010, pp. 193-267 *passim*.
 - ³ George H. Filian, *Armenia and Her People or the Story of Armenia by an Armenian*, Hartford, Connecticut, American Publishing Company, 1896, pp. xiv-xv.
 - ⁴ A.K. Seklemian, “‘Asbarez’i Dzakume” (The genesis of Asbarez), *Asbarez Joghovadzu Dasnameagi Artiv, 1908-1918* (Anthology of Asbarez on the occasion of its tenth anniversary, 1908-1918), Fresno, CA, Asbarez, 1918, pp. 9-15; A. Ghugasian, “A.K. Seklemian,” *Asbarez Hisnameag 1908-1958* (Fiftieth anniversary of Asbarez 1908-1958), Fresno, CA, Asbarez, [1958], pp. 192-74.
 - ⁵ Vahram L. Shemmassian, “The Armenian Villagers of Musa Dagh: A Historical-Ethnographic Study, 1840-1915,” Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1996, pp. 62-67.
 - ⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 184-234.
 - ⁷ United States National Archives (USNA), Record Group (RG) 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Consulate of Aleppo, File *Correspondence, American Consulate, Aleppo, Syria, 1916*, Part 2, Classes 125.8 to 310, vol. 64, Jesse B. Jackson to Rev. E. H. Shanks, 10 February 1916, 29 October 1915, 12 June 1916; Rev. Shanks to Jackson, 15 April 1916, 25 September 1916; *idem*, Part 7, Class 310, vol. 69, Jackson to Rev. Shanks, 17 June 1916; Jackson to Moses Ranjilian, 14 September 1916; handwritten letter regarding Taslakian family, 20 November 1916; Jackson to Taslakian, 23 November 1916. In the summer of 1982 I conducted research at the USNA in Washington, D.C., and placed an order for documents to be microfilmed. The microfilms were mailed to me, but I did not check their contents at the time. When I read the microfilms years later for my doctoral dissertation, the documents cited in this footnote were missing. I tried to inquire about them on two different occasions through acquaintances, but to no avail; the documents were nowhere to be found in their files. I have concluded that they had been removed from the files for microfilming but never microfilmed due to inattention and unfortunately lost or misplaced.

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- ⁸ Ibid., File *American Consulate, Aleppo, Syria, 1919*, Part 1-5, Class - 3, vol. 81, Rev. Shanks to Jackson, 15 December 1918, 14 June 1919; Jackson to Rev. Shanks, 14 June 1919 (this letter was microfilmed).
- ⁹ See, for instance, Aurora Adajian Lehmann, private papers, Chatsworth, California, letters mailed from Port Said to H.K. Phillian at 841 Main Street, Paterson, New Jersey, 8 October 1915 (date on envelope), Hovhannes Philian (same person) at 142 Pine Street, Manchester, Connecticut, 23 March 1916 (date on envelope). It is not too clear as to who sent the letters. See also idem, Boghos Der Bedrosian (Paul Bedrosian) to Ohannes K. Filian (same person), 21 March 1916. Unfortunately, letters sent from the US to Port Said are nowhere to be found.
- ¹⁰ Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) Archives, Boston (now Watertown), Massachusetts, File 1054/35, *H.H.T. Yekibdosi G. Gomide 1918 T.* (ARF Central Committee of Egypt 1918), Account of Money Distributed in the Port Said Camp (Money from America).
- ¹¹ Zohrab Hanisian, private papers, Napa, California, untitled and unpublished family history booklet, p. 8; idem, List of U.S. Based Armenian Volunteers in Légion d'Orient – WWI, list prepared by the Zoryan Institute, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Six of the volunteers, originally from Musa Dagħ (“Svedia”) were then living in New Britain, Connecticut: Serop Adajian, Hampartzoom Hagopian, Hovhannes Hovhannesian (Hanisian), Sarkis Karamanian (Kasamanian?), Sarkis Sarkahian, and Bedros Taslakian. For the formation and activity of the *Légion d'Orient* in general, consult Guévork Gotikian, “La Légion d'Orient et le Mandat Français en Cilicie (1916-1921),” *Revue d'Histore Arménienne Contemporaine*, Tome III, numéro special, prepared by Raymond H. Kévorkian, 1999, pp. 251-324; Aram Karamanoukian, *Les Etrangers et le Service Militaire*, Paris, Editions A. Pedone, 1978, pp. 115-150; Hagop Torosian, “Haigagan Lekeone,” Mardiros Kushakjian and Boghos Madurian (eds.), *Hushamadean Musa Leran* (Memorial book of Musa Dagħ), Beirut, Atlas Press, 1970, pp. 425-449; Dikran H. Boyajian, *Haygagan Lekeone. Badmagan Hushakrutium* (The Armenian Legion: A historical memoir), Boston, MA, Baykar Printing Press, 1965.
- ¹² Vahram L. Shemmassian, private papers, a 1918 photograph depicting the fourteen-member executive committee of the *Légion d'Orient* support group in New Britain. The five Musa Dagħians on the committee were: Sarkis Sarkahian, Boghos Matosian, Peniamin Geokjian, Zakar Kbburian, and Sarkis Kasamanian. Seven others were from Iran and one was from Kharpert. The provenance of the fourteenth member is unknown.
- ¹³ Hanisian, private papers, family history booklet, p. 9 writes: “With the signing of the Selective Service Act in May 1917, U.S. citizens and aliens between the ages of 21 and 31 years old were required to register for the WWI Draft system. Zakaria and Sarkis [Hanisian], registered on June 5, 1917, the first of three designated registration dates. Aliens were required to register but were not subject to induction into the American military service.” Similarly, George Barkev Phillian registered for the draft on 5 June 1917 in Lee County, Florida, and Rupen Hayrig Phillian on 24 August 1918 in Erie, Pennsylvania (see Bill Larkin, email to the author, 1 May 2009). Manase and Samuel Magzarian likewise registered (see Alberta Magzarian, letter to the author, 26 September 2009). The brothers Madatia Gozman (b. 14 November 1881) and Badros (Bedros) Gozman (b. 27 March 1885) Taminosian in Florida, too, counted among the prospective soldiers (consult Raymond H. Banks, USGenWeb Archives, rayhbanks@aol.com, retrieved 23 May 2009). Other Musa Dagħians may also have registered.
- ¹⁴ *Arev* (Sun), (Alexandria, Egypt), 6 December 1915. For departure preparations, consult Rose Egarian Fiscus, “Rose’s Story (As Recorded in 1953),” unpublished memoir, pp. 16-17.

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- ¹⁵ *Arev*, 28 January 1916. See also the issue of 4 February 1916.
- ¹⁶ *Hayrenik* (Fatherland), (Boston), 18 February 1916.
- ¹⁷ USNA, RG 36, Records of the Bureau of Customs, Passenger Lists of Vessels arriving at New York, 1897-1916, Microfilm Publication T715, Roll 2,455, List or Manifest of Alien Passengers for the United States Immigration Officer at Port of Arrival, *S.S. America* sailing from Genoa, February 21, 1916, arriving at Port of New York, March 8, 1916. Although the date of arrival is listed as 8 March, the source in note 16 below indicates 9 March. The latter date is also corroborated by Bill Larkin, email to the author, 15 November 2010. This discrepancy may be explained by the fact that the new arrivals were probably kept at Ellis Island overnight for customs formalities, especially health inspection; or, although the manifest indicated 8 March, the actual arrival date was 9 March.
- ¹⁸ Willis Mason West, *The Story of American Democracy Political and Industrial*, Boston, New York, Chicago, Atlanta, San Francisco, Allyn and Bacon, 1922, p. 581.
- ¹⁹ *New York Times*, 12 March 1916, as cited in Richard Diran Kloian, *The Armenian Genocide—First 20th Century Holocaust*, Richmond, CA, Armenian Commemorative Committee, 1980, p. 133.
- ²⁰ [Nvart Yegharian/Igarian], “1915 Suedia Muharebesi” (The 1915 Svedia War), unpublished eyewitness account (original donated by the author to me). This account, written in Turkish in Armenian characters, was published in Armenian translation in *Asbarez*, 27 October 1916, 3 November 1916, 10 November 1916, 17 November 1916, 24 November 1916, 1 December 1916.
- ²¹ Elisa Seklémian, “Récit de l’Épisode de Djébel Moussa,” in Archag Tchobanian (ed.), *La Femme Arménienne*, Paris, 1918, pp. 78-82.
- ²² Shemmassian, private papers, Richard J. Krejsa, “Paul Bedrosian: 25 April 1900-21 October 1993,” a four-page necrology.
- ²³ Mary Vartanesian Dabbakian, email to the author, 19 March 2010.
- ²⁴ Aurora Adajian Lehmann, email to the author, 24 March 2010.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, private papers, Sarah Adajian’s Application for Information form or Copies of Immigration and Naturalization Records.
- ²⁶ Telephone interview with Regina P. Adajian, 7 June 2009, Granada Hills, California-Wethersfield, Connecticut.
- ²⁷ *Hayrenik*, 27 January 1917, correspondence from Leylani (Movses Der Kalusdian) dated 20 October 1916.
- ²⁸ Armen Hanisian, letters to the author, 26 September 1977, 1 October 1977.
- ²⁹ Julie Aprahamian, private papers, New York, New York, Inspection (vaccination) Card (Immigrants and Steerage Passengers) of Missak Aprahamian, List or Manifest, *Vasari*, 13, no. on ship’s list or manifest, 19.
- ³⁰ Zohrab Hanisian, private papers, List or Manifest of Alien Passengers for the United States Immigration Office at Port of Arrival, *S.S. Vauban*, sailing from Buenos Aires (La Plata), 19 October, 1916, arriving at Port of New York, 11th November, 1916. The immigrants were, as spelled, Vanes Geukdjian, Zacaria Hanesian, Hampartzoom Agopian, Sarkis Hanesian, Mooses Keuserian, and Manvel Kebisian.
- ³¹ John Renjilian, letter to the author, 13 October 1988.
- ³² *Ibid.*, private papers, Newtown, Connecticut, Yérémia Rangelian (Renjilian) Laissez-Passer, no. 8284, issued by the Sandjak Autonome d’Alexandrette, 12 October 1920. The photo of Krikor Sarrafian is also affixed to this document; *idem*, Sarah Rengilian (Renjilian) Laissez-Passer, no. 8289, issued by the Sandjak Autonome d’Alexandrette, 12 October 1920. The photos of Victoria Renjilian, twenty-two years of age, and Helen Renjilian, twelve years of age, are also affixed to this document.

- ³³ Florence Igarian Harutiunian, private papers, Pismo Beach, California, Marie Igarian's and her daughter, Sara's passport, issued by the Haut Commissariat de la Republique Française en Syrie & Cilicie, 19 October 1920.
- ³⁴ Vartanesian Dabbakian, email, 19 March 2010.
- ³⁵ Hanisian, private papers, List or Manifest of Alien Passengers for the United States Immigration Office at Port of Arrival, S.S. *Megali Hellas*, Passengers sailing from Pireus on November 8, 1920, arriving at Port of New York November 25, 1920.
- ³⁶ Ibid., List or Manifest of Alien Passengers for the United States Immigration Office at Port of Arrival, S.S. *Pannonia*, Passengers sailing from Patras on 21 December, 1920, arriving at Port of New York January 10, 1921.
- ³⁷ Nazareth Emlikian, private papers, Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania, Maritza Boyadjian's passport, issued by the Haut Commissariat de la Republique Française en Syrie & Cilicie, Grand Liban, 2 March 1921.
- ³⁸ Gerald C. Gemian, private papers, Towaco, New Jersey, Marie Subkyan's passport issued by the Haut Commissariat de la Republique Française en Syrie & au Liban, 9 July 1921.
- ³⁹ Miriam Kalamian, private papers, Hamilton, Montana, Statement of Facts for Preparation of Petition: Section of Law, Alien Registration no. A-3971583, name: Nora Serekian (Nouritza Melaytutian).
- ⁴⁰ Miriam Kalamian, email to the author, 21 September 2009.
- ⁴¹ Ibid., private papers, Bedros (surname illegible) to Mihran Serekian, 31 March 1923. The letter is written on the stationery of V. Morlian, Ph.D., LLB, 294 Washington Street, Room 431, Boston, MA.
- ⁴² Ibid., email, 21 September 2009.
- ⁴³ Jack Hachigian, *Secrets from an Armenian Kitchen* (n.p.: n.p., 2006), pp. 22-23.
- ⁴⁴ Mary Vartanesian Dabbakian, email to the author, 19 March 2010; telephone interview with her on 21 March 2010, Granada Hills, California-Boynton Beach, Florida.
- ⁴⁵ Norman Balabanian, *Life Story*, Gainesville, Florida, n.p., 2008, p. 18.
- ⁴⁶ Telephone interview with Vartanesian Dabbakian, 21 March 2010.
- ⁴⁷ A. Araradian, "Hay Gaghtaganutiune Amerigayi Mech" (The Armenian immigrants in America), *Arshaluys Badgerazart Darekirk* (Dawn illustrated yearbook), prepared by Armenag Melikian, Fresno, CA, Asbarez, 1922, p. 52.
- ⁴⁸ Bill Larkin, email to the author, 2 November 2009.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid., 15 November 2010.
- ⁵⁰ Cheney Brothers Silk Manufacturing Company Records, Archives and Special Collections at the Thomas J. Dodd Research Center, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT, Series II: Personnel Records (1900-1962), Subseries E: Employee Record Cards (1860-1960), <http://doddcenter.uconn.edu/findaids/Cheney/MSS19840026.html>. Retrieved 10 March 2010.
- ⁵¹ Adajian Lehmann, email, 30 October 2009; Vartanesian Dabbakian, email, 19 March 2010; Sarah/Sally Renjilian Peeke, "Notes Regarding the Sarkis and Aznive Renjilian Family," sent to the author.
- ⁵² <http://doddcenter.uconn.edu/findaids/Cheney/MSS19840026.html>.
- ⁵³ Hachigian, *Secrets*, p. 22.
- ⁵⁴ "Alexander M. Phillian," *AAA News* xxxv, No. 5, September-October, 2001, p. 14.
- ⁵⁵ Elizabeth Frankian Standen, private papers, Holyoke, Massachusetts, "John E. Franklin, 87, Was Silk Producer," newspaper clipping dated 27 January 1973. Probably the newspaper is the local *Holyoke Transcript-Telegram*.
- ⁵⁶ Sarah Renjilian Peeke, private papers, Wellesley, Massachusetts, "Samuel S. Renjilian, 79," a clipping from an untitled newspaper. Probably it is the *Holyoke Transcript-Telegram*.

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- ⁵⁷ Frankian Standen, private papers, "Mr. and Mrs. Serekian Mark Golden Wedding," a clipping from the *Holyoke Transcript-Telegram*, 24 July 1972, p. 10.
- ⁵⁸ Adajian Lehmann, private papers, Satenig/Sallie Phillian, "MY UNCLE," typed poetry.
- ⁵⁹ Edgar Williams, "40 Days of Musa Dagh: A Bloodbath That Never Was," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 19 September 1980, p. 2-B. This is an interview with Stepan Panossian.
- ⁶⁰ Hachigian, *Secrets*, p. 141.
- ⁶¹ Shemmassian, private papers, three pictures depicting the two brothers at their workshop either together or individually.
- ⁶² Ibid., business card of Albert Sherbetjian.
- ⁶³ Telephone interview with Vartanesian Dabbakian, 21 March 2010.
- ⁶⁴ Ibid.
- ⁶⁵ Renjilian Peeke, private papers, "Mrs. Samuel S. Renjilian, 67," a clipping from an untitled newspaper. Probably it is the *Holyoke Transcript-Telegram*.
- ⁶⁶ "Our History," Kalamian's Inc. website by Mystic Net Marketing, <http://kalamians.com/history.html>, retrieved 2 June 2009.
- ⁶⁷ Telephone interview with Armen Jack Adajian, 15 May 2009, Granada Hills, California-Lake Bluff, Illinois.
- ⁶⁸ Michael Adajian, email to the author, 10 June 2009.
- ⁶⁹ Hanisian, private papers, family history booklet, p. 8.
- ⁷⁰ Larkin, email, 2 May 2009.
- ⁷¹ Ibid., 1 May 2009.
- ⁷² Telephone interview with Regina P. Adajian, 7 June 2009; Michael Adajian, private papers, Chicago, Illinois, "Joseph S. Adajian Dies at 96: Longtime Owner of Popular Downtown Restaurant," a clipping from *The Hartford Courant*, 1 December 1988, pp. B1, B5.
- ⁷³ Michael Adajian, private papers, "Joseph S. Adajian Dies."
- ⁷⁴ Telephone interview with Armen Jack Adajian, 18 May 2009.
- ⁷⁵ Adajian Lehmann, emails, 3 November 2009, 30 November 2009; telephone interview with Alberta Magzarian, 21 December 2009, Granada Hills, California-Olney, Maryland.
- ⁷⁶ Telephone Interview with Dikran Sarkuni, 21 December 2009, Granada Hills, California-Los Angeles, California.
- ⁷⁷ Adajian Lehmann, email, 24 December 2009.
- ⁷⁸ Shemmassian, private papers, Krejsa, "Paul Bedrosian."
- ⁷⁹ Adajian, private papers, photocopies of pertinent pages from the *New Britain Directory* for the years 1924-1930.
- ⁸⁰ Larkin, email, 2 November 2009.
- ⁸¹ Ibid., 5 January 2010.
- ⁸² Egarian Fiscus, "Rose's Story," pp. 18, 25.
- ⁸³ Ibid., pp. 19-20.
- ⁸⁴ Shemmassian, "The Armenian Villagers," p. 128.
- ⁸⁵ Levon Filian, email to the author, 20 May 2009.
- ⁸⁶ Ibid.
- ⁸⁷ Larkin, email, 21 November 2010.
- ⁸⁸ Kalamian, email, 21 September 2009.
- ⁸⁹ Telephone interview with Vartanesian Dabbakian, 21 March 2010.
- ⁹⁰ Armen Hanisian, letter to the author, 26 September 1977.
- ⁹¹ Magzarian, letter, 4 October 2009.
- ⁹² Hachigian, *Secrets*, p. 131.
- ⁹³ Vartanesian Dabbakian, email, 19 March 2010.

- ⁹⁴ Hachigian, *Secrets*, p. 131.
- ⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 141.
- ⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 71.
- ⁹⁷ Telephone interview with Magzarian, 24 December 2008.
- ⁹⁸ Gemian, letter, 23 March 2010.
- ⁹⁹ Telephone interview with Vartanesian Dabbakian, 21 March 2010.
- ¹⁰⁰ While a number of letters from Musa Dagh to relatives and friends in the US are found in family collections in the US, letters sent from the US to Musa Dagh are hard to find. For correspondence in the first category, see Adajian Lehmann, private papers, miscellaneous letters and business papers sent by H.A.M. Filian from Bitias to relatives in the US, 1920-21; Hagop Dzaghuni (Hergelian?) from Yoghunoluk to Ohannes K. Phillian, 22 February 1923; Victoria J. Shemmassian from Vakef to Mr. and Mrs. Hovhannes K. and Sara Magzarian Phillian, 23 February 1923; Mgrdich Der Arakelian from Haji Habibli to aunt Sara Phillian, 7/22 January 1926. See also Victoria Renjilian Sarafian, private papers, Fresno, California, Movses S. Renjilian from Bitias to “My Dear Children”, Victoria and her husband Krikor Sarrafian, 2 May 1923; Emlikian, private papers, Sarkis Boyajian to brother-in-law Kapriel Emlikian, 18 January 1929.
- ¹⁰¹ Shemmassian, private papers, two postcards sent by Movses/George Sherbetjian/Shirm to his brother, Albert in the US from two different legs of his trip. The first postcard was sent from Delgada, Portugal on 27 July 1925 and the second one from Cairo, Egypt on 12 August 1925; *idem*, family reunion pictures.
- ¹⁰² Telephone Interview with Regina P. Adajian, 6 July 2009.
- ¹⁰³ Mekhitarist Armenian Catholic Order Archives, Vienna, Austria, File *Hnchagean Gusagsutium 1920[-1938]. Adenakrutean yev Artzanakrutean Dedrag S.T. Hnchagean Gusagsutean Svedio Shrchanagi Miatseal M. Varchutean 1920 Noyemper[-1938 Okosdos]* (Hnchagian Party 1920(-1938): Notebook of minutes and recordings of the United Body Committee of the Svedia District Social Democrat Hnchagian Party 1920 November(-1938 August), copy of a letter to comrade Isgender Kh. Filian in Paterson, New Jersey, 18 January 1931.
- ¹⁰⁴ ARF Archives, File 965/28, *H.H.T. Giligio gam Lernavayri G. Gomide 1921 T.* (ARF Central Committee of Cilicia or Lernavayr 1921), ARF Svedia Committee chair, V. Vahakn, and secretary, Shant-Diran, to ARF Central Committee of America, Boston, 8 November 1921; *idem*, File 969/32, 1922, 16 March 1922.
- ¹⁰⁵ Hachigian, *Secrets*, p. 47.
- ¹⁰⁶ “Vijagakrutium Jebel Musayi Hay Kiugherun” (Survey of the Armenian villages of Musa Dagh), *Suriahay Daretsuyts* (Syiran Armenian Almanac), prepared by M. Ajemian, M. Siserian, and Y. Vosgerichian, 2nd year, Aleppo, 1925, p. 241; *Aztag* (Medium/Factor), Beirut, 9 July 1927.
- ¹⁰⁷ Armen Hanisian, letters to the author, 26 September 1977, 1 October 1977, 7 February 1989; Harach College Archives, Anjar, Lebanon, Zakaria Hanisian, chair, Mihran Serekian, secretary, and Hagop Sarkahian, treasurer of the Yoghunoluk Educational Society in the US to the Anjar (St. Paul) Church Construction Committee, 3 July 1961.
- ¹⁰⁸ Harach College Archives, Harach School Board of Trustees to Musa Dagh Compatriots Living in the US, 8 May 1962. An attachment to this letter, likewise dated 8 May 1962, furnishes details of the construction cost (3,570 Lebanese liras).
- ¹⁰⁹ *Husaper* (Hope bearer), (Cairo), 15 January 1936, 12 February 1936. The money was distributed by Rev. Dikran Antreasian.
- ¹¹⁰ Manase Sevag, “Musa Dagh’e yev Kaghutahay Badvakhntrutiune” (“Musa Dagh” and the Dignity of the Armenian Community), *Hayasdani Gochnag* (Clarion of Armenia), Vol. XXXVI, No.43, 24 October 1936, pp. 1,022-23.

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- ¹¹¹ Hachigian, *Secrets*, pp. 141-42.
- ¹¹² Alberta Magzarian, Anna Magzarian, and Louisa Magzarian, *The Recipes of Musa Dagh: An Armenian Cookbook in a Dialect of Its Own* (n.p., Lulu.com, 2008), p. 162.
- ¹¹³ Cathy Chestnut, "Stephen Taminosian, 69, Was Mentor to Family, Loved Nature," obituary in the Fort Myers, Florida, *News-Press*, 17 August 1990; "Stephen H. Taminosian," *News-Press*, p. 6B.
- ¹¹⁴ "Alexander M. Phillian," *AMAA News*, p. 14.
- ¹¹⁵ Magzarian, letter, 4 October 2009. Some of the bachelors who went back to Musa Dagh, got married, and returned to the US were Garabed/Charlie Chaparian, Sdepan Kelejian, Manase Magzarian, Madatia Taminosian, and Sdepan Panosian.
- ¹¹⁶ Kalamian, email, 21 September 2009.
- ¹¹⁷ Hachigian, *Secrets*, p. 22.
- ¹¹⁸ Adajian Lehmann, email, 24 December 2009.
- ¹¹⁹ Ibid., 10 September 2009.
- ¹²⁰ Ibid., 24 December 2009.
- ¹²¹ Those who married *odars* included, among others, the four siblings of Serop and Sara Adajian (a fifth sibling never got married); the four daughters of Sarkis and Azniv Renjilian; and the two daughters of Yeprem and Marta Frankian (a third daughter married an Armenian). See, respectively, Adajian Lehmann, email, 28 February 2010, Renjilian Peeke, private papers, "Samuel S. Renjilian, 79," and Frankian Standen, private papers, "John E. Franklin, 79."
- ¹²² Barry R. Shirn, *The Sharbatjian's [sic] of Musa Dagh: What Flows Within*, Bloomington, Indiana, Authorhouse, 2005, pp. 20, 26-27; Larkin, email, 2 November 2009; Frankian Standen, private papers, "John E. Franklin, 87."
- ¹²³ Hachigian, *Secrets*, p. 26.
- ¹²⁴ Ibid., untitled list of Musa Daghians in the US; Interview with Paul Bedrosian, 27 May 1990, Pismo Beach, California; Magzarian, letter, 26 September 2009; Levon Filian, email to the author, 20 May 2009.
- ¹²⁵ Filian, email, 20 May 2009.
- ¹²⁶ Gemian, letter, 23 March 2010.
- ¹²⁷ Adajian Lehmann, email, 9 November 2010.
- ¹²⁸ Magzarian, letter, 4 October 2009; telephone interview with Magzarian, 26 December 2009.
- ¹²⁹ Interview with Hovhannes Hajian, 5 January 1990, Hollywood, California.
- ¹³⁰ Telephone interview with Magzarian, 26 December 2009.
- ¹³¹ Hachigian, *Secrets*, pp. 131, 168, 183.
- ¹³² Violet Skenderian, letter to the author, 29 January 2008.
- ¹³³ Michael Adajian, private papers, Mary (Aurora Adajian Lehmann), copy of an email to "Dear Cousins," 15 June 2004.
- ¹³⁴ Frankian Standen, letter, 12 September 1988.
- ¹³⁵ Renjilian Peeke, "Notes Regarding the Sarkis and Aznive Renjilian Family," written for the author.
- ¹³⁶ Telephone interview with Vartanesian Dabbakian, 21 March 2010.
- ¹³⁷ Vahram L. Shemmassian, personal recollections.
- ¹³⁸ Magzarian, letter, (no day) January 2010.
- ¹³⁹ Ibid.
- ¹⁴⁰ Adajian Lehmann, email, 10 September 2009.
- ¹⁴¹ Shemmassian, private papers, S.H. Adajian "English a [sic]" composition assignment book. The two compositions are titled "The Description of a Tree" and "Description of a Silkworm."

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- ¹⁴² Ibid., Krejsa, “Paul Bedrosian.”
- ¹⁴³ Telephone interview with Vartanesian Dabbakian, 21 March 2010.
- ¹⁴⁴ “Alexander M. Phillian,” *AMAA News*, p. 14.
- ¹⁴⁵ Chestnut, “Stephen Taminosian.”
- ¹⁴⁶ Hachigian, *Secrets*, p. 27.
- ¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 47.
- ¹⁴⁸ Vartanesian Dabbakian, email, 19 March 2010; telephone interview with Vartanesian Dabbakian, 21 March 2010.
- ¹⁴⁹ Telephone interview with Vartanesian Dabbakian, 21 March 2010.
- ¹⁵⁰ Gemian, letter, 23 March 2010.
- ¹⁵¹ Telephone interview with Vartanesian Dabbakian, 21 March 2010.
- ¹⁵² Alberta Magzarian, private papers, Olney, Maryland, Rev. P.H. Welshimer, letter of recommendation for Samuel Magzarian, 29 July 1924.
- ¹⁵³ “Alexander M. Phillian,” *AMAA News*, p. 14.
- ¹⁵⁴ Frankian Standen, private papers, newspaper clippings titled “John E. Frankian, 87, Was Silk Producer” and “Mr. and Mrs. Serekian Mark Golden Wedding.”
- ¹⁵⁵ Egarian Fiscus, “Rose’s Story,” pp. 19-23; Larkin, email, 1 May 2009.
- ¹⁵⁶ Telephone interview with Vartanesian Dabbakian, 21 March 2010.
- ¹⁵⁷ Frankian Standen, private papers, YMCA Certificate of Membership of Yeprem Frankian, July 1911, Troy, NY.
- ¹⁵⁸ Hachigian, *Secrets*, p. 26.
- ¹⁵⁹ Frankian Standen, private papers, caption of a picture of John Atamian.
- ¹⁶⁰ Renjilian, letter, 13 October 1988.
- ¹⁶¹ Renjilian Peeke, private papers, “Samuel S. Renjilian”; Frankian Standen, private papers, “Mr. and Mrs. Serekian Mark Golden Anniversary,” newspaper clipping.
- ¹⁶² Shemmassian, private papers, Krejsa, “Paul Bedrosian.”
- ¹⁶³ Adajian Lehmann, emails, 30 December 2009, 1 March 2010.
- ¹⁶⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 9 November 2010.
- ¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 24 March 2010.
- ¹⁶⁷ Frankian Standen, private papers, caption of Jacob Magzarian picture. Similarly, Mary Vartanesian Dabbakian writes: “My Aunt Mary Skenderian and her son, Alex went to live with her brother-in-law in College Point, NY, where she passed away during a flu epidemic” (see email, 19 March 2010).
- ¹⁶⁸ Gemian, letter, 23 March 2010.
- ¹⁶⁹ Balabanian, *Life Story*, p. 18. Others also fell victim to car accidents. In Manchester, Connecticut, for example, “Isgoohi [Vartanesian Kalamian] was hit by a car and killed, while walking from work.” Mary Chaparian Phillian died in Paterson in 1926 under similar circumstances leaving behind three young children (see respectively, Vartanesian Dabbakian, email, 19 March 2010, and “Alexander M. Phillian,” *AMAA News*, p. 14).
- ¹⁷⁰ “Alexander M. Phillian,” *AMAA News*, p. 14.
- ¹⁷¹ Ibid.
- ¹⁷² Filian, email, 20 May 2009.
- ¹⁷³ Larkin, email, 5 June 2010.
- ¹⁷⁴ Hachigian, *Secrets* p. 26.
- ¹⁷⁵ Chestnut, “Stephen Taminosian.”
- ¹⁷⁶ Michael Adajian, email, 10 June 2009; idem, private papers, Johnny Mason Jr., “Plainville Veteran to be Honored Monday,” newspaper clipping from *The Hartford Courant*, 9 November 1991.
- ¹⁷⁷ Adajian Lehmann, email, 1 March 2010.

¹⁷⁸ Adajian Lehmann, private papers, Alex J. Phillian to “Dear Sister” (Sara Phillian Adajian), 10 August 1944, from “Somewhere in France.”

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., email, 14 March 2010.

¹⁸⁰ Frankian Standen, letter, 12 September 1988.

¹⁸¹ Filian, email, 20 May 2009.

**ՄՈՒՍԱ ԼԵՐԱՆ ՊԱՆԴՈՒԽՏՆԵՐՈՒ ԵՒ ԳԱՂԹԱԿԱՆՆԵՐՈՒ ԿԵԱՆՔԸ
ՄԻԱՅԵԱԼ ՆԱՀԱՆԳՆԵՐՈՒ ՄԷՋ, 1910-1950ԱԿԱՆՆԵՐՈՒՆ
(Ամփոփում)**

ՎԱՀՐԱՄ ՇԵՄՄԱՍԵԱՆ

Յօդուածը կ'ուսումնասիրէ Մուսա Լերան հայ պանդուխտ-գաղթականներու կեանքը՝ Մ. Նահանգներու մէջ, Ի. դարու առաջին կիսուն: Ան հիմնուած է ցարդ գրեթէ չօգտագործուած սկզբնաղբիւրներու վրայ, ներառեալ՝ արխիւներ, թերթեր, յուշեր, անձնական հարցազրոյցներ, նամակագրութիւններ, անձնական փաստաթուղթեր, կայքէջային տեղեկատուութիւններ, եւն.:

Մուսա Լեռէն Մ. Նահանգներ պանդուխտութիւնը ծայր առած է Ի. դարու սկիզբին, մահաւանդ՝ 1908ի երիտթուրք յեղափոխութենէն եւ անոր յաջորդող կլիկեան եւ հիւսիսային Սուրիոյ ջարդերէն ետք: Յետագային անոնց միացած են Եգիպտոսի Փոր Սայիտի գաղթականներն, եւ 1916ին՝ Պուենոս Այրէսէն ժամանած գաղթականներ: Մուսա Լեռէն գաղթը վերսկսած է 1919ին՝ տեղահանուածներու Մուսա Լեռ վերադարձէն ետք:

Պանդուխտ-գաղթականներուն մեծ մասը հաստատուած է Մ. Նահանգներու Արեւելեան Ափ, մասնաւորաբար Քրնթիքաթ, Նիւ Ճրրզի, Փենսիլվենիա, Մենչուսէց, Նիւ Եորք եւ Յորիտա: Քիչեր բնակութիւն հաստատած են Քալիֆորնիա: Ասոնք գործի լծուած են մետաքսի գործարաններու, ուտեստեղէնի արտադրութեան եւ այլ մասնագիտութիւններու մէջ: Ոմանք հիմնած են իրենց անձնական գործերը:

Մ. Նահանգներու հեռաւորութիւնը արգելք չէ եղած որ ամուր կապ պահպանուի ծննդավայր Մուսա Լերան հետ: Պանդուխտ-գաղթականները ներքին ցանց մը յառաջացուցած են, պահպանած իրենց աւանդոյթները եւ շարունակած հաղորդակցիլ իրենց բարբառով:

Այդուհանդերձ, համարկումը անխուսափելի եղած է: Դպրոցներու, ակումբներու, եկեղեցիներու թէ կամաւորական ընկերակցութիւններու ընդմէջէն գաղթականները առնչուած են ամերիկեան կեանքին: Անոնցմէ ոմանք մաս կազմած են նաեւ ամերիկեան զինեալ ուժերուն՝ Համաշխարհային Բ. Պատերազմի տարիներուն: Յաջորդ սերունդէն շատեր իսառն ամուսնութիւններ կ'ընելով սկիզբ դրած են ամբողջական ձուլման: