

NOUVEL HAY MAGAZINE

SANS FRONTIÈRES

La communauté arménienne d'Ethiopie jeudi 14 Mars 2018 à 7h30 pm



ARPA Institute Presentation
The Ethiopian Armenian Community

By Asbed Pogarian

Thursday, March 14, 2019 @ 7:30PM

In the Aram and Anahis D. Boolghoorjian Hall of the Merdinian School: 13330
Riverside Dr.

Sherman Oaks, CA 91403

Abstract: Armenians and Ethiopians have been in contact for centuries, despite their distant geographic homelands, mainly in Jerusalem. They both share the common branch of Christianity, monophysitism, which asserted that in the person of

Jesus Christ there is only one divine nature, rather than two natures, divine and human, as asserted at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 AD. Armenian clergy have visited Ethiopia and vice versa. Individual Armenians have settled in Ethiopia as traders, emissaries and even diplomats. However, it was only in the late 1800s and

early 1900 that a community was formed in Adis Ababa, the capital. The community

increased in numbers after the Genocide, reaching its peak of around 1,200 members in the 1950s. There are striking similarities between the Armenian and Ethiopian alphabets, which is considered by some as another indicator of the close

ties Armenians and Ethiopians had as early as 400 AD. In 1924, Ras Teferi Mekonen, the future Emperor Haile Selassie, "adopted" 40 orphans from the Armenian orphanage in Jerusalem and brought them to Ethiopia, making them his official Imperial Marching Band. Their director, Kevork Nalbandian, composed the

first national anthem of Ethiopia in 1930, which was used until the Communist Revolution of 1974, when it was discontinued. After the overthrow of the Emperor,

most Armenians left the country, thus weakening the community. Today, only about

70 Armenians remain in Adis Ababa with a functioning church and an elementary school, but no Armenian students in attendance.

Asbed Pogharian is a third generation Ethiopian-Armenian. His paternal grandfather arrived in Ethiopia in 1899 after surviving the Hamidian massacres of 1895-96. Both his parents were born in Addis Ababa. He left Ethiopia in 1975 to attend the Melkonian Educational Institute in Cyprus. After graduating from college

in Philadelphia in 1984, he spent a year in Yerevan researching the relationship between Ethiopians and Armenians throughout history. Last January, after an absence of 43 years, he returned to Ethiopia for the first time and documented his travel in a film, Dear Ethiopia: A Love Letter. Parts of his film will be shown at the presentation. He currently lives in La Crescenta.

Disclaimer: The Merdinian School is not the sponsor of this event and any opinions expressed during the event are not those of the School.

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