

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

POSTSCRIPT

HIS LIFE'S A STAGE

Sos Sargsian, 68, the actor who made a nation cry in such memorable roles as Shakespeare's *Othello*, the tsarist officer Zimzimov in Gabriel Sundukian's *Bebo*, Don Quixote in the 1968 Russian version, ran for president in 1991, as the candidate of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation-Dashnaksutiun. No sooner were the elections over (Sargsian had received four percent of the vote) he returned to the stage. Without government moneys for filmmaking, the only venue available to him and others like him was the theater stage. Sargsian founded and became artistic director of the Hamazkaine Theater Group, funded and supported by the Hamazkaine Cultural Association headquartered in Lebanon, with chapters throughout the Diaspora.

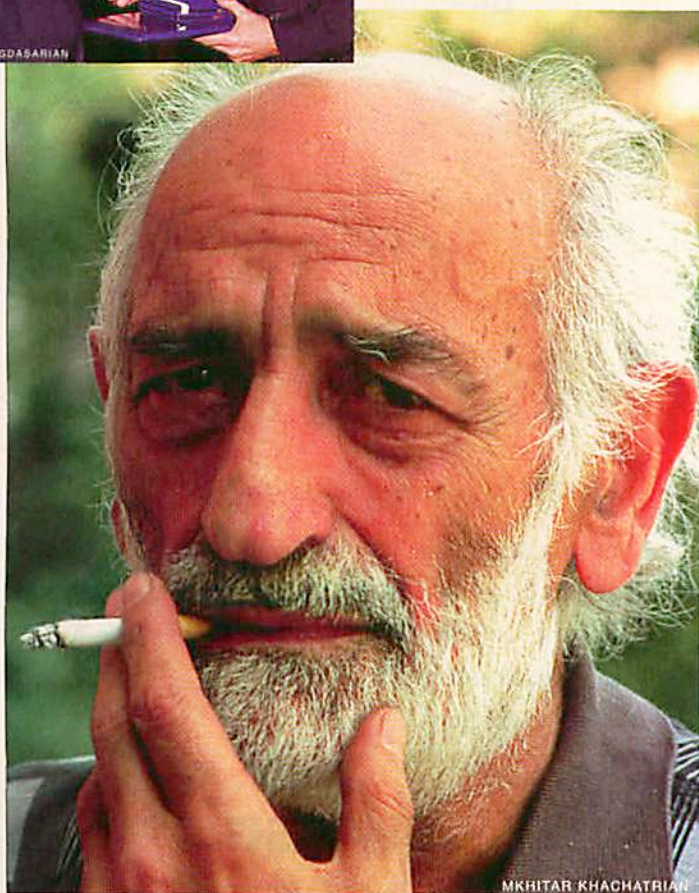
Now in its seventh year, the theater group's repertory this season includes Moliere's *Tartuffe*, Saroyan's *A Cup of Kindness* and *Oscar* by Claude Maniet, as well as three children's pieces.

In December 1997, then-President Levon Ter Petrossian, Sargsian's erstwhile opponent, decorated the actor with the order of Mesrob Mashtots.

Recently, Sargsian was appointed rector of the Armenian State Institute for Performing Arts, where he is also a professor of theater.



MELIK BAGDASARIAN



MKBITAR KHACHATRIAN

UNITED DIOCESE?

In an interview with AIM (April-May 1998), when speaking about the protracted administrative schism in the Armenian Church, Catholicos Aram I made it very clear that it is ultimately up to the people to decide the question of "church unity." When asked about the role of the hierarchy and who is going to take the first step, His Holiness said: "Antelias came here not to divide the people, but to serve the people. If the people whom we are serving tell us thank you very much for what you did, the next day Antelias will go back to Antelias."

Recently, the "people" spoke and threw the "church unity" ball in Antelias's court. The National Representative Assembly of the Prelacy, meeting in Watertown, Massachusetts—April 29-May 1—passed a resolution that said: "Whereas the issue of the administrative unity of the Prelacy and the Diocese of the Eastern United States requires the involvement, participation and approval of the Holy See of Etchmiadzin and Antelias, and whereas genuine unity can only be advised as the communities centered around the Prelacy and Diocese churches work together, to strengthen cooperation and internal trust on the path of community integration; be it resolved, that future unity meetings should follow agreement on these issues between the Holy See of Etchmiadzin and Antelias, and be it further resolved, that until then we encourage the Prelacy parishes in the United States and Canada to continue to seek genuine cooperation with their Diocesan counterparts in the spirit of Christian fellowship and national solidarity." What this means is that, after thirty years of on-and-off negotiations between the Prelacy and the Diocese, the problem goes back to "square one."

Frustrated by the impasse, the Diocese during its annual Diocesan Assembly meeting in New York in early May, passed a resolution that read: "Whereas, the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America has made every effort to implement the joint unity guidelines of 1982, which were reaffirmed in 1989 by the Diocesan and Prelacy Assemblies; and whereas, over the past year there has been no progress in bringing about unity, we believe that the time is now and our people are ready for one united diocese under the supreme ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians at Holy Etchmiadzin; therefore, be it resolved that the Diocese through its Unity Committee move forward to complete the unity process when the Prelacy is prepared to proceed in implementing the 1982 unity guidelines." The Diocesan Assembly affirmed that they "look to the direction and blessings" of both Catholicoses Karekin I and Aram I, "for the unification of the Armenian Church in America."

The Prelacy "resolution" clearly puts the responsibility on the Catholicosate of Cilicia to resolve the diocesan division in North America with the Catholicosate of Holy Etchmiadzin. Catholicos Aram I said in AIM: "We as church leaders, have a prophetic role: to challenge, to remind, to criticize, to lead, to facilitate." Now that the "people" have made their wishes clear, perhaps, it is time for the church leadership to resolve the schism in North America once and for all.

By Hratch Tchilingirian