

# The Armenians from the Caucasus and Anatolia to Switzerland and New England in the 19th and 20th Centuries



*The Armenians from the Caucasus and Anatolia to Switzerland and New England in the nineteenth and twentieth Centuries*

*Friday, June 13, 2014 • 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM*



Swissnex Boston, 420 Broadway, Cambridge MA 02138

A joint lecture around the themes of exile; intercultural; Armenian identity; humanitarian, political and intellectual relations between the Armenians and both Switzerland and New England, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

***Coorganisation:***

*Swissnex Boston, UNIGE, University of Boston, National Association for Armenian Studies and Researches*

<http://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-armenians-from-the-caucasus-and-anatolia-to-switzerland-and-new-england-in-the-19th-and-20th-tickets-11845228397>

About the lectures and the panelists

**Prof. Valentina Calzolari Bouvier** to speak on:

***Armenian revolutionaries in Geneva and Lausanne at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries***

In 1913, the Armenian revolutionary Avetis Aharonian proposed to take Switzerland as a model for the renewal of the Armenian society, economy and customs, claiming the necessity of a rupture with the past. But at the same time, in another context, he praised the continuity of the Armenian identity and traditions. For example, in his dissertation defended at the University of Lausanne the same year he insisted on the sacred role of the fireplace as a symbol of the Armenian family's identity, while in an Armenian work he denounced the wastefulness of this practice. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the relationships between Swiss and Armenian were intensive and many Armenians were exiled in Geneva. This talk will approach the idealization of Switzerland as a social and economic model and asks the general problem of new social and economic imperatives requiring a break with ancient and traditional identity.

**Prof. Simon Payaslian** to speak on:

***The Origins of the Armenian Community in New England and the Construction of Armenian-American "cultural congruence"***

Simon Payaslian will discuss the origins and development of the Armenian community in the United States, with a focus on the New England region, from the 1880s to the 1920s. The early Armenian immigrants to the New World sought preservation of their Armenian national identity while seeking integration into American society. While many Armenians emphasized the preservation of Armenianness and struggled against foreignization, others stressed the imperatives of cultural integration and rapid economic growth. Payaslian will cover the case of the *Armenia* journal, published in Boston from 1904 to 1913, which promoted the idea of "cultural congruence" between Armenian and American values.

- **Prof. Valentina Calzolari Bouvier:** Professor of Armenian Studies and Chair of the Department of Mediterranean, Slavic and Oriental Languages and Literatures at the University of Geneva, currently in sabbatical as a visiting scholar at Harvard University. She is the current President of the International Association of Armenian Studies.

- **Prof. Simon Payaslian:** Charles K. and Elizabeth M. Kenosian Chair in Modern Armenian History and Literature at Boston University. His most recent book is *The Political Economy of Human Rights in Armenia: Authoritarianism and Democracy in a Former Soviet Republic* (2011).