

Associate Director of MEMEAC, Dr. Anny Bakalian, visits LERC

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Reported by Elie Nabhan

Dr. Anny Bakalian, the Associate Director of Middle East and Middle Eastern American Center (MEMEAC), Graduate Center, City University of New York, United States, and a foremost authority on Armenian Americans, paid a visit to the Lebanese Emigration Research Center, to meet with LERC Director Ms. Guita Hourani, and to learn more about the Center.

Author of *Armenian Americans: From Being to Feeling Armenian*, published in 1993 and *Backlash 9/11 Middle Eastern and Muslim Americans Respond* published in 2009 with co-author Mehdi Bozorgmehr.

In her first study, Dr. Bakalian explains the contentious issue of assimilation for most immigrant groups in the United States. She deals with terms of ethnic identity, ancestral heritage, as most immigrant groups, including Armenian Americans try “to hold onto their culture by transplanting their traditional institutions and recreating new communities in America.” This volume, she believes, shows how men and women of Armenian descent become distanced from their ethnic origins with the passing of generations.

The latter book deals with American reactions to the September 11, 2001 attacks when their sense of security was altered. According to the book summary, “9/11 also ushered in a backlash in the form of hate crimes, discrimination, and a string of devastating government initiatives for Middle Eastern and Muslim Americans.” The book “provides the first comprehensive analysis of the impact of the post-9/11 events on Middle Eastern and Muslim Americans as well as their organized response.” Through fieldwork, interviews, and discussions with community leaders, the authors’ show how people wrapped themselves with the American flag so to speak and how “ethnic organizations were mobilized to demonstrate their commitment to the United States while defending their rights and distancing themselves from the terrorists.”

Ms. Guita Hourani met with Dr. Bakalian to discuss LERC’s accomplishments, activities, and services. Dr. Bakalian was interested in sending researchers to LERC to benefit from its research infrastructure and opportunities available for association and networking.

Dr. Bakalian was then given a presentation of LERC’s electronic archives and database with which she was thoroughly impressed. She was then taken on a tour of the Lebanon Migration Museum at NDU.

Dr. Bakalian presented LERC with a copy of her book *Backlash 9/11* and LERC reciprocated by giving her a copy of its latest publication *Our People*, and a copy of NDU’s most recent Palma Journal special issue on Lebanese migration.

When asked about her visit to LERC, Dr. Bakalian wrote “Impressive beginnings for the Lebanese Emigration Research Center, with best wishes for the future as you grow and flourish.”



Dr. A. Bakalian (left) at LEAD with Mrs. L. Haddad (middle) and Dr. C. Fadda-Conrey (July 2010).



Dr. A. Bakalian pictured at the Lebanon Migration Museum at NDU (July 2010).