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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

April 1, 1976

ADMINISTRATIVELY CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM FOR: ROLAND ELLIOTT
FROM: JIM CONNOR *JE C*
SUBJECT: Letter to George Mardikian

The attached article was returned in the President's outbox with the following notation:

"Might write him with compliments, etc."

Please prepare an appropriate letter, clearing with the necessary persons.

cc: Dick Cheney

D / Might write him
into compliments etc.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1976

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN.....

Patriot Boosts American Spirit

By KAREN GREENE
Staff Reporter

Great Americans aren't born, they're grown, contends George Mardikian, an Armenian import and superpatriot whose flag-waving faith in his adopted country has never waned.

Since taking root in San Francisco in 1922, Mardikian has become one of America's classic success stories. Never one to forget his gratitude to the "land of opportunity", he spends much of his time traveling cross-country, singing his song of America. The noted author and philanthropist is in Charleston this weekend to speak at the annual convention of the South Carolina Home Economists Assn.

A self-proclaimed trouble-maker, Mardikian explains his surname means "son of a warrior". "My war is against poverty and disloyalty. My main objective in life is to go around the country and disavow the bearers of malcontent and peddlers of gloom. That's why I'm still holding 30 pounds of extra weight," he says with a wink. "When I step on them, I want them to feel it."

A veteran of his native country's battles with the Turks, Mardikian became a guerilla at the age of 15. After a capture and subsequent escape, he left Constantinople for America only hours before the Turks came to re-arrest him.

Nearly penniless, he got a job in Coffee Dan's, a San Francisco basement restaurant, and took home \$12 a week for his dishwashing labors. Other jobs followed until Mardikian and his wife, Naz, opened a small place called Omar Khayyam's where they served Armenian dishes.

After several other restaurant ventures, Mardikian walked into the old Coffee Dan's in 1938 and 15 minutes later he owned it. This sentimental location is presently the base of the entrepreneur's operations.

"There is, what I call, one sacred table in the place," he says, with a sly grin. "Even when the restaurant is full, that table is empty. It marks the exact location where I washed dishes."

Besides managing his restaurant, Mardikian has served as a food consultant to the U.S. Army from 1942 through 1954 and continues his active work with food-relief programs in needy countries. For his service, he is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Medal of Freedom, America's highest civilian honor.

A favorite medal, he points out, is the Boy Scouts' "Silver Buffalo" award. "It's usually given to Presidents or those who are about to kick the buck-



On a recent visit of President Ford to San Francisco, both Mr. and Mrs. George Mardikian were invited to a reception as friends. Mr. Mardikian (second from right) asked President Ford to meet his "other President", Mr. Arch Monson, the National President of the Boy Scouts of America. This was a great meeting because all three gentlemen are Eagle Scouts, the highest rank in Scouting; and, all three are also wearers of the Silver Buffalo, Scouting's highest award. Mrs. Mardikian looks on, wearing her Nefertiti pin.

Page 2, The Armenian Observer, March 3, 1976

et." he jokes. "And, I've been fooling them for 15 years."

A scout for more than 60 years, Mardikian stresses his faith in the youth of America and extols the virtues of vocational training, as well as literary know-how.

"Not all youngsters are born to become doctors, lawyers or engineers," he observes. "Some want to work with their hands. Americans, I believe, are natural mechanics."

As a contributor to several national publications, Mardiki-

an makes his opinions known. He is also author of "Dinner at Omar Khayyam's" and "Song of America", his autobiography.

His recipe for success lists hard work as the main ingredient. "First, have faith in yourself. Put your utmost trust in America, the hope of the world and all freedom-loving peoples. Add to this a faith in God. Combine everything and back it all with hard work - you can't miss."