

ԲԱՆՔԵՐ ՀԱՅԱԳԻՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ
REVIEW OF ARMENIAN STUDIES
ВЕСТНИК АРМЕНОВЕДЕНИЯ



ՀԱՅԱԳԻՏԱԿԱՆ ՄԻՋԱՋԱՅԻՆ ՀԱՆԴԵՍԻ
INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF ARMENIAN STUDIES



2021 N 3 (27)
ՀՀ ԳԱԱ «ԳԻՏՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ» ՀՐԱՏԱՐԱԿՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ

The Efforts of Archbishop Khoren Muradbekyan Aimed...

He sought to settle the affairs of the Church and the Armenian Apostolic Church under the protection of the Soviet authorities. He was one of the founders of the Armenian Apostolic Spiritual Council and was considered a saint. It was to be presided by the Catholicos with the participation of an experienced high-ranking clergymen. Archbishop Khoren Murad, Bishop Arsen and Bishop George Gurev and later in the absence of the Catholicos, the meetings of the Spiritual Council were presided by Archbishop Khoren. Also on March 1, 1922, an Armenian Delegation submitted to the government of the Armenian Republic the proposal for the restoration of the Armenian Apostolic Church.

With the establishment of the Supreme Spiritual Council on January 1, 1922, it was agreed in the name of the Armenian Apostolic Church that the Minister for Religious Affairs of the authorities would take the initiative of the state to restore the ecclesiastical status of the Armenian Apostolic Church.

It is appropriate to quote the words of Archbishop Khoren: "In these conditions, thanks to the Supreme Spiritual Council, the Armenian Church is guaranteed safety from the interference and the influence of the Soviet authorities, especially the Commissar of Religious Affairs."

After the formation of the Supreme Spiritual Council, the State Council of National Affairs (Ministry of Internal Affairs) issued a circular note on the protection of the rights of the Church and on settling the Armenian Church's legal status, other than on church documents. That is why, on April 10, 1922, a decree was signed on April 1, 1922, Archbishop Khoren wrote the proposal from the head of State Council of Armenia to Patriarch George II. On May 22, 1922, the Armenian Apostolic Delegation presented the proposal concerning the status of the Armenian Apostolic Church.

Archbishop Khoren Muradbekyan held the position of Deputy Catholicos of All Armenians and the presiding member of the Supreme Spiritual Council until 1932 when he was elected Catholicos of All Armenians. During that period, the violence perpetrated by the Soviet authorities against the Armenian Apostolic



Hayrapetyan K.

Church and its ministers increased. Church seizures and repression of the clergy were becoming more and more widespread.

Due to the desperate situation, Archbishop Khoren regularly addressed

the government of the Russian Empire, asking them to use the executive agencies to stop and restrain the continuous seizures in the Western Van and the northern districts.

Despite the exerted best efforts and zeal, very few churches reopened, most remained closed, and the policy of repression against priests continued.

Reopenings of the Armenian Churches

From January 1908, the Soviet authorities started their systematic attempts to put pressure on the Armenian Apostolic Church and prohibit its services. The regular continuation of these actions led to the change in the administrative structure of the Armenian Government. According to the decision of the Plenum of the People's Council of the Armenian SSR, the People's Commissar of Education, acting there to assist the Minister to set the functions of the Ministers and heads of the ministries in accordance to the above requirements, after consulting with the DGB members, did not accept the former Armenian Commissary of Education, K. G. Khachaturyan, as representative of the religious community. He had to leave because of religious questions according to the Soviet. The decision was taken on January 20, 1908.

During the period of 1908-1909, Armenian Church Hierarchs, in the capacity of the Religious Commissar and heads, started continuing to negotiate with representative officials of the Soviet government, trying to solve the issue of providing permission for the Armenian Apostolic Church continuation of church services, requesting of the government's confirmation and publication of a new "Decree" concerning a "Religious Church Association" according to the legal norms of the Soviet law. At the same time, the heads of the negotiations with the government in the negotiations claimed that the first agreement with the authorities



Hayrapetyan K.

“Under orders and the intervention of the authorities, the state controls, during the meeting of the State Council of Soviet Armenia on May 20, 1926, a decision was made to take advantage of all circumstances within the Armenian Republic, which are to serve to, to protect Soviet cultural monuments, to destroy rapidly and completely, and thus to repel the religious masses from communism, in order to win the masses”.

“Therefore, the authorities demand that the Clerical Committee to prevent damage and also increase the entry and exit of the Armenian clergy to Soviet Armenia, destroying the church of any religious function according to their understanding the conditions of Armenian clergy abroad”.

Armenian Clergy in Diaspora and Armenian Spiritual Church

Adhering to his title of a clergyman, Archbishop Khoren continued to fight by all possible means to find a way beyond the existing barrier between the church and the state. It should be noted that in those years the church and its ministers were humiliated not only by the authorities, but also by the press in the Diaspora and Soviet Armenia, which further alienated the state from the Armenian Apostolic Church, provided that the latter had already become a “thorn in the flesh for the state”. Thus, for example, in 1926, Atrpet³² published an article in the Tbilissi newspaper “Martakoch” with the headline “Intolerable”, in which he accused the Catholicos of All Armenians and the members of the Supreme Spiritual Council of looting and illegally selling national antiquities³³. In particular, it referred to the gold coins of Tigran the Great, the eastern tapestry-curtain and the Catholicos' pearl crown, which were allegedly taken out of the treasury of the Mother See and sold to foreigners.

the Armenian Church of Armenia. The new church was to be in agreement with the Soviets, and the church leaders had agreed to

The clergymen of the Armenian Apostolic Church found themselves in a hopeless situation. On the one hand, the persecution and repression by the authorities, on the other hand, the disturbing articles of the Armenian press in the Diaspora seemed to once again give reason to believe that the church, by overestimating its importance in the fate of the Armenian people, was trying to undermine the reputation of the Soviet authorities in the Diaspora.

Based on the demand of the created situation and through the mediation of Archbishop Khoren, Catholicos of All Armenians George V, on the eve of the October Revolution on November 17, 1927, addressed all Armenians with an encyclical to call for solidarity, unity and assistance to Soviet Armenia³⁹.

The authorities of Soviet Armenia were not averse to the possibility of intensifying the life of the people through the influence of church property. The church of course, aware of the change, the nature of these authorities, and

In 1925, the authorities formed the Union of Atheists (renamed into the Union of Fighting Atheists (UFA) in 1929)⁴⁰. The main goal of the union was to engage in atheistic education of the people, which intensified the policy of intolerance towards the church and religion.

The official newspaper "Atheist", published since 1928, was filled with anti-religious, anti-church propaganda and cartoons of the clergy. The culmination of the atheists' actions was the mass closure of churches and turning them into clubs

and schools. Religious belief was held in low esteem, the leaders of the church of Armenia, the clergymen, were being beaten and pressed to the Bolshevik Special Schools, and of course, to the UFA. The religious leaders in general, the clergymen, the church, the church leaders, were all the victims of the religious freedom of that period. From the year of 1928 to 1930, the number

Hayrapetyan K.

churches were closed en masse, clergy were arrested and intimidated.

In general, in 1920–1930, about 40 clergy were arrested, 12 of whom were released, 3 were shot, and 1 – Yeznik Vardapet Vardanyan was strangled⁴⁶. As for the condition of churches in Soviet Armenia, as of December 31, 1929, according to the last letter of the Catholicos of All Armenians George V to the authorities, 25 out of 31 churches in Daralagyaz were closed, 8 – reopened in a state of ruin, 26 churches were closed in Lori Pambak, 33 – in Ijevan and 15 – in Zangezur⁴⁷.

There are a number of general terms in common use, and among these 'Buddhist' is one which applies well to most of the members of one of the three 'factions' of the Buddhist church in Thailand. The Buddhist terms people are always referring to the 'Buddhist' church are not the same as referring to 'Buddhism'. In this case they are referring to those who follow the 'orthodox' and 'orthodoxical' paths in the 'orthodox' or 'orthodoxical' church.

Despite the conservative nature of the House Committee of the Appropriations, which denied the Senate's bill, the authorisation did not change. This reflects both the House's and the Senate's failure to take account of the circumstances, and not because of a desire to increase funding to the committee in the House during the period of the conservative committee of the House being in power. As a result of this, the House authorisation consent to these committee to spending the House's authorisation committee during other business.