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THE EFFORTS OF ARCHBISHOP KHOREN MURADBEKYAN AIMED AT THE NORMALIZATION OF CHURCH – STATE RELATIONS IN 1924–1930

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Introduction

The subject of studying church – state relations is especially actual nowadays, as the discussion of the role of the church in Armenian history, both in the Soviet times and in modern conditions, has a significant place in terms of understanding the development of the Armenian public life and outlining the vision. In this respect, of particular interest in the history of the Armenian Church are the years 1924–1930, when the question of the existence of one of the greatest national values, the Armenian Apostolic Church, was put on the table of discussions.

Creation of Supreme Spiritual Council

After the establishment of the Soviet regime in Armenia, due to the unfavorable situation for the church as well as the recurring diseases of the Catholicos, it became impossible to convene a church assembly and further manage the Armenian Apostolic Church. In December 1923, in consultation with the high-ranking clergy of the Mother See, it was decided to establish a Supreme Spiritual Council, chaired by the Catholicos¹.

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¹ Բեհբուդյան 1996, 163:

... : 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 strangled⁶⁶. 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 Zangezur⁶⁷.