

ՔԱՆԱՔԱՐԱ ՀԱՅՐԱՊԵՏԵԱՆ
Գաւառի պետական համալսարան

ԱՄԵՆԱՅՆ ՀԱՅՈՑ ԿԱԹՈՂԻԿՈՍ ԽՈՐԷՆ Ա. ՍՈՒՐԱԴԲԵԿԵԱՆԻ ՍԱՀՈՒԱՆ ԱՌԵՂՍՈՒԱԾԻ ՇՈՒՐՋ

Պատմագիտության ասպարէզում Ամենայն Հայոց կաթողիկոս Խորէն Ա. Մուրադբէկեանի մահուան հետ կապուած տեսակէտները տարբեր են. Ամենայն Հայոց կաթողիկոսը սրտի կաթուածից է մահացել, թէ՛ խեղդամահ է արուել, արդեօք կաթողիկոսի բռնի մահը Մայր Աթոռ Ս. Էջմիածնում պահուող զինամթերքի, թէ՛ գանձերի հանգամանքով է բացատրելի: Ամենայն Հայոց կաթողիկոսի մահուան առեղծուածի բացայայտումը կարևոր է ոչ միայն Հայոց Եկեղեցու պատմության, այլ նաեւ տուեալ ժամանակաշրջանի Խորհրդային Հայաստանի եւ առհասարակ 1930-ական թուականներին խորհրդային իրականության հասարակական-քաղաքական յարաբերութիւնների եւ իրավիճակի ուսումնասիրութեան ու լուսաբանման, հայ հոգեւորականութեան հանդէպ՝ խորհրդային քաղաքական վերնախաւի իրականացրած քաղաքականութեան՝ բիրտ ու դաժան միջոցների կիրառման տեսակէտից:

Ներկայացուող յօդուածն ունի ոչ միայն գիտական, այլև գործնական նշանակութիւն: Ներկայ փուլում կրկին Հայ Առաքելական Եկեղեցու առջև ծառացած օրակարգային հարցերից է եկեղեցի-պետութիւն փոխյարաբերութիւնների կարգաւորումը: Հետևաբար՝ անցեալի փորձի ուսումնասիրումն ու հետազօտումը հնարաւորութիւն կստեղծի ոչ միայն նշուած հիմնախնդրի կարգաւորմանը միտուած համապատասխան քայլերի, ուղենիշների մշակման համար, այլև առկայ քաղաքական, հանրային, կրօնական մարտահրաւէրներին դիմակայելու կարողութիւնների ձևաւորման:

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ON THE MYSTERY OF DEATH OF KHOREN I MURADBEKIAN — CATHOLICOS OF ALL ARMENIANS¹

In historiography, the views related to the death of Catholicos of All Armenians Khoren I Muradbekian are different: did the Catholicos of All Armenians die of a heart attack or was he strangled? Was his death caused by the ammunition or treasures stored in Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin? The discovery of the death mystery of the Catholicos of All Armenians is important not only for the history of the Armenian Church, but also from the perspective of the study and coverage of the socio-political relations and situation of the Soviet Armenia of the given period and in the 1930s in general, as well as from the perspective of application of brutal and cruel methods inherent to the policy implemented by the Soviet political elite towards the Armenian clergy.

The presented article has not only scientific, but also practical significance. At the current stage, one of the agenda issues facing the Armenian Apostolic Church is again the regulation of church-state relations. Therefore, the study and research of the past experience will create an opportunity not only for the development of appropriate steps and guidelines aimed at the settlement of the mentioned issue, but also for the formation of capacities to face the existing political, public and religious challenges.

THE HYPOTHESES ON THE DEATH MYSTERY OF THE CATHOLICOS OF ALL ARMENIANS— KHOREN I MURADBEKIAN

On the night of April 5–6, 1938, the 65-year-old Catholicos of All Armenians Khoren I Muradbekian passed away under unknown circumstances.

¹* Ստացուեի է՝ 9.11.2023, գրախօսուեի է՝ 11.11.2023: էլ. հասցէ՝ q.hayrapetyan@gsu.am: հմբազիր՝ Գէորգ Սարեան:

The news of the Catholicos death immediately spread abroad: according to these news, he was strangled in the patriarchate residence².

According to the official message of the Supreme Spiritual Council; however, it was announced that the Catholicos died of a heart attack and was buried in St. Gayane Monastery. The reports by Archbishop Arsen addressed to the Supreme Spiritual Council of Etchmiadzin and his letter addressed to the Patriarch of Constantinople Mesrop Naroyan have been preserved³ as facts confirming the statement of the Supreme Spiritual Council.

It was impossible to speak up about the death and the hasty burial of the Catholicos in the Soviet Union; however, in the Diaspora⁴ and nowadays also in Armenia, there are a number of hypotheses about the death of the Catholicos, which were once put forward by Torgom Vehapetyan, Bishop Pargev Gevorgyan, Professor Stepan Stepanyants, Armenak Manukyan, Catholicos Vazgen A and Catholicos Khoren A's sister's grandson – Alexander Mikayelyan.

Thus, Torgom Vehapetyan considers the treasures kept in the Mother See to be the cause of the death of the Catholicos and immediately mentions someone named Piruz as the murderer, who killed the Catholicos with a strong blow from an electric current wire. Torgom Vehapetyan's research makes it clear that the body of the Catholicos was not buried the day after his death, but remained in the room for two days, and then the soldiers tried to bury the Catholicos somewhere far away in order to cover up the tracks, but the virgins of the monastery covered the body of the Catholicos and buried it in the cemetery⁵ of St. Gayane Monastery.

Stepan Stepanyants (Stepan Kertogh) has also presented his hypothesis regarding the death of the Catholicos of All Armenians, and in his work puts forward the

² **G. Avagyan**, *The Martyr Catholicos*, Yerevan, 2008, pp. 116–117. **G. Lazean**, *Armenia and Armenian law. In the light of Armenian and Russian relations*, Yerevan, 1991, 389–342:

³ **К. Hayrapetyan**, *The Analysis of the Mystery of the Death of the Catholicos of All Armenians Khoren I Muradbekian in historiography*, **Etchmiadzin**, E, St. Etchmiadzin, 2018, pp. 138–139.

⁴ **Н. Tchilingirian**, *In Search of Relevance: Church and Religion in Armenia since Independence*, Paris, 2007, p.5. **F. Corley**, *The Armenian Church Under the Soviet Regime, Part 1: The Leadership of Kevork, Religion, State & Society*, Vol. 24, No. 1, 1996, p. 9. **Е. Oganessyan**, *The Armenian Church in the USSR, Religion in Communist Lands Volume 7*, Sidney, 1979, p. 239. **А. Багдасарян**, *Армянская апостольская церковь и Советское государство: особенности взаимоотношений*, Вестник Моск. ун-та, сер. 8, История, 2018, № 1, стр. 77.

⁵ **К. Hayrapetyan**, the mentioned work, pp. 139–140.

hypothesis that the Catholicos was strangled by the hands of Cheka because of the weapons and treasures⁶ kept secretly in the monastery.

S. Stepanyants notes that the documents testifying the presence of weapons in the Mother See are stored in the National Security Archive of Armenia, according to which the Catholicos and bishops were aware of the weapons located in the Mother See. The state security officers were assigned a difficult task: to remove the monastic weapon from the monastery, and in order to forget the secret about the weapon forever, according to S. Stepanyan, on the night of April 5–6, 1938, the Chekists strangled the Catholicos⁷.

In his another work, S. Stepanyants mentions the name of Gegham Klekchyan, a shatir /scepter-bearer/ from Nor Bayazet serving the Catholicos, as a witness to the death of the Catholicos, according to whose testimony, a woman named Piruz and other employees of the Cheka had ordered him and other clergymen of the monastery to stay away from the Catholicos⁸. It should also be noted that Pargev Gevorgyan⁹ also presented this hypothesis at one time.

Thus, while bathing the Catholicos before placing him into the coffin, Gegham Klekchyan noticed that his face was bruised, and there were long blue lines on his neck with small spots of blood. On the same day, Hayk Yeghiazaryan, personal physician of the Catholicos, came to Etchmiadzin. The doctor, examining the body of the Catholicos, declared: “There is no doubt, the Catholicos was strangled¹⁰”.

S. Stepanyants notes that the day after the death of the Catholicos, the state security authorities confiscated the monastic weapons and the riches of treasury. At the beginning of June, 1938, at the 11th Congress of the Communist Party of Armenia, People’s Commissar of Internal Affairs V. Khvorostyan declared that the Catholicos died of a heart attack because he witnessed the end of his life and Patriarchate. It was mentioned at the assembly that 2.5 kg of gold, 15 pounds of silver and many precious jewels were seized from the monastery. The report also stated that the treasures were kept under the soil at a depth of 2.5 m, and a concrete floor

⁶ In the same place, p. 141.

⁷ In the same place.

⁸ In the same place, pp. 141–142.

⁹ **P. Gevorgyan**, What happened to you, man of God?/“Homeland”, Yerevan, 1991, number 7, p. 36. П. Георгян, Епископ Армянской Апостольской Церкви. В борьбе за существование, Журнал Московской Патриархии. М., 1994. №4 (ЖМП). с. 49.

¹⁰ **К. Hayrapetyan**, the mentioned work, p. 142.

was built on top and sacred books were placed on it. The Assembly, however, made no mention of weapons being kept in the Mother See¹¹.

Armenak Manukyan has also tackled the issue of the causes of the Catholicos death. He draws attention to the fact that the main witness Gegham Klekchyan, had been arrested and detained a week before the death of the Catholicos on March 29, 1938, and his testimony regarding the examination of the body of the Catholicos is groundless. Therefore, he considers the death of the Catholicos a consequence of the negative influence of the oppressive political atmosphere during 1937–1938¹².

Catholicos of All Armenians Vazgen the First also wrote down what he had heard about the death of the Catholicos, according to which Catholicos Gevorg VI Chorekchyan told him that the commissar of the National Party of Armenian SSR was guilty of the death of the Catholicos; however, a few months after the death of the Catholicos, for some unknown reason, V. Khvorostyan was also arrested and shot, but during the conversation, Catholicos Gevorg VI did not give a clear answer to the question addressed to him what the Catholicos had died of. Catholicos Vazgen A also mentioned that in the autumn of 1955, after his election as Catholicos, he hired Gegham Klekchyan, the former shatir of Catholicos Khoren I, who had just returned from exile. Gegham Klekchyan told that he had been arrested during the days of the Catholicos' murder and heard the bad news in prison. Vazgen A. Palchyan gives another testimony, according to which he accidentally met the former secretary of Etchmiadzin regional committee in Arzni, who told that the death of the Catholicos happened by the hands of Beria¹³.

From the records of Catholicos Vazgen I, we can assume that the murder of Catholicos Khoren I took place by the orders of Beria, and Gegham Klekchyan, who was considered an eyewitness to the murder, had already been arrested before the death of the Catholicos.

Alexander, the grandson of Catholicos Khoren I's sister Satenik, also has a publication about his death, which states that during one of the family gatherings, a few days before his death, the Catholicos announced: «I am ready for any resolution at any time.» According to Mikayelyan, the fact of the brutal murder of the Catholicos was never doubted in their family, even his father, Hrant Mikayelyan, remembered that his uncle looked twisted in the coffin, as if he had been electrocuted. In 1966

¹¹ In the same place, 143:

¹² “**Nation**”, 1996, number 220, November 20, p. 4.

¹³ **K. Hayrapetyan**, the mentioned work, pp.144–145.

Alexander Mikayelyan met the academician Suren Yeremyan to clarify the circumstances of the death of the Catholicos, and it turned out that Beria had demanded from the Catholicos Khoren to hand over the keys to the treasury of the Etchmiadzin shrine, but in response he had received a refusal, which was the reason for killing¹⁴ the Catholicos.

Thus, there are three hypotheses regarding the death of Catholicos Khoren I:

1. The Catholicos died of a heart attack.
2. The Catholicos was strangled with an electric wire.
3. The Catholicos was killed by a blow from an electric current wire.

As for the motives of killing the Catholicos, there are two points of view: the murder of the Catholicos happened because of the treasures or ammunition kept in the Mother See.

PRESENTATION OF NEW FACTS ON THE MYSTERY OF THE DEATH OF THE CATHOLICOS OF ALL ARMENIANS KHOREN I MURADBEEKIAN

Thus, through the comparison and examination analysis of all the hypotheses and viewpoints related to the mystery of the death of the Catholicos, our study, as well as the events of the last years during the lifetime of the Catholicos, we can draw the following conclusions:

1. The elite of the Soviet government, practically being convinced that it is not possible to finally destroy the Armenian Apostolic Church even through widespread anti-church propaganda and repression, adopted the policy of minimizing the activities of the Armenian Apostolic Church, making it serve only the purpose of extracting material and financial resources from the Diaspora.

This is evidenced by the numerous letters and kondaks (official written statements made by Catholicos) of Catholicos Khoren I addressed to the Diaspora with a request to help Soviet Armenia¹⁵ and contribute to its reconstruction. This is also

¹⁴ **А. Микаэлян**, «Для него католикосат был боевым постом», Новое Время, АРХИВ 201126/07/2011 https://nv.am/dlya-nego-katolikosat-by-l-boevym-postom/?fbclid=IwAR3Vqm9kZw5Hr2rNnRma4GZwdtM7oW8OjRrTh9FpN8NPylYHdi_Qru7tFN0 entry: 29.03.2023

¹⁵ Documents on the history of the Armenian Church, Book B, Khoren I Muradbekian — the Catholicos of All Armenians (spiritual activity in 1901–1938, compiled by **S. Behbudyan**, Yerevan, 1996, number 273, pp. 412–414, number 359, pp. 511–512.

confirmed by the publications¹⁶ in the press regarding the aid and donations sent by Diaspora Armenians to Soviet Armenia.

The efforts of the Catholicos aimed at the regulation of church-state relations in this way were in vain, because in 1937–1938, the persecutions by the authorities against the church reached their peak.

2. Catholicos Khoren I, disappointed and disheartened by the open harassment and humiliation of the church by the authorities of Soviet Armenia, from then on refused to turn to the Diaspora for material and financial resources, as most of the money and donations received in his name were either immediately confiscated by the authorities or a small amount was allocated to the Mother See, which was not even enough to cover the daily wants of the monks in the congregation. Khoren I wrote about it in the letter¹⁷ addressed to V. Khvorostyan on December 4, 1937.

It should be noted that during the time of Khoren A. Muradbekian being a Catholicos, thanks to the efforts of the Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem Archbishop Torgom Hovsepyan and the plenipotentiary and delegate of “Illuminator’s dime” initiative and the Catholicos, patriarch Archbishop Garegin Hovsepyan, a fund collection was organized to repair the Mother See and improve the bankrupt economic situation, as a result of which the financial funds collected were kept in the Diaspora¹⁸ at the will of the Catholicos, in order to be used in case of need. From these funds regular allocations were made to the Patriarchal Sees of Constantinople¹⁹, Jerusalem and Cilicia²⁰ to rebuild and maintain Armenian churches and schools, to provide material assistance to emigrants and orphans.

¹⁶ «Turkey», 1935, number 128, July 23, p. 4.

¹⁷ Documents on the history of the Armenian Church, Book A, (1921–1938), compiled by **S. Behbudyan**, Yerevan, 1994, number 186, p. 324.

¹⁸ It refers to the deposit under the control of the London Central Commission of the “St. Etchmiadzin” Foundation. See Documents on the history of the Armenian Church, Book B, number 332, p. 480, number 396, pp. 551–552, number 397, pp. 552–555, Book A, number 183, pp. 318–319. **A. Hatityan**, A brief overview on the history of M. See of St. Etchmiadzin (1920–1967) «The issues of the renovation of the Mother Cathedral and the improvement of the Armenian Church, during the period of Khoren I the Catholicos», **Etchmiadzin**, D, St. Etchmiadzin, 1968, p. 20.

¹⁹ Documents on the history of the Armenian Church, Book D, Sahak B. Khapayan – Catholicos of Cilicia 1891–1940, compiled by **S. Behbudyan**, Yerevan 1997, number 241, p. 539–540, number 242, p. 541–542, number 247, p. 545, number 254, p. 552: Documents on the history of the Armenian Church, Book B, number 392, pp. 546–547.

²⁰ Documents on the history of the Armenian Church, Book D, Sahak B. Khapayan – Catholicos of Cilicia 1891–1940, compiled by **S. Behbudyan**, Yerevan 1997, number 241, pp. 539–540, number 242, p. 541–542, number 247, p. 545, number 254, p. 552: Documents on the history of the Armenian Church, Book B, number 392, pp. 546–547.

The Catholicos of All Armenians believed that if these funds were sent to Soviet Armenia, they would be immediately confiscated by the authorities, therefore he considered it more appropriate to use them in the Diaspora for the needs of the Patriarchal Sees, the needs of the Armenian community, as well as cultural and national events²¹.

3. The authorities of Soviet Armenia were certainly aware of the money kept in the Diaspora in the name of the Catholicos of All Armenians, so they raised an issue according to which the Mother See of St. Echmiadzin should be taxed. The amount²² of tax liabilities of the Mother See for four years, about 220,000 rubles, which was equivalent to 41,500 US dollars, was presented to the Catholicos. According to the authorities, it was not a large amount compared to the money²³ kept abroad. In addition, it should be mentioned that as of 1936 there was about 580,625 US dollars in the deposit account of the “St. Etchmiadzin” Foundation under the control of the London Central Commission.

We believe that the goal of the representatives of state authorities regularly visiting the Catholicos was not to take out the «munitions and treasures» stored in the Mother See, but to transfer the money kept in the Diaspora to Soviet Armenia through the Catholicos at any cost, even if it meant threatening the Catholicos, or intimidating and arresting people close to him.

3. As for the versions of the death of Catholicos of All Armenians – dying of a heart attack, being killed or strangled, it should be noted that as a result of studying the above mentioned references, we do not rule out the version of the Catholicos being killed with indirect intent. However, we cannot assert any version of the death of the Catholicos and deny the others, because we did not find any documents proving these facts in the National Archives of Armenia, nor in the archives of the civil status acts registration services of the Republic of Armenia (see references No. 1, 2), despite the fact that according to Archbishop Arsen Ghlthchyan’s report, a protocol was drawn up after the autopsy of the Catholicos.

4. Due to the lack of direct facts, it is difficult to prove any of the hypotheses of death, but we consider it important to clarify whether the isolation of the Cath-

²¹ Documents on the history of the Armenian Church, Book B, number 375, pp. 530–531, number 378, pp. 533–534:

²² As of 1938, 1 dollar was equivalent to 5.3 rubles https://forbes.kz/news/2014/12/04/newsid_74373_սուսը_10.03.2023_թ.

²³ Documents on the history of the Armenian Church, Book B, number 332, p. 480.

olicos was planned by the authorities or not. In the course of our study, we came to the conclusion that it was not planned by the Soviet authorities in advance. Let us mention the following as an argument: in the minutes of the session of August 4, 1938 of the Communist Party of Armenia, it is stated: “Considering that the existing materials expose the active struggle of the Catholicosate against the Soviet government, an order was issued to close the Etchmiadzin monastery, turning it into a museum, not to hold the election of a new Catholicos, and to liquidate the Armenian spiritual center, the Catholicosate of Etchmiadzin”²⁴. Although Grigor Harutyunyan, the secretary of the Central Committee of Communist Party of Bolsheviks of Soviet Armenia, who was in charge of the session, signed the note, he sent a message with the same content to Joseph Stalin²⁵ on the same day, delaying any decision regarding the Armenian Apostolic Church. At his suggestion, in the letter sent to Stalin on August 4, in opposition to People’s Commissar of Internal Affairs of the USSR Viktor Khvorostyan, a line was added: “Requesting the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks to confirm”. On this occasion, we read in Grigor Harutyunyan’s memoirs: “Khvorostyan wanted to counter-speech, as if it is a matter of local significance; we will handle it ourselves”, but in response, Grigor Harutyunyan said: “Echmiadzin, as the spiritual center of Armenians, has international weight and importance. That is why this issue should be agreed with the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks”²⁶. The first secretary of the Central Committee of Soviet Armenia hoped to gain time. His worry was not in vain. In his memoirs we read: “Not a month passes when Stalin contacts him with a special connection:

— Comrade Arutinov, do you still insist on closing the Catholicosate?

The manner in which the question was set already suggested the answer to Arutinov.

— No, Joseph Vissarionovich, I do not insist.

— Well then, good.

Thus, the question of dissolving Etchmiadzin is closed”²⁷:

²⁴ In the same place, number 413, pp. 570–571.

²⁵ In the same place, number 414, pp. 571–572.

²⁶ Grigor Shinarar (the Constuctor). Memoirs about the 1st Secretary of the Communist Party of Armenia G. A. Harutyunyan (Arutinov) in 1937–1953, compiled by **N. Mikoyan**, Yerevan, 2016, p. 131.

²⁷ In the same place. Also see **Friar T. Asoghik Karapetyan**, State and Motherland of the Church, Soviet Armenia 100. the church and the state, articles, documents and photos, St. Etchmiadzin,

5. Summarizing the abovementioned, we can state that the elite of the Soviet power never set the goal of killing the Catholicos of All Armenians and dissolving the Mother See, on the contrary, despite the open distrust in Church, they were well aware that Catholicos Khoren I still had great authority in the Diaspora and his assassination could undermine the authority of the Soviet government among the Diaspora Armenians. Therefore, we believe that the Diaspora factor was much more important for the Soviet authorities, because it provided a huge financial flow to Soviet Armenia through the Catholicos. Moreover, it was not ruled out that in the event of the liquidation of the Catholicos by the authorities and the closing of the Mother See, the Armenian Apostolic Church would not disappear; instead the spiritual center would be transferred abroad, and the Soviet Union would lose the last important leverage it had on Diaspora Armenians. Therefore, it was no coincidence that in 1932 the authorities allowed the convening of a National Church Assembly to elect a Catholicos, even though the Russian Orthodox Church had not had a leader since 1925.

6. As for the views stating that the main reason for terrorizing and killing the Catholicos was the weapons and treasures kept in Etchmiatsin, we do not find them very convincing, because the authorities, without the permission of the Catholicos, could use any opportunity to enter the Mother See and confiscate both the weapons and the treasures, as it, for example, happened after the adoption of the decree of December 17, 1920, when, without the permission of Catholicos Gevorg E, they confiscated the property of Etchmiadzin seminary, the Matenadaran (library), the southern and northern altars of the Cathedral, the dormitory of the Mother See, Hripsime Monastery²⁸, as well as demanded the Catholicos to hand over the valuables (gold, silver, precious stones, other household and artistic items) and furniture²⁹ kept in the Mother See. It should be noted that according to the decision of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party of Bolsheviks on March 20, 1922, it was ordered to immediately carry out inventory and confiscation of valuables, especially targeting the clergy. On April 8, 1922, the Central Committee of the Armenian Communist Party of Bolsheviks, discussing this request, noted that it cannot be applied in Armenia due to the small number of such items³⁰. Regarding

2020, pp. 40–41.

²⁸ In the same place, pp. 146–147.

²⁹ Documents on the history of the Armenian Church, Book B, number 74, p. 146.

³⁰ V. Ghazakhetsyan, *Armenia in 1920–1940*, Yerevan, 2006, pp. 336–337. National Archives

the weapons kept in the Mother See, we can mention that back in 1914 Etchmiadzin was given a limited amount of weapons by order of Viceroy of the Caucasus Vorontsov-Dashkov to protect Armenian churches from Turkish terrorists. However, it was certain that most of the weapons were distributed to border churches and monasteries, and only 60 Mannlicher rifles were sent to St. Etchmiadzin³¹, which was not enough to organize any rebellion or disobedience. Thus, we can state that the Mother See, as such, did not have enough treasures and weapons, therefore we consider it unjustified to kill the Catholicos for weapons and treasures.

7. Let us also try to clarify the circumstances of the hasty burial of the deceased Catholicos. According to the traditional order, the funeral of the deceased Catholicos takes place 10 days after his death, with the participation of diocesan leaders³². However, in the case of Catholicos Khoren I, the testimonies are unequivocal: he was buried immediately after his death, without proper ceremony, accompanied by a limited number of people. This uncertainty in historiography immediately causes many people to think that the authorities aimed to hide the real facts related to the murder of the Catholicos. However, we think that in this way the Soviet authorities tried to keep the news of the sudden death of the Catholicos away from public discussions and wrong interpretations, meanwhile not allowing gatherings³³ of religious people at the Mother See which, according to the census data in 1937, were still a large number³⁴. Let us not forget the fact that the participation of the diocesan leaders in the funeral ceremony of the Catholicos was also associated with big problems: In Soviet Armenia, almost all the diocesan leaders were arrested and shot, and the arrival of Diaspora diocesan leaders was almost impossible; for example, during the election of Catholicos Khoren I in 1932, many of them were not able to come to Soviet Armenia for political reasons, and especially in this case, in the days of rampant Stalinist violence, their presence at the funeral ceremony of the Catholicos was excluded.

of Armenia, fund 113, contents 5, case 3, paper 24:

³¹ Documents on the history of the Armenian Church, Book B, number 20, p. 37.

³² **Deacon Varuzhan Terteryan**, From the bright pages of the past, The life and activities of the Catholicos of All Armenians Muradbekian, **Etchmiadzin**, D-E, St. Etchmiadzin, 1994, p. 76.

³³ As, for example, the authorities behaved after the death of Gevorg E. Surenyants, ordering to activate the mass works in the villages in order to divert the attention of the villagers from the funeral procession and to prevent gatherings. See А. Вирабян, Документы о выборах католикоса армянской церкви (1930–1932 гг.) / **News on Social Sciences**, number 1, Yerevan, 1996, p. 137.

³⁴ **В. Жиромская**, Религиозность народа в 1937 году (По материалам Всесоюзной переписи населения), «Исторический вестник», №5, 2000, стр. 107–108.

On April 8, 1938, the archbishop Gevorg Chorekchyan³⁵ returned to Etchmiadzin from Tiflis. Archbishop Arsen Ghltchyan immediately handed over to him the kondak No. 620, dated April 18, 1936³⁶, found in the room of the late Catholicos on April 6. According to the Kondak, Archbishop Gevorg Chorekchyan was appointed deputy Catholicos of All Armenians³⁷. Reverend Gevorg, actually taking over the leadership of the Armenian Apostolic Church, telegraphed the death of the Armenian Catholicos to Patriarch Torgom of Jerusalem on April 10, 1938: “It is with sadness that I announce that Catholicos Khoren died of a heart attack. Please manage to report properly to all places”³⁸.

Following the message of Archbishop Gevorg received in the early morning of April 11, the Patriarch of Jerusalem immediately communicated the death sentence of the Catholicos to all the dioceses of the Diaspora: “It is with immense sorrow that we announce the death of the Catholicos of All Armenians from a heart attack, according to April 10 telegram of Deputy Archbishop George”³⁹. Based on this report, as well as the announcement⁴⁰ published in the “Zion” magazine, the Diaspora Armenian press by mistake mentions April 10 or 11⁴¹ as the day of the Catholicos’ death.

The news of the untimely death of Catholicos of All Armenians Khoren I caused great sorrow and pain to all Armenians⁴². Patriarch of Jerusalem Archbishop Torgom wrote in the article entitled “The Great Mourning” that the death of the Catholicos was a sudden, merciless and terrible blow that fell on “the head of the sacred Armenian church and the heart of the nation”⁴³.

In 1941 (also mentioned in 1943⁴⁴), by order of Archbishop Gevorg Chorekchyan, the remains of Catholicos Khoren I were moved from the cemetery of Gayane

³⁵ G. Avagyan, mentioned work, p. 139.

³⁶ Documents on the history of the Armenian Church, Book A, number 189, pp. 327–328.

³⁷ Documents on the history of the Armenian Church, Book B, number 405, pp. 562–563: Also see F. Corley, *The Armenian Church Under the Soviet Regime, Part 1: The Leadership of Kevork, Religion, State & Society*, Vol. 24, No. 1, 1996,

³⁸ «Zion», 1938, number 5, May, p. 138.

³⁹ In the same place.

⁴⁰ In the same place, p. 130.

⁴¹ “Go ahead”, 1938, number 3761, April 13, p. 1.

⁴² “A Volume Novels”, 1938, number 4–5, April-May, pp. 181–184, “Hask /Crop/”, 1938, May, p. 66, “Armenian Speaker”, 1938, number 1, October, pp. 5–6, «The Republic of Armenia», 1996, number 44, March 7, p. 2.

⁴³ “Zion”, 1938, number 5, April-May, pp. 131–134.

⁴⁴ P. Gevorgyan, the mentioned work, p. 36.

monastery and buried on the north side of the central entrance of the church. During the pontificate of Catholicos Vazgen A. Palchyan, a corresponding tombstone⁴⁵ was also placed on the grave of the late patriarch. After the declaration of independence of the Republic of Armenia on September 7, 1996, at 11.00 in the morning, after the liturgical ceremony, in a special procession and under the chairmanship of Catholicos Garegin I, the remains of Catholicos Khoren I were transferred from St. Gayane Monastery to the Mother Cathedral, taking its rightful place next to the late All Armenian Catholicoses⁴⁶.

CONCLUSION

Regarding the death of All-Armenian Catholicos Khoren I Muradbekian, as a result of studying and analyzing the hypotheses in historiography, as well as comparing direct and indirect facts, we came to the conclusion that the goal of the representatives of the state bodies who regularly visited the Catholicos was to transfer the money kept in the Diaspora to Soviet Armenia through the Catholicos at any cost, even by threatening the Catholicos or terrorizing people close to him. The elite of the Soviet government did not set a goal to kill the Catholicos of All Armenians and dissolve the Mother See. It was not ruled out that in the case of the neutralization of the Catholicos by the authorities and the closing of the Mother See, the Armenian Apostolic Church would not disappear, but simply the spiritual center would be transferred abroad, becoming a base to fight against the government of Soviet Armenia.

ՀԻՄՆԱԲԱՌԵՐ

Ամենայն Հայոց Կաթողիկոս Խորեն Ա. Մուրադբեկեան, գանձեր, զէնքեր, վարկած, Սփիւռք, հիմնադրամ, սովետական իշխանութիւն, սպանութեան վարկած, Հայ Առաքելական Սուրբ Եկեղեցի:

⁴⁵ **Deacon Varuzhan Terteryan**, The life and activities of the Catholicos of All Armenians Muradbekian, p. 77.

⁴⁶ The remains of the Catholicos Khoren I were laid to rest in the yard of the Mother Cathedral, “Echmiadzin”, September, 1996, pp. 25–26.

РЕЗЮМЕ

Годы патриаршества Католикоса Всех Армян Хорена I Мурадбекяна (1932–1938) совпали с неимоверно сложным периодом в истории армянского народа, когда сталинское насилие и антицерковная политика достигли своего апогея.

В этих обстоятельствах глава Армянской Апостольской Церкви Католикос Хорен I, учитывая историческую роль Армянской Апостольской Церкви в деле сохранения нации, а также принимая во внимание, что на родине церковь мало-помалу теряет свой авторитет и вес в общественной жизни, выдвинул на первый план задачу урегулирования взаимоотношений между диаспорой – Церковью – государством, но преимущественно между Церковью и диаспорой, то есть Первопрестольным Святым Эчмиадзином и Патриаршими престолами, а также проблему повышения авторитета Армянской Апостольской Церкви в диаспоре.

Следовательно, было не случайным восстановление поста патриаршего посланника в диаспоре в 1934 году, а также вовлечение Патриарших престолов – Иерусалимского, Константинопольского патриархатов и Киликийского католикосата в программе разработки Конституции Армянской Апостольской Церкви, торжественного празднования в диаспоре 1500-летнего юбилея перевода Библии на армянский язык и формирования армянской литературы.

В результате Католикосу Хорену I Мурадбекяну удалось не только установить теплые братские отношения между Первопрестолом и Патриаршими престолами, но и прочно связать армянство всего мира и два престола вместе с Киликийским католикосатом с Родиной и Святым Эчмиадзином.

Представляемая статья имеет не только научное, но и практическое значение.

Одним из актуальных вопросов, стоящих перед Армянской Апостольской Церковью на данном этапе, является продолжение урегулирования взаимоотношений между армянской диаспорой-Церковью-государством, Первопрестольным Святым Эчмиадзином и Патриаршими престолами. Следовательно, изучение прошлого опыта может создать возможность не только для разработки соответствующих ориентиров, направленных на урегулирование вышеуказанных проблем, но и для формирования возможностей противостояния существующим геополитическим, общественным и религиозным вызовам.

REFERENCE 1.

ON THE REGISTRATION OF THE DEATH ACT FROM THE RA CIVIL STATUS ACTS REGISTRATION AGENCY

ՁԱ N 8

Տեղեկանք

Քաղ. _____ ԽՈՐԷՆ ԱՆՔՍԱՆԴՐ ՄՈՒՐԱԴԻԲԷԱՆ

(անուն, հայրանուն, ազգանուն)

Ծնվ. _____ 1876թ. _____, Վերաբերյալ _____ ՄԱՀ

(անրի տնտանի անվանումը)

ակտի գրանցում/ ՔՎԱԳ _____ ՎԱՐԱՐԱՅԱՑ տարածքային բաժնի

արխիվում չի հայտնաբերվել:

Ստուգված է _____ 1937թ. _____ ից _____ 1939թ. _____ -ը

ՔՎԱԳ _____ ՔՎԱԳ ԳՈՐԾԱԿԱՆՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ

տարածքային բաժնի պետ _____ ՄԱՐԻՆԵ ՅԱՏԱԽԱՆՅԱՆ

(անուն, հայրանուն)

(ստորագրություն)

Ստան վստաստողի վավերականությունը կարող է ստուգվել www.e-registry.am կայքում միացնալով **СЕР-8856-8308-0500** հսկվել համարը:





20 ԴԵԿՏԵՄԲԵՐԻ 2021թ.

REFERENCE 2

THE REGISTRATION OF THE DEATH ACT FROM THE RA CIVIL STATUS ACTS REGISTRATION AGENCY

ՁԱ N 8

Տեղեկանք

Քաղ. _____ ԱՆՔՍԱՆԴՐ ՄՈՒՐԱԴԻԲԷԱՆ

(անուն, հայրանուն, ազգանուն)

Ծնվ. _____, Վերաբերյալ _____ ՄԱՀ

(անրի տնտանի անվանումը)

ակտի գրանցում/ ՔՎԱԳ _____ ՎԱՐԱՐԱՅԱՑ տարածքային բաժնի

արխիվում չի հայտնաբերվել:

Ստուգված է _____ 1 ՀՈՐԷԱՐԻ 1938թ. _____ ից _____ 31 ԴԵԿՏԵՄԲԵՐԻ 1939թ. _____ -ը

ՔՎԱԳ _____ ՔՎԱԳ ԳՈՐԾԱԿԱՆՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ

տարածքային բաժնի պետ _____ ՄԱՐԻՆԵ ՅԱՏԱԽԱՆՅԱՆ

(անուն, հայրանուն)

(ստորագրություն)

Ստան վստաստողի վավերականությունը կարող է ստուգվել www.e-registry.am կայքում միացնալով **СЕР-8856-8308-0500** հսկվել համարը:





22 ՄԱՐՏԻ 2023թ.