


**ASTGHİK GHAZARYAN\***

*Institute of History of the NAS RA*

*Applicant of historical sciences*

astx-1989@mail.ru

0009-0005-6340-3741 

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## **ARMENIAN EVANGELICAL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN SYRIA AND LEBANON (1920S–1940S)**

### ***Abstract***

The formation and development of the educational systems of Armenian communities in the Middle East were shaped not only by pedagogical needs but also by the imperative to preserve and strengthen national, religious, and cultural identity. The educational life of these communities was largely guided by church structures. Preschools functioned under the auspices of various churches, including the Apostolic, Catholic, and Evangelical denominations. Armenian Evangelical educational institutions in the Middle East, established particularly in the aftermath of the Armenian Genocide, were distinguished by their religious and national orientations. In these schools, alongside instruction in the Holy Scripture, considerable attention was devoted to teaching the Armenian language, literature, and history; conducting prayers in the native language; and providing foreign-language education, which enabled students to pursue higher studies. Many Evangelical schools operated under missionary auspices, through which support was provided for improving buildings and material-technical conditions. Special emphasis was also placed on the education of girls, ensuring their equal participation in the learning process.

**Keywords:** *Armenian Evangelical Association, church, Middle East, American missionaries, education, colleges, schools.*

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### ***Introduction***

From the second half of the nineteenth century onward, the Christian population of the Ottoman Empire – particularly Armenians – began to experience growing ethnic and religious discrimination within the framework of the “reforms” implemented by the state. These persecutions gradually evolved into an institutionalized state policy, reaching their peak in the early twentieth century.

Between 1915 and 1923, Western Armenians were subjected to large-scale violence, mass deportations, and systematic extermination, becoming victims of the genocidal policy carried out by the Turkish authorities. As a result, the Armenian people confronted both physical annihilation and the threat of losing their national identity, as well as their historical and cultural heritage.

In the humanitarian crisis that followed the Armenian Genocide, one of the most urgent priorities became ensuring the essential needs and care of orphaned children. Church institutions and international humanitarian organizations played a decisive role in addressing this challenge.

As Armenian communities gradually took shape in various countries, they attached significant importance to school-building and the establishment of educational systems, alongside extensive orphan-relief efforts. These initiatives engaged all branches of the Armenian nation, including the Apostolic, Catholic, and Evangelical communities.

This article focuses on the educational activities of the Armenian Evangelical community in Syria and Lebanon – from the founding of the Armenian Missionary Association of America to the operation of existing institutions – and examines their impact on local Armenian communities and the broader educational environment of the region.

It should be noted that the Evangelical community had already grown before the Genocide. According to the missionary Chambers, “In 1914, there were 55,000 Evangelical Armenians and 163 churches.”<sup>1</sup> However, after the war, the number of surviving Armenian Evangelicals decreased to about 25,000–30,000,<sup>2</sup> according to Rev. Yeghishe Kasouni. At least half of these survivors likely settled in Syria and Lebanon, as these territories became the first and largest centers of refuge for Armenian survivors in the Middle East.

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<sup>1</sup> **Sis Matean** 1949, 353; **Atrashes Ter Khachatoulean** 1972, 196.

<sup>2</sup> **Qasouni** 1947, 411.

Over the years, well-organized Armenian communities were established in these areas.

This development was the result of the active efforts of church institutions and various organizations, particularly those engaged in educational, spiritual, and cultural missions. As historian and publicist L. Chormissian notes, "The establishment of Catholic as well as Protestant schools was not merely for the education of children, but primarily to ensure the future of the community."<sup>3</sup>

The Armenian Missionary Association of America (hereafter, the Association) serves as a vivid testament to this dynamic. As one of the organizations that played an active role in supporting Armenian refugees, the Association was founded on June 7, 1918, during the annual conference of the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches of America and was established in the United States.<sup>4</sup>

Its mission was rooted not only in the American vision of Christian missionary work but also in the conviction that education and spiritual formation could serve as essential instruments for the reconstruction of national identity, especially for a people who had endured such a profound catastrophe. Recognizing the importance of this task, the Association sponsored Armenian Evangelical churches and educational institutions in Syria and Lebanon.

The educational programs developed under its auspices were distinguished by their religious and national orientation. They included instruction in the Armenian language and literature, Armenian history, and foreign languages such as English, French, and Arabic. These initiatives aimed to prepare generations capable of active participation in local and international scientific and cultural spheres. This comprehensive educational approach simultaneously facilitated the integration of Armenian communities into diverse Middle Eastern societies while supporting their preservation and continuity as distinct cultural and national entities.

The Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East was established in Beirut by 1924.<sup>5</sup> Evangelical churches began to emerge in various cities across Syria, including Damascus, Aleppo, and Kessab, as well as in Leba-

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<sup>3</sup> Chormissian 1972, 497.

<sup>4</sup> Ver. Hovh. Aharonean 1988, 212.

<sup>5</sup> See Hushardzan Hay Avetaranakac ev Avetaranakan ekexecvoy 1952, 360; Hay Avetaranakan ekeghecin, 1989, 49.

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non, in cities such as Beirut and Anjar. According to teacher and publicist , seventy-three clergymen were serving in these churches at that time. Almost all of them operated educational institutions, including kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, theological seminaries, and girls' schools. Khrolobian conducted a detailed study of student enrollment in these Evangelical institutions in Syria and Lebanon. According to his data, in 1926 the total number of Evangelical students was 2,798, including 1,527 boys and 1,271 girls. By the 1938 academic year, this number had decreased to 2,703, including 1,427 boys and 1,276 girls.<sup>6</sup> Notably, the student population remained stable in subsequent years.

According to an article published in the newspaper Zartonk, there were 20 schools operating in Syria and Lebanon by the 1940s. These schools were staffed by 143 teachers and attended by 2,268 coeducational students. Of these students, 1,034 were recorded as Protestant, 1,163 as Apostolic, and 71 as non-Armenian.<sup>7</sup>

The cited facts demonstrate that the Armenian Evangelical community successfully established itself in these regions after the Armenian Genocide and continued its educational mission in a new environment. This is evident from the consistent number of students enrolled in Evangelical educational institutions.

The Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East and its affiliated spiritual and educational institutions had a direct impact on the spiritual revival, as well as the educational and cultural development of the Armenian community in the region.<sup>8</sup> Within the framework of Christian and spiritual upbringing, a comprehensive educational program was implemented from kindergarten through secondary school, placing fundamental importance on the harmonious integration of Bible study into the learning process. The Scriptures were regarded both as a means of transmitting faith and as a cornerstone of moral education.

At the same time, evangelical institutions sought to raise the overall quality of education. They did so by creating appropriate learning conditions, providing

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<sup>6</sup> Khlobean 1950, 104.

<sup>7</sup> "Zartonk" 1948, № 169(3302), 2.

<sup>8</sup> Because the educational and enlightening activities of evangelical churches are parallel to their preaching activities, we cannot separate the Association's activities from those of evangelical churches.

scholarships, recruiting qualified teachers, and encouraging students to strive for excellence. The goal was for students to obtain “the highest grade or grade point average,”<sup>9</sup> which would offer them the opportunity to continue their studies at higher educational institutions.

### ***Evangelical Educational Institutions in Beirut and Its Surrounding Areas***

In pursuit of these objectives, the network of educational institutions continued to expand across various communities. The following section examines the history and key characteristics of several Evangelical schools established in two pivotal regions of the Middle East.

A number of educational institutions were founded in Lebanon during the 1920s and 1930s, particularly in Beirut and its surrounding districts. Although some have undergone name changes over time, they continue to operate and serve the Lebanese-Armenian community to this day. Notable examples include the Armenian Evangelical Central High School, the Armenian Evangelical College (also known as the Armenian Evangelical Co-Educational High School), the Armenian Evangelical Secondary School, among others.<sup>10</sup> These institutions have played a particularly significant role in Lebanon’s educational system and the Armenian community’s intellectual and cultural life.

Among the Armenian Evangelical educational institutions in Beirut and the surrounding area, the Armenian Evangelical Central High School played a central role. Founded in 1922 by Rev. Yenovk Hadidian, the school originally offered a four-year course of study and merged with another evangelical institution in 1924, taking the name Armenian Evangelical Co-Educational School. In 1932, the school relocated to a new building in the Ashrafieh district constructed by missionary H. Riggs in memory of his wife, E. Barnum-Riggs.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Ver. Hovh. Aharonean 1988, 91.

<sup>10</sup> Antinean 2011, 62.

<sup>11</sup> In 1923, missionary H. Riggs moved to Beirut, Lebanon, where he continued his work among Armenian refugees in Lebanon and Syria. He also taught at the Middle East Theological School. Later, he served as Executive Secretary of the Middle East Christian Council. Riggs was married three times: first to Annie Tracy in 1904 (who died in 1905), second to Emma Barnam in 1907 (who died in 1917), and third to Annie Denison in 1920, <http://www.uacla.com/henry-h-riggs.html>.

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During the 1940s, the Ashrafieh school was still in the process of development and, as Dr. Berberian noted, it lacked one academic level to be considered a fully accredited high school.<sup>12</sup> In 1945, the institution adopted the name Armenian Evangelical Central High School. It continues to fulfill its vital mission of preserving Armenian national identity and transmitting the Armenian language, literature, and cultural heritage to its students.

The Armenian Evangelical College was one of the Evangelical community's key educational and spiritual institutions. Founded in 1923 as the Armenian Boys' Evangelical High School, the school later changed its name. It had three divisions for students aged under 6, 6–12, and 12–18. In 1933, it merged with the American School for Armenian Girls and became the Armenian Evangelical Co-Educational High School. Classes were held in a building provided by the First Armenian Evangelical Church of Beirut, which supervised the institution. The school's primary goal was "to fully support the intellectual, physical, moral, and spiritual development of its students."<sup>13</sup> The school's curriculum corresponded to the Lebanese Baccalaureate educational program. Armenian cultural education was vividly reflected in the teaching of the Holy Scriptures, the Armenian language and literature, and national history. At the same time, instruction was often conducted in English, enabling graduates to pursue higher education in local foreign-language institutions or universities abroad. The school had an attached library with a large collection of English-language books and about 3,050 volumes of Armenian literature. The library regularly received new journals and newspapers, further supporting the students' academic and cultural development. The Armenian Boys' Evangelical High School was distinguished by its high academic standards and its ability to prepare students for admission to the American University of Beirut (AUB), so it is no coincidence that it was among the few institutions to receive this recognition. To advance this goal, plans were made to add a fifth year to the existing four-year program. This extension would enable graduates to pursue further studies at other institutions without the need to take entrance examinations.<sup>14</sup> During that period, a significant number of the school's students passed their exams and were

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<sup>12</sup> Berberian 1946, 68.

<sup>13</sup> See Hay Avetaranakan Qolej 1968.

<sup>14</sup> Lratu 1940, № 3, 7.

admitted to AUB as freshmen or sub-freshmen.<sup>15</sup> During the 1937–1938 academic year, the teaching of the Armenian language improved thanks to the efforts of the school's principal, Rev. Yeghishe Kasouni.<sup>16</sup>

Another institution that developed during that time was the Armenian Evangelical Secondary School, which was founded in 1934 in the Nor Marash district of Bourj Hammoud. Over the years, the number of classes at this school steadily increased. Later, it was renamed the Armenian Evangelical Shamlian-Tatigian Secondary School<sup>17</sup> and continues to operate under that name today. It should be noted that educational work was not always smooth, easy, or effective. Schools occasionally encountered challenges, primarily due to teacher shortages, which occasionally resulted in the closure of certain institutions. To address this issue, two-year training programs for prospective teachers were organized.<sup>18</sup> During this period, many trainees served the church and conducted literacy classes for women who wished to become literate. The work was further complicated by poor building conditions and a lack of necessary equipment, including teaching aids, textbooks, maps, and other materials. It should be noted, that alongside general subjects, they also taught Latin-script Turkish and Arabic.<sup>19</sup>

Nevertheless, the situation gradually began to improve as a result of educational reforms, despite these difficulties. Over time, schools started employing teachers with Bachelor's and Master's degrees in education.<sup>20</sup> In 1935, the "Teachers' Union"<sup>21</sup> was established in Beirut to unite educators, organize congresses and lectures to improve educational and spiritual standards, and foster unity within the Evangelical community through prayer. In the 1930s, the Armenian General Benevolent Union supported both Armenian Apostolic and Evangelical educational and church centers, creating a network of nationally subsidized schools, as L. Chormisian notes.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Janaser 1938, 4.

<sup>16</sup> Janaser 1938, 99.

<sup>17</sup> Ver. Hovh. Aharonean 92. 178.

<sup>18</sup> See Avetagir 1945, 16.

<sup>19</sup> See Avetagir 1945, 16.

<sup>20</sup> See Avetagir 1945, 17.

<sup>21</sup> Yushardzan 389.

<sup>22</sup> Cholaqean 2021, 125.

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At the same time, it is a fact that educational processes in Armenian-populated areas were often organized with the support of foreign missionaries, especially in the 1920s. Beyond providing material assistance to orphanages, these missionaries contributed to kindergartens and other educational institutions. For instance, missionary Elizabeth Stevens Webb<sup>23</sup> began spiritual and educational work in Beirut's neighborhood as early as 1922. The school primarily served girls from middle and low-income families, numbering around 200 according to Webb's records.<sup>24</sup>

Thus, these educational institutions deserve great recognition, as they were the primary channels for education and upbringing within the Armenian Evangelical community. Over time, these institutions reorganized, modernized, and adapted to evolving educational needs. To this day, they continue to successfully educate and nurture new generations in the spirit of national identity, faithfully carrying out their socially and culturally significant mission.

#### ***Educational Institutions in Aleppo***

As one of the most important centers of the Armenian diaspora, Syria stood out for its well-organized communal structure. This structure was manifested through the coexistence and mutual reinforcement of cultural, religious, and educational institutions. Thousands of Armenians who escaped the Ottoman Empire settled in various Syrian cities, particularly Aleppo, Damascus, Kesab, and Latakia, forming vibrant, self-organized communities.

There were three Armenian religious communities in Syria – Apostolic, Catholic, and Evangelical – each of which maintained its own educational system. Political parties and various associations supported the development of educational models. According to A. Fishenkchyan, "Armenian schools in Syria were generally community-based, with their administration belonging to various parties and organizations."<sup>25</sup> These schools included Armenian national schools

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<sup>23</sup> Missionary Elizabeth Webb and her sister, Mary Uber, had been active in Adana since the 1890s, caring for girls. She left for Switzerland shortly thereafter, where she began her evangelistic work with the American Near East Relief Organization, "Memorial records for Elizabeth S. Webb", Item #17482, <http://www.dlir.org/archive/items/show/17482> (accessed May 17, 2022).

<sup>24</sup> Item #17482, <http://www.dlir.org/archive/items/show/17482> (accessed May 17, 2022).

<sup>25</sup> Fishenkchyan 2003, 157.



under the jurisdiction of the Apostolic community, as well as schools of the Armenian Catholic and Armenian Evangelical communities.”

Overall, these schools educated 6,523 children in 1928–1929.<sup>26</sup> In addition to providing primary and secondary education in the Armenian language, these schools served as primary platforms for preserving and transmitting national identity.

Kindergartens were opened at the Evangelical Emmanuel and Bethel churches in 1923, enrolling 735 children.<sup>27</sup> The Bethel Armenian Evangelical Secondary School was particularly important due to its location and high educational standards. The school was located in a district surrounded by a neighborhood called “Jeprike.”<sup>28</sup> During the 1927–1928 academic year, the coeducational student body numbered 258, increasing to 374<sup>29</sup> by 1933–1934. Initially, classes were held in the church building. There were no benches for students, and the classrooms were separated by partitions to prevent students from seeing each other. Consequently, the school struggled to provide adequate facilities and necessary educational resources. This situation persisted until the mid-1930s. In 1937, a new school building with spacious classrooms was constructed. Between 1923 and 1946, the school graduated 7,779 students, including 4,396 boys and 3,383 girls.<sup>30</sup> Notably, scientific subjects were taught in English, while Armenian studies followed the ten-year curriculum and used textbooks from Armenian schools.<sup>31</sup>

In 1920, the Armenian Evangelical Boys Higher College<sup>32</sup> opened in Aleppo as a reproduction of the Central College of Ayntap. It later became known as “Aleppo College”<sup>33</sup> and played a significant role in educating and raising Armenian generations. By 1929, 400 boys and 250 girls<sup>34</sup> were enrolled. 1929 was a turning point for the college when its director, Petros Kartsayr, passed

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<sup>26</sup> **Fishenkchyan; Sourio Alpom** 1929, 3.

<sup>27</sup> **Avetagir** 1945, 77.

<sup>28</sup> See **Betel** 2001, 214; **Shnorqean** 1973, 5; **Qortoshyan** 2013, 54.

<sup>29</sup> **Cholagean** 2021, 174; see **Dzamkharyan** 2019, 102.

<sup>30</sup> See **Betel** 2001, 277.

<sup>31</sup> See **Betel** 2001, 278.

<sup>32</sup> **Klobean** 1950, 368. Tigran J. Khrlobyan was a teacher at this school.

<sup>33</sup> **Klobean** 1950, 172; **Ver. Hovh. Aharonean** 96.

<sup>34</sup> **Miller** 1967, 42

away, necessitating the appointment of a successor.<sup>35</sup> Missionaries from the American Relief Society subsequently assumed responsibility for the college's operations. Consequently, in the 1930s, the college gradually became a center for the study of the English language and literature. Therefore, the number of Armenian and local Christian students began to decrease. The American missionaries also made changes to the college's charter, stipulating that education should be carried out according to international standards. Of the 14 members of the Board of Directors, only six were to be Armenian, and the election of the president, previously carried out by the Board of Directors, was to be carried out by the missionaries or the American trusteeship. However, as a result of a number of reforms, the teaching of the Armenian language, literature, and history became important at the college.<sup>36</sup> In addition to training teachers, doctors, and other specialists, the college trained future pastors who served in both Armenian and local churches.<sup>37</sup>

In 1921, work resumed at Armenian Evangelical School – another educational institution in the Gastel Jura district. Originally founded in 1855, the school was later closed. Sargis Palapanyan (Palapanyan Khoja), Tigran Khrlobean, and Nuri Ishkhanyan, who had moved from Aintab, took over the administration and trusteeship of the school.<sup>38</sup> Over time, the school faced significant difficulties, as reflected by the changing number of students: while there were 400 students in the 1925–26 academic year, the following year the number decreased to 280.<sup>39</sup> This decline was initially driven by migration and later exacerbated by deteriorating building conditions. In 1931, the board of trustees decided to relocate the school to one of the buildings of the "Aleppo College."<sup>40</sup>

Among the evangelical educational institutions in Aleppo, the Armenian Evangelical United School, founded in 1927, was also of considerable significance. This institution placed significant emphasis on religious education, dedicating three hours per week to it, and on Armenian language instruction,

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<sup>35</sup> See **Luashavigh** 496; see **Tutikyan** 1996, 215. "**Hayastani Kochnak**" № 8, 1925, 42; **Dzamkharyan** 2019, 101.

<sup>36</sup> **Ver. Hovh. Aharonean** 177.

<sup>37</sup> **Miller** 1967, 42; Aleppo College is still operating today.

<sup>38</sup> **Qeshishean** 2015, 88.

<sup>39</sup> **Qeshishean** 2015, 92.

<sup>40</sup> **Qeshishean** 2015, 94.

which received four hours per week. Additionally, children participated in morning prayers. One day each week was devoted to spiritual and national songs, as well as to Armenian history. The school's educational activities were organized by representatives of the Evangelical Church and overseen by the community's educational commission.

Several Protestant missionaries operating in Aleppo had been involved in orphan care since the early 1920s and implemented educational programs. At the initiative of missionary J. Marty, for example, a "wooden building"<sup>41</sup> was constructed in Aleppo for "refugees to address their spiritual and educational needs."<sup>42</sup> The building hosted courses for approximately 200 students and operated a Sunday worship group. Due to an increase in student enrollment, the girls eventually joined their corresponding classes at the Girls' High School.

Girls' education was of great importance to both the missionaries and the Evangelical community; therefore, nearly all educational institutions had separate classes for girls. Missionary Miss Forman made a particularly significant contribution to girls' education. Through her efforts, the American Girls' High School<sup>43</sup> opened in Aleppo in 1922 following the Antakya Girls' School.<sup>44</sup> It operated under the jurisdiction of the Evangelical Church.

This school placed primary emphasis on teaching the Armenian language, Armenian history, and music. Interestingly, the missionaries often learned Armenian and taught in Armenian themselves.<sup>45</sup> This school is a striking example of how, after learning Armenian, missionaries conducted all school activities in Armenian. By the 1927–28 academic year, the school had 125 enrolled students, and it began cooperating with Aleppo College in 1933.

Now, let's turn our attention to educational institutions operating in other regions of Syria, outside Aleppo. In the Armenian-populated district of Kesab, for example, only five of the ten large and small villages had schools, which were also attended by children from neighboring villages. By 1910, the number of schools had increased to 20, including 11 Evangelical, 5 Armenian national, and

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<sup>41</sup> Luashavigh 475.

<sup>42</sup> Qeshishean 2015, 68.

<sup>43</sup> Janaser № 3, 1938, 57.

<sup>44</sup> Qeshishean 2015, 95; It was considered a school because it had a 2-year additional curriculum.

<sup>45</sup> Qeshishean 2015, 95.

4 Catholic schools.<sup>46</sup> The Kesab school enjoyed particular prestige because it was staffed by energetic teacher-preachers,<sup>47</sup> especially those who had come from Ayntap.

The Kesab Evangelical Coeducational School was founded as early as 1848–1852 through the efforts of missionary Miss Chambers.<sup>48</sup> The number of students gradually increased, particularly after 1924 when the school received official recognition.<sup>49</sup> However, the Kesab school faced challenges regarding its building conditions. Funds were raised through donations, amounting to approximately \$1,000 annually and around \$3,000 for the dormitory building.<sup>50</sup>

According to Khrlöbean, during the 1932–1933 academic year, Kesab's coeducational school had 208 students and six teachers, all of whom were Aleppo College graduates.<sup>51</sup>

Notably, the educational institutions of the Armenian Apostolic, Evangelical, and Catholic communities had nearly identical structures. Their differences were essentially in their curricula. Catholic schools adopted the French system, while Evangelical schools primarily followed the English educational program.<sup>52</sup> Importantly, unlike the state educational system, these schools aimed to impart knowledge and transmit spiritual and cultural values.<sup>53</sup> Moreover, these schools were rooted in the education of generations past, focusing on preserving national identity and religious practices.

Thus, the Armenian Evangelical Church, particularly the Evangelical Union, performed essential and patriotic work for the Armenian population that had survived the genocide by addressing vital needs as well as educational, cultural, and national preservation efforts. Clearly, this work did not proceed smoothly.

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<sup>46</sup> **Qesap** 2015, 153.

<sup>47</sup> **Qesap** 2015, 148.

<sup>48</sup> We first encounter missionary Robert Chambers in 1904. He was invited to a theatrical performance at the American High School, where he gave a speech (**Byurakan** 1904, 152). We speak of the missionary with great respect, considering him “More patriotic than any other Armenian.” **Mesean** 1918, 15.

<sup>49</sup> **Yushamatean Hayastanyac Avetaranakan ekexecvoy** 2021, 84. In 1959, the school was transformed into a primary school and renamed the Armenian Evangelical Martyrs School. **Pashayan, Harutyunyan** 2011, 17.

<sup>50</sup> **Avetagir** № 3, 1946, 79.

<sup>51</sup> **Khrlöbean** 1950, 363.

<sup>52</sup> **Cholaqean** 179; **Harutyunyan** 294; **Fishenkchyan** 157.

<sup>53</sup> **Cholaqean** 136.

The Evangelical Church and its newly established educational institutions faced significant challenges, including teacher shortages, poor building conditions, financial difficulties, and other obstacles. Nevertheless, much of this was overcome through community solidarity, the support of Armenian benefactors and missionaries, and dedicated personal effort. Over time, these educational institutions began to provide an advanced education, enabling students to successfully pursue higher education.

### ***Conclusions***

Historically, the establishment of educational institutions across various regions of the Middle East was driven not only by educational needs but also by the imperative to restore and strengthen national, religious, and cultural identity. The formation and development of educational systems within Armenian communities in the Middle East were closely tied to church structures and organizations. Most schools operated in conjunction with churches, which meant that particular emphasis was placed on religious and national education. Nearly all church-affiliated communities, including Evangelical, Apostolic, and Catholic, maintained kindergartens, schools, or Sunday schools.

In these regions, Armenian Evangelical educational institutions began to open primarily after the genocide, particularly from the 1920s onward. Remarkably, many of these schools continue to operate today, fulfilling vital functions in preserving Armenian identity and transmitting linguistic and cultural values. This is exemplified by the secondary schools, higher institutions, and colleges functioning in Beirut and its surrounding areas, as well as in Aleppo and its vicinity.

It should be noted that Evangelical institutions often operated with the sponsorship and support of missionaries. Their assistance was crucial in improving inadequate building conditions and supplying schools with the necessary equipment. Particular importance was placed on the education of girls, who were granted nearly equal opportunities to pursue schooling. In Armenian Evangelical schools, the study of the Holy Scriptures was emphasized alongside instruction in the Armenian language and literature, and prayers were conducted in the mother tongue. Foreign languages were also taught in addition to Armenian, enabling students to continue their studies at higher educational institutions.

Thus, the Armenian Evangelical community, particularly the Armenian Evangelical Union, prioritized education alongside their religious mission. This emphasis contributed significantly to the preservation and development of communal identity.

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**ԱՍՏՂԻԿ ՂԱԶԱՐՅԱՆ**

Հայցորդ,

ՀՀ ԳԱԱ պատմության ինստիտուտ

[astx-1989@mail.ru](mailto:astx-1989@mail.ru)

0009-0005-6340-3741 

## ՀԱՅ ԱՎԵՏԱՐԱՆԱԿԱՆ ԿՐԹԱԿԱՆ

### ՀԱՍՏԱՏՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐԸ ՍԻՐԻԱՅՈՒՄ ԵՎ ԼԻԲԱՆԱՆՈՒՄ 1920–1940-ԱԿԱՆ ԹԹ.

Ամփոփում

Մերձավոր Արևելքի հայ համայնքների կրթական համակարգի ձևավորումն ու զարգացումը պատմականորեն պայմանավորված է եղել ոչ միայն կրթական պահանջներով, այլև ազգային, կրոնական ու մշակութային ինքնության պահպանման և վերականգնման հրամայականներով: Հայ համայնքների կրթական կյանքը ձևավորվել է հիմնականում եկեղեցական կառույցների ներքո. եկեղեցիների հովանու ներքո գործել են նախակրթարաններ՝ ընդգրկելով ինչպես առաքելական, այնպես էլ կաթոլիկ և ավետարանական համայնքները: Հայ ավետարանական կրթօջախները, որոնք սկսեցին ստեղծվել հատկապես ցեղասպանությունից հետո՝ 1920-ական թվականներին, առանձնանում էին ոչ միայն կրոնական, այլև ազգային կրթա-

դաստիարակչական ուղղվածությամբ: Այս դպրոցներում Սուրբ գրքի ուսուցմանը զուգահեռ մեծ ուշադրություն էր դարձվում հայոց լեզվի, գրականության և պատմության դասավանդմանը, մայրենի լեզվով աղոթքների կատարմանը, ինչպես նաև օտար լեզուների ուսուցմանը, ինչը հնարավորություն էր տալիս աշակերտներին շարունակել ուսումը բարձրագույն հաստատություններում: Ավետարանական դպրոցների գործունեությունը հաճախ իրականացվում էր միսիոներների հովանու ներքո, որոնց աջակցությամբ բարելավվում էին շենքային պայմանները: Հատուկ ուշադրություն էր դարձվում նաև աղջիկների կրթությանը՝ ապահովելով նրանց հավասար մասնակցություն կրթական գործընթացին:

**Բանալի բառեր՝** Հայ Ավետարանչական Ընկերակցություն, եկեղեցի, Մերձավոր Արևելք, Ամերիկյան միսիոներներ, կրթություն, քոլեջներ, դպրոցներ: