

THE

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New York, N. Y.

A QUARTER OF A CENTURY AGO



Tiran Abegha Nersoyan (1928)

This special issue is dedicated to His Eminence Archbishop Tiran on the twenty-fifth anniversary of his ordination.

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The training of the body is of some small service,

But Religion is of service in all directions;

It contains the promise of life

Both for the present and for the future. —Timothy 4:8

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A MESSAGE

From the Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of Calif.

I VIVIDLY REMEMBER THE DAY ARCHBISHOP TIRAN WAS ORDAINED PRIEST. I WAS IMPRESSED BY THE EVENT BEYOND POSSIBILITY OF EVER FORGETTING. AS DEACON AND AS PRIEST TIRAN SURPAZAN WAS MOST POPULAR AND LOVED FIGURE IN SEMINARY AND MONASTERY. AS TEACHER AND DEVOTED MEMBER OF THE ST. JAMES BROTHERHOOD HE CAN BE EVALUATED BY SAYING THAT HIS SEMINARY DEANSHIP CREATED THE GOLDEN AGE OF THE INSTITUTION AND CAN BE COMPARED TO HIS CAREER AS PRIMATE OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA. HE WAS MOST EFFICIENT PRINCIPAL AND RESPECTED SCHOLAR. ARCHBISHOP TIRAN IS ONE OF THE MOST CAPABLE SERVANTS OF THE CHURCH. ANY COMMUNITY WILL FEEL PROUD TO HAVE HIM AS LEADER. HE JUSTLY DESERVES THE TRIBUTE THE ARMENIAN GUARDIAN AND ACYOA ARE RENDERING HIM. MAY THIS SILVER OCCASION LEAD HIM TO A GOLDEN ONE WITH GOLDEN YEARS IN BETWEEN. MAY MANY YEARS TO COME BE AS FRUITFUL AS THOSE THAT PASSED. MAY THE YEARS AHEAD BRING FULFILLMENT OF HIS FONDEST DREAMS AND MAY GOD GRANT HIM LONG LIFE AS PRINCE OF CHURCH AND AS A TEACHER AND UPHOLDER OF ORTHODOX DOCTRINE.

SHNORK Dz. V. KALOUSTIAN.

TRIBUTE WHERE IT IS OVERDUE

Archbishop Tiran was ordained to the priesthood on July 22nd, 1928. On the twenty-fifth anniversary of the ordination of His Eminence the ARMENIAN GUARDIAN extends its heartfelt congratulations to our eminent and very dear Primate.

We also congratulate ourselves for having a Primate who has enriched our lives in so many ways.

The A.C.Y.O.A. and its official organ the ARMENIAN GUARDIAN may be pardoned for having an especially warm spot in their hearts for Archbishop Tiran, because they owe their inception and development exclusively to his vision and efforts. Thanks to his continued solicitude the A.C.Y.O.A. today numbers one thousand strong and it is seven years old. Within a relatively short time it has grown into an active, articulate force dedicated to the single purpose of upholding the best interests of the Church of our forefathers here in our United States.

Without being presumptuous we might enumerate some of the achievements of our Primate whose anniversary we so proudly commemorate today, although—Heaven knows, they are clearly visible to the unjaundiced eye and the unbiased mind.

Under his guidance the Cathedral Project is fast becoming an accomplished fact instead of a distant hope. Although incomplete as yet, this project has spurred our Diocesan communities to greater activity, and parish churches have sprouted out everywhere, even under the tropical palms of a Florida vacation resort.

Our Diocesan clergymen, many of whom were ordained by him or were his pupils in Jerusalem, have been imbued with the Archbishop's own vitality and spirit of selfless dedication, and they, in turn, are transmitting that spirit to the people in their own parishes, All of which has helped to create an unprecedented animation and a sense of general awareness throughout the Diocese.

As a result we now have a church life that belies the prophets of gloom who prematurely mourned our imminent demise.

Archbishop Tiran's far-seeing mind soon discerned the grave shortcomings which still existed in our Diocesan life when he came here nine years ago, and he has adopted firm measures to overcome them within the limits of possibilities.

Today church schools, choirs, parish activities, senior and junior church organizations have been systematized and put on a more solid foundation.

Many new parishes have been set up where there were none before.

His most recent venture, the annual Seminar, turned out to be an unqualified success—to everyone's astonishment; a little plan that promises to snowball into a nationwide educational project.

In the hands of the master of the exquisite phrase our Book of Divine Liturgy has emerged in a superb bi-lingual edition. Thanks to his painstaking work our Church has acquired added significance within non-Armenian theological circles and institutions of higher learning.

With his distinguished presence Archbishop Tiran has enhanced the prestige of our Church here and abroad. Through his sermons from the pulpits and his addresses from the platforms of universities and interfaith and world organizations, our Church finds herself represented by a clergyman of the highest competence and caliber. As such he has gained for us wider recognition and sincere admiration on four continents.

These are contributions that can be minimized only when one looks through the wrong end of a telescope.

The word ingratitude has no place in the dictionary of the A.C.Y.O.A. and we want to pay tribute where it is overdue.

And so from the bottom of our hearts we say: Thank You, your Eminence, and may your happiness be as endless as your patience!

S. A. E.

FROM A FORMER STUDENT OF THE ARCHBISHOP

I am delighted to forward my heartfelt congratulations on the occasion of the 25th year of ordination to priesthood of Archbishop Tiran. The 25 years of his Grace the Archbishop's ministry have been really most fruitful in serving God, his church and our people ever beloved. His accomplishments will always be remembered in Jerusalem where he worked as a very capable and qualified teacher and as a rare Dean of the Seminary of the Armenian Patriarchate. As Primate of the Armenian Church of North America he labored hard to make the church life prosper incomparably. I wish him many many successful years in his endeavours for the glory of God, His Church and our people.

Dirayr Vartabed Dervishian

How Can We Overcome "Internal" and "External" Obstacles?

THE ARCHBISHOP'S ADDRESS

AT THE SEVENTH ANNUAL BANQUET OF THE ACYOA

(Excerpts)

"We are a tiny element of a great nation, great not only in numbers, in material resources, in worldly strength, but also great in its spiritual potentialities. This nation can do great things for the world. It can utilize its power of leadership for the advancement of God's kingdom in the world. This cannot be done solely by giving out billions of dollars in material aid, although this is a necessity and highly commendable work of helpfulness to others. It cannot be done by mere lip service to Christian ideals; but it can be done by dedicating ourselves to the highest human ideals, which are the ideals set by God for mankind. It can be done by taking our religion seriously, and by striving constantly to have the fuller life, which Christ promised to those who follow him. . . .

"It is true that there are great numbers of Americans who profess to be religious. Some of these, however, mistake religion for magic. They think that by going through certain ceremonies and thus doing the customary thing, they have done their duty to God. By merely going to church, or by merely having certain ceremonies performed on them they think their souls will be saved. Others going to the other extreme think that by quoting the Bible and drawing all kinds of strange conclusions from those quotations they will find the way of salvation.

"We must beware of both these pitfalls. Of course, we can be saved from spiritual death only through the holy

sacraments and through the Word of God, but we must subject ourselves to the holy sacraments and to the Word of God in deep discernment, in humility, and in an honest effort to be changed by God's grace.

"It is the gradual change and renewal of our souls that will give us the fuller life, in which we can find happiness, real deep happiness both in this world and in the life to come.

"It is that kind of religion that we need. We must all strive towards that kind of religious life, both as individuals, and as groups or corporate bodies. . . .

"We have had great religious leaders and teachers. By following them, by being faithful to our religious and cultural past, and being faithful to our Church and its precepts we can live in this country the fuller Christian life.

"By holding the standard of our faith high and by following dutifully on the path of our forefathers, we can avoid the dangers and the pitfalls to which I made reference a moment ago. Because the Armenian orthodox way of Christian living will give us a sound and realistic spirituality, which is neither merely formal nor merely emotional, but which in a healthy way will make us adjust our lives to the circumstances of modern civilization and, at the same time, will lead us to eternal life and to the Kingdom of God.

"Not only this, but also, provided we have the necessary missionary zeal,

we can spread our good influence around us and thus contribute, in our modest way, to the spiritual enrichment and to the deepening of the faith of America. We can become a fragrant and beautiful flower in the gardens of large and small Christian communities, which together are striving, in their different ways, to cultivate the spiritual soil, or we might say the soul, of America.

"In very few words I have put before you a great yet reasonable prospect, a basic plan you might call it. This prospect opens a beautiful vista before us. You should ponder upon it whenever you feel like looking into the future of our Church in this country, and in a larger context, into the future of Christianity in America in general. . . .

"As Armenians we must be hard-working, thrifty, family loving, and education loving. These are important traits which our fathers and mothers have maintained. We must learn the inspiring and edifying life stories of our past, as well as recent heroic leaders, along with American stories. We must try to learn whenever possible the Armenian language, which will open for us a door which we can enter to learn of the thoughts and achievements of an ancient people. We must read Armenian literary works, if not in the original, at least in English translations. We must sing Armenian songs along with our American songs. We must play and listen to Armenian music along with American music. We must use Armenian proverbs and sayings. We must keep Armenian customs insofar as they are beautiful and meaningful. We must dance Armenian dances, and, yes, we must cook and eat Armenian dishes in our homes. All these things would be interesting and useful even if we were not of Armen-

ian descent. Many people learn about different nationalities, so we have all the reason why we should learn about our own past as well as present culture. . . .

"The internal difficulties (that we shall have to face in this Organization) are, of course, more difficult to surmount. They are lack of discipline, apathy, indifference, failure to grasp the real purpose of the Organization, worldly levity and mental laziness.

"We are living in a young and vigorous country. The freedom we enjoy has made this country great. Our prosperity is proverbial in the whole world. We must use these blessings to good purpose. And good purpose does not mean only pursuit of material comfort and enjoyment; it does not mean only the use of more gadgets for our ease and pleasure. Ultimately only One is Good, and that is God, as the Lord Jesus said. And while our ultimate purpose is to realize God's will in us and in our society, all intermediate good things must serve and be directed towards the uplifting of our souls to God.

"It is sad to note that a great many young men and women lack this kind of purposefulness in their lives. They lack intellectual passion. They seem to think of almost nothing but of making money and spending it for common pleasures. They are mostly floaters on the stream of life. They seem to think that the wonderful technical progress of our civilization is all that should engage our attention and activity.

"We in the ACYOA and members of other organizations of the same character know, or rather should know, that material comfort, while good and useful, cannot guarantee the fuller life to a person. Men cannot live by bread

alone, nor can nations live by bread alone. . . .

"And while we strive to triumph over our internal difficulties, we must see that all the young people in our Church, be they nominal or active members, are gathered together in our Organization, which is the threshold of the Church itself, which is the home of our souls. We must rally our young people, all our young people, around our Organization. This is a tall order. But eventually we have to fill that order. . . .

"Apart from the internal obstacles, our Organization will also encounter external obstacles. These will be considerable. Various factions in the Armenian community will be hitting us from right and from left. They will be making false accusations against us. They will try to confuse us with misleading ideas. They will try to disrupt our discipline and good order with malicious incitements. They will speak in the name of the Church and will pose as champions of the Church, without themselves having a grain of Christian faith and Christian sentiment in their souls.

"In the face of these difficulties, we must, with unbounded charity, weigh and analyze and evaluate the motives of these factions in their effort to undermine us, whether they be youth groups, elder people's groups, or their media of publicity. We must judge these people in the light of their real and true motives, and we must chart our course in the light of the principles of our Constitution and in the light of our Christian faith.

"It is the duty of every member of the ACYOA to dispel the misconcep-

tions in the minds of those people who have wrong ideas about us. Failing this, we must disregard them and continue on our path of constructive work and progress. By their fruits ye shall know them, said our Lord. The fruits of our Organization will gradually be seen more and more clearly. Let those fruits, which the ACYOA is bearing and will bear, be our answers to those who are against us.

"In order to bear good fruits, we must all, whether individuals or groups in the Organization, adhere faithfully to the spirit, as well as to the letter of our Constitution. This Constitution was drawn up and adopted, and subsequently amended by the members of our Organization, and we all subscribe to it of our own free will. The freedom of our Organization to direct its own activities is only limited by its own Constitution—freely subscribed to by its own members and executed by its own constituted bodies. This is so, because only in freedom can people assume responsibilities. As long as our members are motivated in their actions by the same holy purposes of their Christian faith and their love for our Mother Church, their freedom will be creative and fruitful. It is that kind of creative and constructive freedom that we want our Organization to have. Subjecting oneself to God's will is the loftiest and most satisfying way of being free. Because by working with God, we shall partake of God's own infinite freedom.

"I pray to the Lord to give you wisdom, courage, vision and the grace of the Holy Spirit, so that you may go forward and do what is pleasing in His sight and be worthy of the eternal reward which He will give to all the workers of His vineyards.

JOIN THE ACYOA!

In the Line of a Noble Succession

A GREAT MAN

"Archbishop Tiran is big enough a man to have the independence of his ideas. And it is sheer pettiness not to recognize and honor that independence. Our agreements must always make disagreements tolerable, I dare say, desirable."

By Rev. A. A. Bedikian

When, in the early part of 1951, I moved from Chicago to New York, the hub of our national life was still further north. Worcester, Mass., still maintained its proud tradition of being "the America of Armenians". It continued to be the Diocesan seat of the Armenian Church. It boasted of its first and original Armenian church edifice on Laurel Street. In the absence, or rarity, of churches in cities where there were settlements of Armenians in considerable numbers, it was in a sense, one might say, a counterpart of "Etchmiadzin" for all the Armenians in this land. Boston was the center of "intellectual enlightenment" also for Armenians. New York during those earlier years did the bidding of Boston with a humble and cooperative spirit. And we, New Yorkers, did well, I think.

But as time went on, conditions changed, and eventually New York became the "capital" of our national life just as in former years Boston had been. Progress in matters of reorganization was slow but sure in the initial period. Until, finally, things began to happen. The "why" and the "how" can be answered only in terms of personalities.

New church leaders appeared on the

Rev. A. A. Bedikian is pastor emeritus of the Armenian Evangelical Church in New York.

scene. These were men "sent by God" commissioned to save the soul of the Armenian people in this land. They were men with dreams and vision, above all with dedication to the proposition that the maintenance of the "faith of our fathers" was the only secret for the preservation of the character and integrity of the Armenian people in this land of freedom. They were not only dreamers, but planners, workers. The result? It is a marvel of achievement. Look at what has been accomplished, with a sense of perspective, and you will be able to measure its tremendous dimensions as fully as possible.

One man that I have known to claim credit for these accomplishments more than anyone else in the line of a noble succession of other leaders, is the present Primate, Archbishop Tiran. Much of the progress in all phases of our national life, certainly in the past ten years, must be estimated in terms of his ideas and activities.

I never judge a person in the light of differences of ideas; I tolerate them. It is unworthy of any self-respecting man to expect of a man concurrence of ideas as a basis of friendship and esteem. Archbishop Tiran is big enough a man to have the independence of his ideas. And it is sheer pettiness not to recognize and honor that independence. Our agreements must always make disagreements tolerable, I dare say, desirable.

This Diocese has never been more fortunate in having a clerical leader gifted as Archbishop Tiran is, in many ways, than it is now, and has been since he was called to the difficult position of Primate. I have no right to make any comparisons. Whatever merits his predecessors may have had, he stands squarely in his own right as a great man. God has endowed him with powers to an unusual degree. He is a thinker, a thorough-going theologian, a scholar, a linguist, a writer and a speaker of distinction. He would be as honored in the ranks of another church as any distinguished clergyman of our days. A good and powerful man is rare at all times, among all peoples. And not to recognize that fact is a disservice to a people like the Armenians who, more than anything else, and more at the present time than ever before, is in need of men qualified to lead as Archbishop Tiran is. A leader must lead. If a leader is sought who can be led, woe to the church! Archbishop Tiran has decisively demonstrated that he is a man "cut to lead". And to his honor, in all his humility, he would not surrender his leadership so long as he was in a position to lead. He must always be honored for his insistence upon the sacredness of his position as a leader

even though many might be disgruntled because of it. Mediocrity will not tolerate strong leadership. And such intolerance is but a witness to the power of the leader.

The writer of these lines is a humble minister of another religious community. Without compromising with the consciousness of that fact, I have always felt very close to Archbishop Tiran because there is a community of spirits between us that transcends all outward differences in traditions or background, religious or political. There are enough dreams and ideas emanating from a passion for the salvation of the soul of our own people, to bring two men together regardless of all differences. Fundamentally, all Armenians, no matter of what church affiliation, having this love for the soul of the nation can work together and accomplish great things together. This very thing, I know, Archbishop Tiran aspires to realize. And on that basis I feel honored to be his brother. Mustn't all Armenians in positions of leadership—especially the clergy—be brothers, imbued with the love of Christ Jesus and the Armenian people who lived for His glory and died to maintain the radiance of that glory undiminished?

A SHORT TESTIMONIAL

In the handful of years Archbishop Tiran has been in America, he has racked up an impressive record of accomplishments, with effects reaching far into the future.

These and the countless other activities of the Primate have been undertaken in addition to his many routine duties. Withal, he has remained a man of great learning, culture, intelligence and wisdom, and of tolerance towards

those who would, for various reasons, impugn these attributes.

So the thousands of us who hold His Grace in respect, affection and admiration heartily felicitate him on the twenty-fifth anniversary of his ordination, extend to him our deepest gratitude for the many services he has tendered the Armenian-American community, and pray we may be blessed with his presence and his leadership for a great many years to come.

Armine Dikijian

Noble Vision and Practical Realism

ARCHBISHOP TIRAN'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS

"At the height of his career, we hope and pray that Archbishop Tiran will fully realize his rare capabilities as Servant of the Lord, Leader, Builder and Teacher, for the benefit of the Armenian Church and People."

By Dadour Dadourian

On the twenty-fifth jubilee of his priesthood, it is befitting to present Archbishop Tiran, one of the dignitaries and leaders of the Armenian Church, in his capacity as a clergyman, an administrator, a man of vision, a man of strong convictions and a scholar.

During the last nine years of service in the United States as a primate of the Armenian Church, he has proven a clergyman of unselfish devotion, a devotion born out of his profound faith in the role that the Armenian Church is destined to play in the life of his people, as she has played for fifteen centuries. Priesthood has meant for him a life of endless strife and sacrifice while ministering to the spiritual and intellectual needs of his pupils in the Monastery of Saint James in Jerusalem, among his parishioners in London and Paris, and his churches and congregations in the United States.

A primate is looked upon primarily as an administrator in his capacity as organizer, as a builder and leader,—friendly leader. The Armenian Church in America today represents a well organized community from a religious standpoint. During his tenure of office

Mr. Dadour Dadourian, a successful businessman and noted philanthropist, holds most important positions in the administration of our Diocese.

Archbishop Tiran has organized and built a total of some fifteen parishes and churches. This in itself indicates his innate qualities of spiritual strength, devotion, patient forbearance and persistent will to build and create order out of an unorganized, inert state of community life.

The Armenian Church Youth Organization of America, the backbone of tomorrow's Armenian Church in this country, is one of the outstanding achievements of his administration—an organization that in the course of time will ensure the existence of the Armenian Church in America for the next two or three generations and will perpetuate it for posterity, should the leadership of the Armenian Church be alive to the requirements of environment and needs of time, inexorable, changing time.

No less important an achievement is also the creation of the Association of Armenian Church Choirs of America which devotes itself to the development and improvement of the church choirs and of their capacity of performance.

Lack of adequate funds and trained personnel unfortunately have hampered the Archbishop in his project of organizing a complete Church School system for Armenian children in America, a vital factor in bringing them up as the future parishioners of the Church. However a good portion

of standard textbooks have been prepared and plans for a better organization are afoot.

The Archbishop's project for establishing Armenian day schools within our communities also has failed to materialize for the same reasons,—funds and teachers.

It is highly gratifying to learn of the closer spiritually fraternal association that has developed among the ministering priests of our Church under his exemplary guidance. The annual gathering of our priests on the eve of the Annual Diocesan Convention would prove more beneficial, were it possible to extend the time and scope of its deliberations over a longer period.

The Armenian youth of the United States has come to look upon His Eminence Archbishop Tiran as a friend and a friendly leader. Were it not for the personal, intellectual and spiritual virtues of the leader in the Archbishop it is hardly probable that our youth would have developed the keen awakening to their Armenian heritage and the spiritual values of the Armenian Church that we, the elders, have been witnessing.

Were it possible to spare him from administrative detail work that should be done by several assistants, he would be able to fully occupy himself with more creative and constructive work.

Great projects, higher achievements have been possible only through vision. Archbishop Tiran is a man of vision,—vision of the growing, expanding Armenian Church not only in the United States, but also abroad. Out of his profound faith and understanding of the Armenian Church, he has been nurturing strong faith also in the growth and development of the Armenian Church in a universal sense: the

Armenian Church recognized and venerated by the other Christian churches counting many millions of followers; the Armenian Church on an equal pedestal in the universal order of Christian worship. During his tenure of office in England and the United States many dignitaries of Christian churches, particularly those of the Episcopalian and other Orthodox bodies have come to know and truly evaluate the Armenian Church thanks to Archbishop Tiran's lectures that are engaging on account of the comprehensive background against which they are presented.

With his great learning and noble vision His Eminence has combined a most marvelous sense of practical realism. This is a rare combination that makes of him a great leader.

Archbishop Tiran is one of the few dignitaries of our church who has envisioned the status of the Armenian Church in America for the forthcoming generations, fifty and one hundred years hence. Foreseeing the prerequisite factors in the maintenance and perpetuation of a church that will be able to serve succeeding generations, he has developed plans for the preparation of clergy fully qualified to serve the future Americans of Armenian descent. The Armenian Church will remain in the United States and, as in other countries, she will be the sole institution safeguarding and perpetuating the Armenian heritage and inspiring and acquainting those of Armenian origin with that heritage.

The Armenian Cathedral and Cultural Center Project will house this heritage; it will be the center of religious training and popular orientation keeping ablaze the Light of Sahak, Mesrop, Vardan, Vahan, Shnorhali, and of the later enlighteners of the Armenian Church and leaders of the race.

It is with keen realization of this fact, and with an unyielding faith in this truth that Archbishop Tiran has refused to yield to innumerable difficulties and outwardly unsurmountable obstacles in bringing this project at least to a partial realization, to a progressing start. If our leaders in other civic, lay organizations, professing deep interest in the physical and spiritual welfare of the Armenians in America, at least partly shared this zeal and vision of Archbishop Tiran and lent a helping hand toward accomplishing this arduous task and bringing this great undertaking to completion, his work would have been much more fruitful. The time has come when one single act, one generous deed would outweigh volumes of verbal endorsement and oral sympathy.

In following his career, one cannot fail to discern in Archbishop Tiran the man of strong convictions: conviction born out of truth, truth dis-
vic-tion born out of truth, truth discovered through labor, study, and medi-sorrow and spiritual enlightenment; that is the thorny path that all spiri-tual leaders have followed while being misunderstood and misrepresented by those incapable to comprehend truth and deliberately refusing to concede

ANOTHER SHORT TESTIMONIAL

In my opinion, the Archbishop's greatest contribution has been, next to his ministry as priest and bishop, his ability to teach us all the true meaning of intellectual honesty.

One of his main problems I feel has been to show us all how futile and naked our life is without God and the Church. His heart and mind have vehemently risen in revolt against our materialistic temper, to which he attributes much of our disunity and disputes. That he has succeeded in

it. Truth bears conviction and conviction bears truth. One realizes this fact when, serving the Church, one discovers that this man of strong, seemingly unyielding trend of mind, readily recognizes a different opinion when it makes sense.

What a chaotic situation and state of affairs would have developed in our Diocese during these turbulent years, were it not for the strong convictions that this man of the Church displayed particularly in dealing with questions of vital import, and proving adamant to innumerable ideas and suggestions ruled by emotional impulse and motivated by personal or factional ends.

People constantly in touch with him often wonder how, along with all his duties and detailed tasks of office, Archbishop Tiran has found time to study and master topics that, far from theological, are nevertheless useful to him as top executive.

At the height of his career, we hope and pray that Archbishop Tiran will fully realize his rare capabilities as Servant of the Lord, Leader, Builder and Teacher, for the benefit of the Armenian Church and people.

solving this problem at least partially is evidenced by newly built churches and increasing worshippers who fill them.

I cannot help but admire and acknowledge with deep respect the undeniable truth that no amount of inquisition, accusation and repression have obscured his bright vision and glowing integrity.

Nubar M. Dorian
Secretary, Auxiliary Committee
of the Diocese

A Report on Our Progress

THE SEVENTH ACYOA ASSEMBLY

THE ARCHBISHOP'S TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY
IS REMEMBERED WITH DEEP GRATITUDE

Youth request Diocesan delegates to draft him for new term
as Primate

By Rose Bannaian and Lillian Tookman

As an editorial of this monthly put it, conventions are occasions that create living ties among the members of an organization through both their business sessions and entertainment. This is exactly what the Seventh Convention of the ACYOA did, as one of its major accomplishments.

I BUSINESS

The long-awaited weekend of the Seventh Annual Assembly of the ACYOA began on the eve of September 4, drawing nearly 1000 young people to Cleveland. To the entire Armenian community of Cleveland this was a profoundly rewarding experience.

The Assembly was above all an exchange of ideas by the 47 delegates, including 9 clergymen, in making decisions for the furtherance of our work in and for the Church.

Presiding at the three-day meetings in the lovely Petit Room of the Hotel Carter was His Eminence Archbishop Tiran, who began the first session by leading us in an Invocation, the ACYOA Prayer and Pledge. Mr. Zaven Hovsepian, Chairman of the Central Committee and ex-officio Chairman of the Assembly then introduced Dr. K. K. Goekjian, Chairman of the

Cleveland Parish Council, who extended his sincere welcome to the delegates and guests. Co-Chairman of the Assembly Planning Committee, Jack Hacherian, voiced the greetings of the Cleveland Chapter, and drew attention to the souvenir items at each delegate's seat. An Assembly Booklet was presented to each chapter, and an inscribed gavel given to Mr. Zaven Hovsepian.

After a short opening address by the Chairman, the members of the Central Council were introduced. They were Matthew Matteosian, Watertown, Vice Chairman; Arax Selvinazian, New York Downtown, Secretary to the Executive Director; Mary Azarian, Lawrence, Recording Secretary; Leo Bakalian, Paterson, Treasurer; Paul Hovsepian, Detroit, Anniversary Ball Chairman; Minas Kazanjian, Lawrence, Advisor to Junior Chapters; Gerald Aharonian, Lowell, Publicity Chairman, Acabe Boornazian, North Philadelphia, Corresponding Secretary, being in Europe, was unable to attend.

Numerous well-wishing telegrams and messages were read.

The new arrival to the fold, Washington, D.C., was presented her charter.

Following roll call of 24 chapters, His Eminence Archbishop Tiran delivered the opening address.

The minutes of the last Assembly were approved upon the recommendation of the Minutes Reading Committee. The report of the Central Council covering their successful efforts to carry out the resolutions by the Sixth General Assembly, the activities of the various chapters, and the general progress of the Organization was read and accepted. The Financial and Anniversary Ball reports were approved. The reports indicated notable progress.

The Nominating and Minutes Reading Committees for this Assembly were then appointed. After much deliberation a new five-member Committee on Taxation, each from a different city, was elected to interview delegates during the Assembly to determine, according to various criteria, the taxes for individual chapters.

Amendments to the Constitution clarifying certain administrative procedures were passed and will be submitted to the chapters for ratification.

A new membership card system was adopted.

Some of the biggest strides ever taken by the ACYOA were accomplished through the passage of the following resolutions:

It was resolved by the Assembly that the Central Council take steps to encourage members of the ACYOA to study to be church school teachers and prepare for Holy Orders.

It was also resolved that the ACYOA as a national church organization encourage and assist in every possible manner the Diocesan authorities in their selection and training of church school teachers and of candi-

dates for ordination into the priesthood, to the full extent of the financial and other capacities of the Organization.

It was resolved too that the ACYOA make a special effort to use all its resources to create in its own ranks and among the Armenian people in general a clear awareness of the necessity of spiritual values to be learned and assimilated as part of their obligations to the Armenian people and to the United States, and for the greater glory of God; and also that the ACYOA, while engaged in the furtherance of spiritual life, stay clear from political activities according to the American principle of separation of Church and State.

Another resolution was passed to urge Archbishop Tiran to accept nomination for the coming Diocesan election to the office of Primate of the Diocese of North America. The Central Council was instructed to take all necessary steps within its power to bring about the successful conclusion of such nomination.

The farsightedness and devotion of the delegates to their common goal were apparent in the wholehearted approval of the highly important resolutions just mentioned.

In his report to the group, our Executive Director, Hagop Nersoyan, stated that our membership and general interest in the ACYOA were ever increasing; however, he said, opportunity for growth in size and scope are boundless. He informed the delegates that a brochure had been prepared on "Nine Good Reasons Why You Should Belong to the ACYOA." He also stated that administrative improvements in the Organization although noticeable, were not as yet perfect.

A vote of thanks was extended to

His Eminence the Archbishop, Father Torkom, Vice-President, Hagop Nersoyan, the clergy, and Central Council members.

Retiring Central Council members this year were Acabe Boornazian, Paul Hovsepian, and Matthew Matteosian. Newly-elected members include Dennis Papazian, Detroit; Ralph Yagjian, Worcester; and Matthew Matteosian, Watertown.

Troy, New York, was selected as the next Assembly site, and Leo Movsesian accepted the ACYOA banner on behalf of his chapter.

Special mention must be made of a panel discussion that was presented prior to the second session on Sunday on the subject "The function of the Armenian Church and of the Eastern churches in the American scene." Members of the panel were Father Arnak Kasparian, Chairman; Father Torkom, Hagop Nersoyan, Zaven Hovsepian, Paul Hovsepian, and Deacon Ohannes Kasparian. In this panel to which delegates and guests contributed, similarities in the characteristics of the Eastern churches and their common problems were discussed. Father Arnak brought out the fact that the present generation has an obligation toward the past and toward the future. Mention was made of internal and external difficulties facing us in the years to come and the necessity was stressed of living purposeful lives.

This program was in keeping with a decision at the Sixth Annual Assembly to honor the memory of His Holiness Garegin I Catholicos of Cilicia, with an informative and cultural program included in the agenda of the Assembly.

II

WORSHIP

Prior to adjournment on Monday, a

short devotional service, prepared specially for the occasion by Archbishop Tiran, was held in which clergy, delegates and guests participated.

Adjournment of a fruitful Assembly was preceded by the benediction of the old and new members of the Central Council and of all the delegates.

ACYOA'ers, awakened by "church call" early Sunday morning, and people of the local community, including non-Armenians, filled to capacity the magnificent Trinity Cathedral, See of the Episcopal Diocese of Ohio, for the glorious celebration of the Divine Liturgy. His Grace Archbishop Tiran who celebrated was assisted by all the visiting clergymen and a choir directed by Deacon Harry Ekizian consisting of clerks from various cities.

Immediately afterward, participants in the telecast of the "Bashdone Jashou" were hurried to station WNBK. An impact beyond all expectation was experienced not only by those directly connected with the presentation but also, it was felt, by the vast viewing audience.

III

BANQUET

AND

ENTERTAINMENT

For the time when ACYOA'ers were away from business sessions, social activities were planned. In an effort to extend further hospitality, the Host Suite was made available where refreshments were served and informative brochures given. The Cleveland headquarters was an information clearing house and favorite gathering place.

The Carter, headquarters hotel, provided two lovely ball rooms for our socials. Friday in the Main Ballroom was the Mixer Party at which Duke

Tookman's informal combo helped set a mood of congeniality. Armenian recordings were played and cooling refreshments served.

The Assembly Ball was held on Saturday evening in the Rainbow Room where a capacity crowd was reluctant to end the festivities.

Sunday noon, the delegates had been transported to the home of their gracious luncheon hosts. Dr. and Mrs. K. K. Goekjian, where preparations had been made to have ample TV sets available to view the Armenian Synaxis prior to enjoying the delightful lawn luncheon.

The famous Rainbow Room was the scene of the Assembly Banquet Sunday evening. Dr. Goekjian, introduced by Assembly Co-Chairman Mike Chekemian, proved to be a zesty toastmaster. After Levon Hekimian of the Cathedral and Cultural Center Project Committee made a few remarks, Rose Bannaian spoke on behalf of the Cleveland chapter. Zaven Hovsepien had many pleasant duties to perform, the first being to present a commemorative plaque to the host chapter. Next came the long-awaited announcement of the recipient of the "A" award—Cleveland!

Zaven Hovsepien then informed the guests (or those who did not already know) that 1953 is the twenty fifth anniversary of the Archbishop's ordination into the holy order of priesthood. With his usual eloquence Mr. Hovsepien enumerated the services that His Eminence had rendered to our Church and people and particularly to the Armenian youth of this country, and presented him with a check, on behalf of the ACYOA, for the purchase of a hand cross, as a modest token of a very deep gratitude.

Hagop Nersoyan said in a short ad-

dress that the ACYOA, besides its broad objectives, satisfies also a member's personal basic needs, inasmuch as it provides him with an object of devotion and good, sincere friends. Father Torkom brought out the fact that the purpose of the ACYOA is to educate its members to be good and faithful Christians, and that young people are expected to serve in the Church mainly as choir members and church school teachers. The main address at the banquet was by His Grace Archbishop Tiran, who in a magnificent speech stressed that a purposeful life may be achieved when emphasis is placed on spiritual values.

Variety was added to the evening through the kindness of Vera Hovivian, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Ekizian, John Balian, and June Anthony.

Dancing to Drtad's Armenian Band at the Hayastan Hop in the Main Ballroom completed the most significant day of our Assembly.

Monday, fair weather greeted ACYOA'ers, and a tremendous crowd picnicked at Taylor's Valleyview Grove.

All too soon, September 7 came around and the Assembly was over, but we know its impressions will be with all for many years to come. The Cleveland chapter is sincerely grateful to all who helped make the Assembly successful. The friendly cooperative spirit at the fruitful business sessions, the reverence at the worship services, the group congeniality at the organized activities, and the cordiality shown in informal groups indicate a continually growing unity in our Organization. Cleveland considers it an honor to have been host at the Seventh Annual General Assembly of the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America.

New Vistas for Our Youth

OUR GOOD FORTUNE AT A CRUCIAL MOMENT

By Nona Balakian

"It is from His Grace Archbishop Tiran, more than anyone else, that the Armenian Youth have at last begun to learn to weave into the fabric of their lives the enviable heritage they possess."

I feel indeed privileged to be given this space in *The Armenian Guardian* to express, in as modest a way as I am able, my deep admiration and high esteem of our eminent Arachnord, Archbishop Tiran, who this summer celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of his ordination to priesthood. I write as a member of the so-called younger generation who came of age during the second world war, as one of the many who grew up in this country with a deep instinctive love of our people and our past, which was not less fervent for being imperfectly understood. We young Armenians had all the good will in the world, but lacking in fundamental knowledge were unable really to absorb the Armenian spirit. It was our very good fortune that at that crucial moment in our lives when the critical spirit was putting our loyalty to the test, there came into our midst a church dignitary of great learning and dedication who not only instilled in us a more enduring faith but wisely guided us through the hurdles of an enlightened Armenianism. It is from His Grace Archbishop Tiran, more than from anyone else that the Armenian youth has at last begun to learn to weave into the fabric of their lives the enviable heritage they possess.

Miss Nona Balakian is a member of the New York Times Book Review staff.

I think the Arachnord first made a deep impression on me on that Sunday morning shortly after the end of the war when, at the special invitation of the late Bishop Manning, he delivered the sermon at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. Though I knew he spoke English well, having studied in England, it was the first time I was hearing him deliver a sermon in English. The universality of his message and the beautiful Oxford English in which he delivered it were very much in keeping with the impressive surroundings, and when he finished I felt that he "belonged" in such a cathedral. I was filled with a hope, richly uplifting, that this new Arachnord would some day lead us to a cathedral of our own.

Soon after, our Arachnord did in fact launch the Cathedral and Cultural Center Project. As a member of the publicity committee for the Million Dollar Campaign, I had the privilege of working with His Grace, the Archbishop, and came soon to feel that I knew him well. I remember our first committee meeting well because of the odd setting it had and because revealed to me that evening was an aspect of the Arachnord's character that was to endear him especially to the Armenian youth. Because of its convenience to the business men on the committee, the meeting had been called in the back of a rug store downtown. There were a few scattered folding chairs, but most of the men

sat on high piles of rugs. When His Grace arrived he was at once offered a chair, but to my surprise he refused it, preferring to sit like the other men. Nor was there anything the least bit affected in his show of humility. There was the grace of true simplicity in his manner. He opened the meeting in a very business-like manner, and I remember being astonished at the practical turn of his mind, the keenness with which he analyzed all issues from the simplest to the most abstract and—what was less expected—the genial sense of humor he exhibited.

From the first the Arachnord made himself available to the younger people. He was truly interested in them and curious about their various problems; he wanted especially to encourage their artistic and literary tendencies. He showed a true concern in the ambitious plans of the A.S.A.'s new Artists' Committee and attended a number of its initial meetings. When he talked to us on such occasions there were never any barriers of rank or position—he would, in fact, stimulate conversation on an intellectual level, and whether the topic was art or literature or metaphysics, he seemed as eager to absorb our viewpoints as to impart his own.

The versatility of his mind made him carry his learning lightly. Having won the confidence and affection of the younger crowd, he did not find it hard to draw them closer to the church. Because he spoke simply and directly to them, they were quick to respond. Those of us who had the good sense to attend the series of lectures on the Armenian liturgy (given at the Riverside Church) had a ground-work in Armenian cultural history we shall not soon forget. Not only did those lectures greatly deepen our appreciation of our church and its traditions, but

indirectly they helped to destroy a feeling of inferiority which some of the young people felt because of language deficiency. They saw that it was possible to become a part of the Armenian community without having a complete command of the Armenian language. His Grace had wisely understood that if once we could sense the real Armenian values we might aspire to a better knowledge of our mother tongue. In the meantime, our church with its ancient, glorious traditions would be our common bond, as it had been for so many centuries.

The Arachnord's English translation of our Divine Liturgy which was published in a beautiful and informative volume a couple of years ago was another great milestone in the religious education of our youth. Practical and realistic, Archbishop Tiran was not content to build a cathedral out of mere cold stones; he wanted assurance that within its walls would be the warmth of faithful hearts who were inspired because they understood the meaning and felt the inherent beauty of our mass. Nor did his efforts to enlighten the youth and bring them closer to the Armenian fold end there. In organizing the ACYOA, whose membership has grown rapidly, he has brought young Armenians together on a social and educational basis, while keeping their interests centered in the church. This admirable publication, **The Armenian Guardian**, which is read widely in Armenian homes, was also his inspired innovation.

Quickly, with great energy, courage and devotion, our Arachnord has opened new vistas for the youth of our community. As no one before him he has kindled the sparks that would too soon have died for lack of nourishment. More urgently than ever, we need him now to fan those sparks into bright, steady flames of dedication.

Comets, Planets, and Peoples

ENLIGHTENMENT AND LEADERSHIP

"The quality of leadership is measured by the response of the followers. A case in point is to be found in the Annual Study Seminar of the AACCA, under the leadership of His Eminence Archbishop Tiran."

By Arra Avakian

Through the centuries of civilization's history some peoples have come and gone like the one-time visitation of a comet whose orbit brings it but once into the light of the world. And other peoples have remained and continue to remain forever a part of man's civilization, even as planets, large and small, unceasingly follow a course through the heavens, but always within the sun's sphere.

The forces controlling the destinies of races are complex and beyond man's understanding. But the behavior pattern of a people is often a powerful contributory force to their fate.

It must therefore be possible to seek and find those characteristics in a people, that lead to their perpetuity. Among these undoubtedly is to be found moral and spiritual enlightenment.

Enlightenment comes to a people through inspired leadership. The Armenian people have enjoyed such leadership through the ages. More than sixteen hundred years ago Saint Gregory the Enlightener gave to the Armenians their national Church, a spiritual heritage without which the race could not have survived.

Following Saint Gregory there were

Dr. Arra Avakian, noted scientist and mathematician, is the chairman of the Choirs Seminar Committee.

other giants, enlighteners all, notable examples being Saint Sahak and Saint Mesrop, Saint Johannes of Otzoun, Saint Gregory of Narek, Saint Nerses the Graceful, Gregory of Tathev, Georg IV. These inspired others, and still others. Thus the servants of the Church bring enlightenment to the people.

The Church herself creates the atmosphere wherein enlighteners are nurtured, and in turn she continues to endure and grows more vital through their work. And the people prosper and their moral and spiritual vigor enhances.

In our age too the Church has her enlighteners. Those of yesterday have just left us, but their inspiration guides us yet. Those of today are in our midst. Their inspiration too guides us, though, paradoxically, their very nearness seems to obscure their importance.

The quality of leadership is measured by the response of the followers. A case in point is to be found in the Annual Study Seminar of the Association of Armenian Church Choirs of America, under the leadership of His Eminence, Archbishop Tiran.

The Study Seminar, now firmly established, is an achievement of considerable intellectual and spiritual significance. Young men and women, products of the American environment, spend a full week of intense

study of the Armenian Church and her practices, her doctrines, history, rites and ceremonies, and her music, tutored by a faculty consisting of the most competent men of our Church in this country and under the immediate and personal supervision of the Dean, Archbishop Tiran. This is enlightenment!

There is no precedent for such enterprise. Its initial conception and eventual realization were inspired and enabled by Archbishop Tiran. During closing ceremonies at the First Study Seminar Archbishop Tiran said in part, "We are going to create, and must create, an inner circle in the Church which will bring together people who, without presumption, without bias, want to learn with open minds the truth and want to follow the path which is that of Christ. Such an inner circle can be useful. . . . The most important need which we have in our

community at present is to have in each parish a small group of people who have missionary zeal to bring in other people, not for the sake of winning them over, but for bringing them up to God. This Seminar, as a first attempt, should encourage you to push your studies further. . . .

"The spiritual purpose of such enterprises as this Seminar, as well as all other work in the Church, done by parish councils, by youth groups, or just church-going people, is to regenerate spiritual life in our people; the strengthening of our faithfulness to Our Lord and Saviour and obedience to the will of God Almighty is essential for our salvation individually or as a community."

What boundless pride the Association of Armenian Church Choirs must feel in the Seminar and the leadership of His Grace, Archbishop Tiran!

"Thou Shalt Not Steal"

Fathers Arnak and Artoon cannot tolerate the violation of this commandment and a "Hyastan hop" takes place as scheduled . . .

A rumor began to circulate at the Carter Hotel, site of the ACYOA Convention in Cleveland, that Father Arnak and Father Artoon, respectively of Detroit and Racine, had been to the airport in a taxi in pursuit of two thugs . . .

Further investigation revealed the exact details of the story . . . A car was parked in front of the hotel, containing musical instruments to be used that night by the band which was to play at the "Hyastan Hop". As all hotel fronts, the front of the Carter Hotel is a restricted area, at least as far as parking goes, and with an intention of quick return the doors of the car were left unlocked. A good woman sees two teenagers approach the car, remove the instruments therefrom and walk away, all in an overdignified manner. As all women this woman too gets suspicious and failing to see any officers of the law notifies two officers of morality (our own Fathers Arnak and Artoon). After a good deal of chasing (a mere two blocks which seem so long in such circumstances) the priests force the thieves to drop the unlawfully appropriated objects. The larceners disappear and the priests return to the hotel with the instruments . . . in a police car. The policemen were spotted too late to be of more help.

A Biographical Sketch

ARCHBISHOP TIRAN

By Father Arten Ashjian

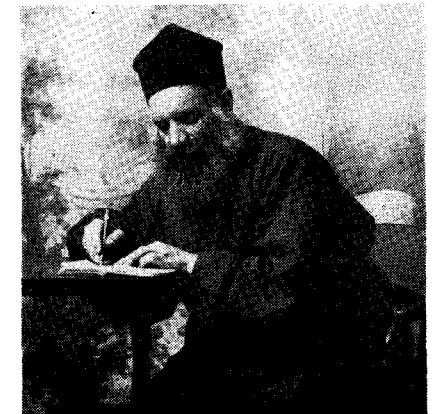
His Parents

Archbishop Tiran (Nersoyan) was born Nerses Tavookjian on August 23, 1904. In Antep (now Gaziantep), Cilicia. His father was the Rev. Nerses Kahana Tavookjian who played a most important role in the destiny of the Armenians of Antep and then in the national life of the Armenians of

principal of one of Antep's two Armenian schools for girls. Young Nerses' elementary education, at the Vardanian School of Antep, was interrupted by World War I, when as a result of the mass deportation of Armenians by the Turks, the Tavookjian family was driven to the deserts of Syria. Preferring death to apostasy, Father Nerses Tavookjian, with his



Yeretkin Annitza Tavookjian



Avak Kahana Nerses Tavookjian

Aleppo. He was a man of limitless courage and iron will. He is known as the "Ghevont Yeret" of Antep's fight of self-defense to which reference will be made below. His mother, Annitza, was one of the best educated ladies of Antep and she was, at one time, the

wife and five children, drank from the bitter cup of hunger, disease and homelessness. Upon the defeat of Turkey in 1918, the family returned to Antep in 1919, along with hundreds of patriotic Armenians, with hopes of a new, peaceful life in an independent Cilicia. The revolutionary movement of Mustafa Kemal dashed the expectations of the Armenians. The French Army of Occupation evacuated Cilicia. The Armenians of Antep resisted the Turks in an unequal fight of self-

The Rev. Arten Ashjian, priest of the Armenian parish of North Philadelphia, is a writer and lecturer on historical and other ecclesiastical subjects.

defense. Young Nerses witnessed this short episode of heroism, bloodshed and siege. For the second time, the family abandoned all earthly possessions and moved to Aleppo, Syria, where thousands of Armenian refugees had found shelter. Nerses Kahana was offered more comfortable positions elsewhere, but he was determined to remain with his own flock under any and all circumstances

To Jerusalem

Upon the advice of his father, who had received his theological education in the well-known seminary of Ar-



Nerses Der Nersessian (Tavookjian)
(1921)

mash, near Istanbul, Nerses entered the Seminary of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem in 1921. Under the peaceful mandate of the British Government, and thanks to the leader-

ship of Patriarch Elisee Tourian, former dean of the Armash Seminary, the Armenian monastery of St. James was entering a new era of slow but sure progress. Student Nerses learned fast, his keen intellect open to all avenues of learning. Graduating in 1914 he served as sub-deacon and taught in the Armenian primary school. He entered religious orders on October 4, 1926, when, accompanied by nine other aspirants to the celibate priesthood, he was ordained a deacon. There followed a two year course in advanced theological studies under the inspired leadership of Patriarch Elisee Tourian, and Bishop Papken Gulesserian, the later an eminent alumnus of the Armash Seminary. Meanwhile, Deacon Nerses' teaching ability promoted him to the position of instructor in the Seminary of the Patriarchate. His interest in research proved helpful in the posthumous publication of the third volume of the late Archbishop Malachia Ormanian's "Azgapatoom" under the editorship of Bishop Papken Gulesserian. At the same time (1927) the young deacon was entrusted with the office of Secretary of the Holy Places owned by the Armenian Patriarchate. The particular responsibility of the Department of Holy Places was to protect the rights of the Patriarchate in Jerusalem. Deacon Nerses, then and later, used his strategic ability and at least on one occasion his fists along with the other monks of the monastery, for the protection of these rights.

His Beatitude Patriarch Elisee Tourian ordained Deacon Nerses to the priesthood on July 22, 1928, naming him Tiran. By his parents' permission, Father Tiran adopted as his surname "Nersoyan", after Nerso, his grandfather. Soon after his ordination, Father Tiran, with his colleague Father Norair Bogharian, was sent to England by the Patriarchate for

further studies. The two bearded "abeghas" mingled with young English seminarians, first at the College of the Resurrection in Mirfield, Yorkshire, then at Kings' College in London. Their frequent visits to the Armenian Church of Manchester were of considerable help to Bishop Leon Tourian, the pastor. On their vacations, Father Tiran and Norair broadened their knowledge of European culture through visits to Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Venice, and Rome, and availed themselves of the opportunity to acquaint themselves with the Armenians in these great centers.

Finances, Real Estate, Editorship

While Fathers Tiran and Norair were nearing the completion of this two year term of studentship in England, Patriarch Elisee Tourian died in

April 1930. Returning to Jerusalem with Father Norair, Father Tiran began to take an active interest in practically every phase of service in the monastery. He was appointed to serve on a committee of three to reorganize the finances of the Patriarchate. Becoming a vardapet on August 23, 1930, he was appointed a regular member of the faculty of the Seminary. He had an active part in the work of the Buildings Department of the Monastery, increasing greatly the value of the real estate properties of the Patriarchate. Oscan Bey Mardigian, former Finance Minister of Turkey, found in Father Tiran an asset in preparing his plans for the liquidation of the huge debt of the Patriarchate. He was the Editor of the Monthly Review "Sion", the official publication of the Patriarchate, in 1930 and 1931.



Tiran Vardapet, Dean of the Armenian Seminary of Jerusalem, with his assistant Serovpe Vardapet (left). Papken Vardapet, Torkom Vardapet, Levon Kahana and Mesrob Vardapet, then seminarians, can be recognized. They are, respectively, fourth, fifth and last from the left, standing, and second from the left, seated.

Dean of the Seminary

This pattern of hard work and devotion to service found its best expression when Father Tiran was named Dean of the Seminary of the Patriarchate, in 1932. During the rather short period of his deanship, 1932-1937, the institution saw many changes and steps forward. Not only was the material well-being of the students (averaging forty-five in number) sought, but steps were taken to improve the teaching staff. In addition to the young vardapets assigned to the instruction of religious subjects, Messrs. Shahan Berberian, Hagop Oshagan, and Nerses Tamamian were invited from nearby countries as professors of philosophy, literature, and mathematics, respectively. A strict disciplinarian, Father Tiran meant business in applying the principle that a student should never be left idle. Outside the class, the student was either playing in some kind of sports, or growing flowers, or doing a carpentry job. Saturday evenings were devoted to literary and musical events, or debating sessions, which grew popular even among the non-teaching members of the clergy. Summers were spent, Arab-Jewish clashes permitting, in daily excursions to nearby towns and hills around Jerusalem, or in vacation trips to historic sites in northern Palestine, to the Sea of Galilee. Many a young student, who had never left his home before entering the Seminary, developed a taste for traveling and touring thanks to these trips carefully planned by the Dean. As further means of entertainment and contact with the world, Father Tiran found donors for a movie projector, and a three-way radio receiving set, for the exclusive use of the student body. Around commencement time in late June, literary, public speaking and singing contests were instituted under his guidance. Inter-collegiate soc-

cer matches won a Jerusalem championship for the Seminary soccer team in 1936.

Of the eight priests graduated from the Seminary during this period, mention must be made of Father Bus-sag Toumayan, (Class of 1934) at present Pastor of St. Sarkis Church in London, England; Father Shnork Kaloustian, (Class of 1935) Primate of the Diocese of California, and Father Hmayak Intoyan, (Class of 1936) Pastor of Holy Cross Church of Union City and Chairman of the Diocesan Council. In addition to his manifold duties as Dean of the Seminary, Father Tiran was always a teacher, keeping the class alive and tense with his searching observations and thought-provoking questions in such subjects as the Bible, General Church History, Dogmatic Theology, and Classical Armenian.

Special Missions



Tiran Vardapet in Sudan with natives and friends.

In the Spring of 1932, Father Tiran was sent by His Beatitude Patriarch Torkom Koushagian to the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, on a pastoral visit to the Armenian community of that remote country. For the first time, Ar-

menians living in such cities and towns as Khartoom, Omdurman, Gedarif, Araba, and Berber, took part in the Divine Liturgy of the Armenian Church and were greatly comforted by Father Tiran's sermons. On this occasion, Father Tiran lectured on the Armenian Church to non-Armenian audiences including one in the mansion of the Governor General of the Sudan.

In 1934, Father Tiran went to Marseilles, France, to receive from Bishop Krikoris Balakian the important diplomatic files of the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople, dealing with the Armenian Question before and after World War I, for safe-keeping in the library of manuscripts of the St. James monastery and after listing them, brought them to Jerusalem.

His Father Dies

Shortly after his return from Marseilles, Father Tiran was summoned to the bedside of his beloved father in Aleppo. An Armenian criminal's bullet had proven fatal to the famous priest, whose life was spared during the worst days of his exile in World War I, and who had the good fortune of witnessing his son's consecration at the Cathedral of Saint James in Jerusalem six years earlier. Before entering his eternal rest the last words of Nerses Avak Kahana, a fiery orator, had been to his last small audience: "Do not try to avenge yourselves, for he knew not what he was doing . . . Now I see angels." He had died with his most charming smile on his face.

This writer will never forget his first interview with the mourning Father Tiran, who sat among a group of comforting friends and relatives, and questioned the prospective student of the seminary he headed as Dean.

"Aren't you afraid of entering the priesthood? Do you realize what they did to Archbishop Leon Tourian, and to my own father?" was his first question.

To Paris, as Vicar

From 1932 to 1936 Tiran Vardapet was the chairman of the Monastery's Clerical General Assembly, and for two terms member of the Board of Directors, until 1938. During the last two years of this period he was again a member of the Department of Real Estate.

The year 1938 marked a change in the course of Father Tiran's life. Upon the advice of Patriarch Torkom Kooshagian, he left for Paris to serve as vicar of the ailing Archbishop Vramshaboo Kibarian. Always eager to heighten the prestige of the Armenian Church, Father Tiran made close contacts with theologians in Paris, and gave talks on the Armenian Church. The Armenian students and intellectuals in Paris soon rallied around him. His sermons attracted larger crowds to the Armenian churches of the Metropolis. His visits to London as observer or guest to Anglican Church conferences were bound to broaden his intellectual scope and to win respect for the Church he served. In Paris, he began the publication of a religious monthly, "Mer Doone" (Our Home), with the material assistance of Mr. Yervant Barguidjian.

Perforated ulcer forced Father Tiran to submit to surgery in the spring of 1939. Thanks to the alertness of the janitor of the Armenian church in Paris, Father Tiran was rushed to a hospital in the middle of the night and underwent a successful operation.

Lectures in London, and the Blitz

The Trustees of Saint Sarkis Armenian Church of London requested, Father Tiran to serve as pastor of the Armenian community of London. With the consent of the Jerusalem Patriarchate, Father Tiran settled in St. Sarkis' parish house in December of 1939. Financed entirely by the Kaloost Gulbenkian Fund, this church needed a good pastor, an intellectual and spiritual leader of the Armenians of that great capital. Soon a group of young Armenians began to hold weekly gatherings with the leadership of Father Tiran. In his spare time, Father Tiran contributed articles to such London publications as *The Asiatic Review*, *The International Review of Missions*, *The Church Times*. His articles on the Armenian Diaspora was selected to appear in the *World Digest* monthly. He kept himself aware of ecclesiastical movements in the Anglican world, representing the Armenian Church in various assemblies. He read a learned paper on the Doctrinal Position of the Armenian Church before a group of Anglican scholars in Oxford in 1942. His "A Christian Approach to Communism", a philosophical analysis of the errors of the "belly philosophy" of communism from the Christian viewpoint, was published by Frederick Muller in 1942, and was reprinted in 1943.

Like millions of Londoners in World War II, Father Tiran had his share of suffering during the blitz of 1940 and the subsequent raids of the Luftwaffe. But God spared his life for the Armenian Church. His presence in the London church was solace and inspiration to many American-born Armenian men and women serving in the overseas forces of the U. S. A. They found in Father Tiran the medium of understanding of the Armenian Church which was sadly neglected be-

cause of the language difficulty back home. His conversations with these young people from America convinced him that by proper leadership, the younger Armenian generation in America could preserve its "Armenianness" so far as the Armenian Church was concerned.

His Work in America and Abroad

This challenge, the problem of the preservation of our youth in America, Father Tiran was bound to meet, when he accepted his election to the Primacy of the Diocese of the Armenian Church in North America, on October 3, 1943. Wartime restrictions on transoceanic travel delayed his voyage to the U. S. A. by one year. Arriving in New York on November 6, 1944, Father Tiran was made a "Dzayrakooyin Vardapet" by his eminent predecessor, Archbishop Karekin Hovsepian, Catholicos-elect of Cilicia. Visiting widely scattered Armenian parishes in this large Diocese was his first task. In the course of these visits, he observed the complexity of the problems with which he was to be confronted. Before long, the Allied victory in Europe against Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy gave Armenians throughout the world the happy setting in which a national ecclesiastical assembly could be convened in Etchmiadzin, Armenia, for the election of the Catholicos of all Armenians. Father Tiran, as head of the American diocese, was the leading delegate. The assembly, held in June 1945, elected Archbishop Georg Cherekjian, the hard working, wise and capable Locum Tenens, as Catholicos Georg VI of Etchmiadzin. Father Tiran was among the ten bishops consecrated by the new Catholicos. Bishop Tiran's aggressive interest in church policy and his deep knowledge of church canon law singled him out in the eyes of His Holiness the Catholi-

cos, who entrusted him with the thorny task of negotiating the reunion of the schismatic group of Armenian churches in North America, with the lawful Diocese. For his patience and forbearance in these negotiations, His Holiness commended Bishop Tiran in an encyclical in 1949, although the reunion did not materialize, due to the intransigence of the leaders of the schismatic body.

Bishop Tiran's achievements during the nine years of his service as "arachnort" cannot be easily summarized. His interests and activities are so varied. Answering daily correspondence from more than thirty-five parishes alone, offering day by day solutions to local problems, presiding over meetings of parish councils and building committees and giving guidance and advice, in themselves constitute a tremendous task, not publicized. But the palpable results are there to see. Between 1946 and 1953, Bishop Tiran was instrumental in filling most of the pastoral vacancies created in the diocese by deaths, retirements and organizations of new parishes. This he succeeded doing by two methods: 1. Inviting qualified clergymen from overseas, numbering thirteen. 2. Finding sponsors, such as Messrs. Alex Manoogian of Detroit, and K. Kazarosian of Providence, for the advanced theological education of young Armenians from the Middle East. Thus, twelve young men came to this country for further studies in American seminaries and universities. Out of these, eight already have been ordained by Bishop Tiran to the priesthood, and one to the diaconate. With only one case of defection from each group, a total of twenty new clergymen are serving in the diocese, representing 75 per cent of the total force.

Through his inspiring leadership,

smaller Armenian communities braced themselves to raise funds for the construction of parish churches, or adding new properties to their real estate. Thus, Miami (Florida), Richmond (Virginia), West Philadelphia (Pa.), Union City (N. J.), Newark (N. J.), Paterson (N. J.), Hartford (Conn.), Worcester (Mass.), Brockton (Mass.), Watertown (Mass.), Niagara Falls (N. Y.), Binghamton (N. Y.), Toronto (Canada), Racine (Wisconsin), Detroit (Mich.).

The offices of the Armenian Diocese, moved twice (1947 and 1949) from rented buildings, were housed permanently in the property purchased with the lot on which the Cathedral and Cultural Center will eventually be erected. The "Special Fund" of the Diocese by the Dadourian Export Corporation was founded in 1950 for investment in real property.

Annual summer conferences, for the benefit of the clergy, were begun by the Primate in 1947 and grew in popularity every year. The hospitality of churchmen like Mr. Aram Attarian (Philadelphia), Krajian Brothers (Binghamton), and the late Khoren Shahbazian (Union City), facilitated these meetings.

Bishop Tiran's name will be linked with the formation of the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America. Preparing the constitution of this body, organizing new chapters and reviving the love of the Armenian youth of America for the Church of their fathers is an indelible work on his part.

Bishop Tiran's knowledge and clarity of thought helped redraft the Diocesan constitution and by-laws both in 1945 and 1950. His letters, as well as articles, are always to the point and avoid pomposity and vagueness. His Eminence introduced, in 1951, the

diocese wide use of uniform questionnaires for the preparation of annual reports by parish councils and subordinate organizations. Thanks to his farsightedness, a clergy pension fund was established in 1948, to which every office-holding clergyman contributes, with the cooperation of parish councils.

In 1950 the Locum Tenens of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem appointed Bishop Tiran as his representative to voice his opinion in the preparation of the statute for the proposed corpus separatum, as which the city of Jerusalem was to be constituted on the basis of a decision of the United Nations General Assembly. Bishop Tiran spoke on several occasions to the U. N. Trusteeship Council, in Geneva, in favour of the internationalization of Jerusalem.

In 1952 he went to Antelias to represent the Armenian Diocese of North America at the funeral of Catholicos Garegin of blessed memory. During this year he went to Lund to attend the conference of the World Council of Churches taking with him Shahe Vardapet Ajemian as assistant. He went to this conference as a special consultant (not as a member or a delegate). Bishop Terenik Poladian, of the Catholicate of Antelias, also attended this conference.

Bishop Tiran is an Archbishop since 1951. His modesty led him to avoid

publicity on this occasion of this promotion by the Catholicos, knowing well, that what counts in the end is deeds, not words or honorary titles.

His unassuming manner has made him accessible to all sorts of people. Wealthy and poor, old and young, learned and ignorant, find in him a man who has time to listen and an inexhaustible capacity to reason, to explain and to persuade.

May God grant him to us for longer years, and may we have the good fortune of receiving his blessing on his Golden Jubilee, too.



Bishop Tiran (1945)

From "The Doctrinal Position of the Armenian Church"

"The human aspect of Christ's being is assumed by economy. He VOLUNTARILY (another crucial word) BECAME man. He assumed the form of manhood according to St. Paul. This form is not a separate being having a nature of its own. It is a mode of existence in which God entered time and space. The Son himself suffered voluntarily in his human nature according to economy."

1943

TIRAN VARDAPET

The Theologian and Thinker

TIRAN SIRPAZAN

As a teacher "he evidenced a most profound and inspiring understanding of the Word of God. And that understanding he passed on to his pupils."

By Mesrob Vartabed Semerjian

At the Armenian Seminary of St. James in Jerusalem we had many instructors from among the priests, but by far the most learned and capable was Tiran Vartabed, now our beloved Arachnort. Under him I studied the Psalms and the Epistle to the Romans. It was indeed an intellectual and spiritual treat to study Holy Scripture under Father Tiran's instruction. In both classes he evidenced a most profound and inspiring understanding of the Word of God. And that understanding he passed on to his pupils.

After my second year at the seminary Father Tiran left for Paris and a few years afterwards he assumed the pastorate of the Church of St. Sarkis in London. In the meantime I had been ordained to the Priesthood and had assumed pastoral work here in the United States. He and I had several correspondences on various theological subjects. I could not but be deeply impressed by his vast learning and profound thinking, and that impression has all the more deepened thru my person-to-person conversations with him here in America on various theological and philosophical matters as well as by reading his many articles and listening to his lectures. Tiran

The Very Rev. Mesrob Semerjian, M.A., is a theologian who in many articles and lectures has interpreted anew and notable originality the traditional dogmas and acts of worship of the Armenian Church.

Sirpazan has never received any degree from any college or university but there are very few theologians and professors of philosophy who could match his learning and profound thinking. His clear comprehension of the structure and meaning of history, his dynamic understanding of the Christian religion and his broad learning and profound insights in the realm of philosophy definitely make him one of the most notable scholars and thinkers the Armenian Church has produced.

Many articles on many subjects have come from Tiran Sirpazan's pen. Besides he has published the following works:

"Divine Liturgy of the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church"

"The Doctrinal Position of the Armenian Church"

"Order of the Dedication of a Church"

"A Christian Approach to Communism"

In the "Divine Liturgy" we find a complete and fresh translation of our Badarak, which in itself reflects much theological thinking. Included in this book is a twenty page commentary which is an interpretation of the meaning of the Badarak. Although there are other systems of interpretation supported by other authorities, one cannot but be impressed by the

THREE DECISIONS

The following are excerpts from the minutes of the Seventh Annual General Assembly of the ACYOA. They indicate the strength of this organization's faith in our future in this country; the sphere and nature of its activities and its reaction to Archbishop Tiran's work as Primate of this Diocese.

FREEDOM, JUSTICE, BROTHERHOOD

... (It was) proposed that the objects of the Organization be reaffirmed on the following grounds:

"We who have committed ourselves to truth and to perpetuate truth through our faith and through our Church, firmly believe and proclaim that:

"The Armenian Church Youth Organization of America seeks, as indicated by its very name and stated in its Constitution, to cause, help and encourage its members to learn, practice, uphold and propagate the moral, dogmatic and spiritual principles and teachings of the Christian religion, and this Organization also seeks to deepen and strengthen among its members the knowledge

ability of Tiran Sirpazan to see the profound meanings in every action and utterance of Holy Badarak.

"The Doctrinal Position of the Armenian Church" is a pamphlet on the Monophysite-Dyophysite controversy in which Tiran Sirpazan (then a vartabed) shows how the dyophysite churches (Roman and Byzantine) have retreated from the position taken by them in the Council of Chalcedon (451 A.D.) and through the centuries have come closer and closer to the position of the Armenian and other oriental churches and that therefore the union of the Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian churches on the disputed point can now be more easily brought about.

The "Order of the Dedication of a Church" is a clarified and re-arranged edition of the corresponding rite in the Great Mashdotz from which all unnecessary repetitions have been eliminated and in which the beauty of the

rite is more simply and clearly expressed.

"A Christian Approach to Communism" is "an attempt to point to a Christian apologetics such as is bound to be developed by the Church in order to face the challenge of Communism". The International Review of Missions has said, "This is a book which makes a real attempt to grapple with a living and urgent problem." And the Dean of St. Paul's Church of London in a radio broadcast has declared that the book is "a valuable contribution to our understanding of one of the factors in the shaping of the future . . . a book which deserves to be read critically and carefully."

On the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the priesthood of our beloved Arachnort Sirpazan it is our earnest hope that he will henceforth write even more prolificly and preserve for posterity the fruits of his remarkable learning and insight.

of, and loyalty to America. This Organization upholds the spirit of human freedom, universal justice, brotherhood of men and devotion to duty as good citizens, dedicated to the service of their God and country.

"In the present world situation, forces of atheistic materialism and other such ideologies are threatening the general foundations on which the above objectives can be carried out at all, and this Organization is convinced that the most potent power against atheistic ideologies is merely the reaffirmation of the positive teachings of the Christian religion."

After discussion, it was **resolved** by unanimous vote:

"That the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America make a special effort to use all its resources to create in its own ranks and among the Armenian people in general, a clear awareness of the necessity of spiritual values to be learned and assimilated as part of their obligations to the Armenian people, to the United States of America and to God and that this Organization stay clear, while engaged in the furthermore of spiritual life, from political activities, according to the American principle of separation of Church and State."

* * * *

CHURCH SCHOOL TEACHERS AND CLERGYMEN

... (It was) proposed that further concrete steps be taken toward the realization of the aims of the Organization. The reasons for this proposal were presented as follows:

"The Seventh Annual General Assembly of the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America in recognizing its mission and obligation of service to our Church, believes that the primary obligation of the Armenian community of America is toward its Church for the good of the Armenian people and of America, and for the greater glory of God.

"This work cannot be done without church school teachers and priests, and the Armenian community of America does not have enough church school teachers, deacons and clergymen to attend to its own religious and spiritual needs.

"During the more than fifty years of its organized existence in the United States of America, the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America has witnessed the growth of an Armenian generation which is American by birth and general education.

"During the same period this Diocese has reached a status where it is no longer entirely dependent on other Armenian church communities abroad to have the church school teachers and clergymen that it needs.

"The Diocese of the Armenian Church of America can, financially and otherwise, prepare its own church school teachers and clergymen."

After discussion, it was **resolved** by unanimous vote:

"That the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America, as a national church organization, encourage and assist in every possible manner the Diocesan authorities in their selection and training of church school teachers and of candidates for ordination into the priesthood, and that this encouragement be as concrete as possible, to the full extent of the financial and other capacities of the Organization."

FOR THE CONTINUED BENEFIT OF OUR CHURCH

(It was) proposed that some action be taken to inform the forthcoming Diocesan Assembly that the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America desires the nomination and reelection of Archbishop Tiran as Primate of our Diocese. (It was) requested that the Archbishop be urged to accept such nomination. After some discussion as to the procedure to be followed, it was voted:

"That Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan be urged to accept nomination for the coming Diocesan election to the office of Primate of the Diocese of North America, for the continued benefit of our Church and people, and that the Central Council take all necessary steps within its power to bring about the successful conclusion of said nomination."

The Armenian Guardian is a monthly publication of news and comments on the church affairs of our Diocese. Its main need is more subscribers. But it equally needs eager friends. In the better interests of your church and people please help us promote this monthly. (\$1.50 for 12 issues).

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