

file
February 21, 1983

His Eminence
Archbishop Torkom Manoogian,
Primate of the Armenian Church
of America (Eastern Diocese), and
President of the Diocesan Council,
630 Second Avenue,
New York, N.Y. 10016

My name is Haroutun Orchanian, member of the Holy Trinity Armenian Church Parish Council of Toronto, Canada.

The reason of my letter is about our council meetings for the past few months. I find these contrary to our By-Laws and parliamentary rules.

1.- The parish council had taken decision to call a special parish meeting for Sunday, October 24th, 1982, to inform the members about the restrictions AGBU and Armen Ontario want the church to agree to, if we have to purchase the land. However, our chairman, Mr. Sarkis Tchilinguirian called the meeting off two weeks before, when all the invitations were ready to go, by calling a vote, and then assuming that if the absent members would have been in, they would have voted as he thought. While one member was in Armenia, the other in bed at home and another one at work (night shift), I found this illegal.

2.- On October 17th, 1982, we, the parish council members, in the presence of Rev. Father Housig Neshanian and Mr. Berge Papazian, church lawyer, while discussing the draft agreement and its paragraph 15 especially, we found it unacceptable, and with majority vote (5 in favor, 2 against and 1 abstain), we have deleted paragraph 15 and all of its restrictions. The chairman, Mr. S. Tchilinguirian was to inform the Diocesan Council to that effect since they were about to discuss the draft, a copy of which was in their possession. To my knowledge this did not happen, because when I asked the chairman the following week in the council if he had written to the Diocese, the reply was "No". The same day he promised to do so.

The following week when I asked him if the letter was sent, the reply I got was "Yes". I asked if it was possible to read it to the council, he said "It is in the files under "Diocesan" heading, and anyone can read it if he wishes". However, I could not find the so called letter, and the following week I asked him if he could find it. The answer was "Check with Mrs. T. Mamourian, the secretary, because she filed it". But the latter had no knowledge of it. So having my doubts and knowing our chairman's stand in the matter, who was unwilling to inform the Diocesan Council about our decision, on December 14th, 1982 I phoned the Diocese

and talked to Mr. Frank Stoneson, who informed me that there was no such letter. I then informed him of our decision of October 17th, 1982, which was to delete paragraph 15.

The chairman's role was to carry the majority's wishes, which was not done.

3.- On December 15th, 1982 parish council meeting, I presented the facts in writing and asked the secretary to insert it in the minutes. The chairman said that it was not possible, and as of February 16th, 1983, the minutes of December 15th, 1982 meeting have not been presented and approved for different reasons, which are unacceptable to me.

4.- I am enclosing a copy of a report handed to the members during the January 23rd special parish assembly. On the last paragraph "Proposal", the statement is totally untrue. There was no such resolution passed during the meeting of January 19th, 1983. Furthermore, when the parish asked for information, the chairman was not ready to give any, and with the help of Mr. H. Yessayan and Mr. Bedros Tchilinguirian of Armen Ontario, tried to tell them that there were no restrictions on the part of AGBU and Armen Ontario for the size and the use of the church and the social hall, which is totally misleading and untrue.

5.- On February 14, 1983, the chairman called a special meeting with the Building Committee and the Diocesan Delegates. The following members were present:

Messrs. Barkev Khojajian, Arthur Selyan, Alex Baltayan and Mourad Bahoudian from Building Committee.

Messrs. Hrant Souin, Bedros Kokorian, Levon Yazedjian, Delegates. Mr. H. Boyadjian, Fund Raising Committee, Mr. Berge Papazian, our Lawyer, and Mr. Setrag Adourian.

The chairman, S. Tchilinguirian then informed us that during his meeting of February 4, 1983 with Mr. Bedros Tchilinguirian of Armen Ontario, the latter had told him that the restrictions of Paragraph 15 be inserted in a different form and the carrying charges be accepted. At that time I advised the members that the Paragraph 15 has already been deleted during one of our parish council meetings, and we also had a letter from our Diocese in New York asking us to delete Paragraph 15 in its entirety, and that it is our duty, as parish council members, to execute the instructions given by the Primate and the Diocesan Council according to our By-Law Paragraph 33. After exchange of ideas, with majority of present, it was decided there should not be any restrictions. The chairman Sarkis Tchilinguirian instructed the lawyer, Mr. B. Papazian to write a new draft with no restrictions at all, and so the case was closed.

6.- After all these meetings,

- a) Parish Council decision of 5-2 vote of Oct. 17/82
- b) Letter from Primate and Diocesan Council
- c) Special Parish Assembly of Jan. 23/83

d) The last meeting of Feb. 14/83 with the Building Committee, Diocesan Delegates, our lawyer, parish council members and Mr. Adourian in favor of not having any restrictions attached to the land purchase deed, and to this effect the lawyer is already working on the draft;

our chairman Sarkis Tchilinguirian and Mr. H. Yessayan are not yet ready to accept the facts, so on February 16, 1983 meeting, they plotted another illegal tactic. The chairman Mr. Sarkis Tchilinguirian announced that he is appointing Mr. H. Yessayan as the chairman of the day, when Mr. Garo Martin objected that it was unorthodox to appoint someone else when the vice-chairman was present, but Mr. Tchilinguirian and Mr. Yessayan insisted that was the way they wanted, so not to have any arguments, we accepted.

After reading the minutes of February 9th, 1983 meeting, the chairman of the day, Mr. Yessayan proceeded with the day's business. I asked the chair why the minutes of the Monday, February 14th meeting were not read and if they were ready, and Mr. Yessayan told me that it will be done when we discuss the draft agreement later. But when Mr. Yessayan introduced the subject of the draft agreement, he started saying that despite of the fact that we have taken out the Paragraph 15, it has to be reinserted in the draft, because if we don't, it might be unacceptable by Armen Ontario or Mr. Alec Manoogian. I said there was a point of order, but Mr. Yessayan said there was no point of order and that he will not let me speak now, but when my turn comes. After my insisting and other council members' objections, he gave me the privilege to talk. I pointed out that Paragraph 15 had already been deleted by 5-2 vote and the Primate and the Diocesan Council have instructed us to do so. Furthermore, on Monday with the majority of the delegates and the building committee members, it was decided not to have restrictions. So if he wished to reopen the subject, it was supposed to be done with majority consent of the council to rescind and annul the previous vote. The chairman insisted there was no such by-law, and that I was trying to sabotage the church project, and since he was the day's chairman, he had the privilege to do anything he liked to.

Afterwards he asked if there was any objection just to review the Paragraph 15, and Mr. Toros Torossian and myself opposed by raising our hands. The chairman opened the subject, and after every one took time to talk about it and my turn came, he would not let me talk, because he said, I was opposed to review the subject, and that he knew already what I would say. The other council members pointed out to him that he had no authority to do so, but he insisted about it, so I asked the secretary to put that in the minutes and that I was going out of the room and that I did not recognize the legality of the meeting. At that moment Mr. Yessayan, the chairman of the day, started swearing and told me to get out of the room and not to come to any more meetings, and that he was free to do anything he wanted.

When I got out of the room and Mr. L. Khosrovian with me, Mr. Yessayan came after me shouting and swearing that I should not show my face in the council meetings any more, and also not to come to church any more, otherwise he will bring a resolution to have me kicked out from any further meetings, and also from the parish council.

Mr. H. Yessayan stressed the fact that "Regardless of any decisions from the general assembly or any other meetings, the church shall be built beside the AGBU building, and we are going to accept all the restrictions, and no one can stop us".

I find that both these members, Mr. Sarkis Tchilinguirian and Mr. Haroutun Yessayan are working in favor of Armen Ontario rather than protecting the interest of our church, and therefore our meetings are becoming fights instead of discussions. Furthermore, it does not make any difference what has been decided during these meetings, because they are still doing whatever they have planned.

I bring this to your attention, trusting that you will find a better solution.

Your Grace
I remain faithfully yours,



Haroutun Orchanian,
Holy Trinity Toronto
Parish Council Member.

cc. Chairman, D.C.N.Y.
H. Souin, Diocesan Delegate