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SOURCE Baikar.

REPRIMAND DASHNAK PRIESTS FOR ANTI-ARMENIAN PROPAGANDA

This report consists of excerpts from a recent series of editorials in Baikar, an organ of the Armenian Ramgavar Party, which attacked the Dashnaks for their alleged propaganda against Echmiadzin and the Armenian SSR.

Numbers in parentheses refer to appended sources.

The priests of the Armenian Apostolic churches sponsored by the Dashnak Party have announced in the US press that they are not willing to accept directives from Echmiadzin dealing with political matters, although they will follow religious instructions. They believe that the Catholicos is forced to give such orders under Bolshevik pressure (1)

This public statement by the Dashnak priests was prompted by the following directive from the Catholicos of Echmiadzin "Armenians in the Diaspora: Obey the laws of your country; be always on the side of international peace; love your mother country and participate in its anniversary celebrations."(2) This is not Communist propaganda. Armenian clergymen should be careful about accusing their supreme religious head of Communist activities in the American press. It is sad to note that, after taking the oath of allegiance to Echmiadzin and after 30 years of affiliation with it, Armenian priests, dominated by Dashnak politics, are now using their influence against the mother church.(3)

The Dashnaks, who are against the Armenian SSR for political reasons, are shamelessly misrepresenting the facts. They are basing their anti-Echmiadzin propaganda on three false premises motivated by party politics: (a) the Armenian SSR is not free; (b) its independence is controlled by the Bolsheviks; and (c) it is under a dictatorship, and therefore avenues of free education are closed to it. These are, of course, all lies. The past 30 years have been the most fertile and progressive years in history for the Armenian people.

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- 1 -

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The attitude of the Dashnak Party toward the Armenian SSR is well known. In the past, the Dashnaks allied themselves with the Nazis. Today, they are cooperating with the Western Powers. Through the Voice of America, they are calling on the Armenian people to revolt against the USSR, considering only their own political interests rather than the welfare of the people of the Armenian SSR. The use of their priests for anti-Communist propaganda is unforgivable.(4)

The Armenian Catholicos has been for centuries the official head of the Armenians and has held their interests and welfare above all else. He has extended his blessings to the ruling power of the day, be he a Sultan, a Tsar, or a Sheik. Why should he not give his blessings to the Armenian SSR government today? The Patriarchs of Cilicia, Jerusalem, and Istanbul, who are entirely independent of Armenia SSR politically, are loyal to Echmiadzin and the republic. Are they forced to do so through fear?(2)

To clarify the position of the Armenian people regarding the anniversary celebration of the Armenian SSR, I want to point out that it was started in the US by the writer of this article [Sarkis Chitjian] and Comrade Snar. When we initiated anniversary celebrations in the 1920's, we tried to make them community affairs, inviting all religious and political groups including the Dashnaks. However, fanatic leftists, who considered themselves the only friends of the Armenian SSR, entered our Armenian Community party and disturbed our peace. They did not allow any bourgeois intellectuals and others to participate in these celebrations. They dissolved our HOG [Armenian Communist organization of the 1920's and early 1930's] and, on the party's supreme order, relayed through Tashjian [leader of HOG], the "Progressives" were organized. Some years later, when Tashjian died, the extreme leftists discarded their fanaticism. Now, the anniversary of the Armenian SSR is celebrated in cooperation with various Armenian groups. The Progressives are pursuing the pro-Soviet line, through churches, bourgeois intellectuals, and political parties. They have organized the Armenian National Council, with a minister as its director. They hold community meetings and celebrate the anniversary of the Armenian SSR.(4)

The idea of an Armenian Republic, regardless of the type of government or the control under which it is maintained, is sacred to the Armenian people and must be worthy of respect and celebration.(2)

SOURCES

1. Baikar, 30 Nov 51
2. " 2 Dec 51
3. " 1 Dec 51
4. " 4 Dec 51

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- 2 -

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