

The Post-Genocide Reorganisation of the Armenian Community of Cyprus in the 1920s-1930s

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Abstract

Armenians have lived in Cyprus since ancient times. Although their number on the island has never been large, they have made a significant contribution to its cultural and socio-political life. After the Adana massacre (1909) and the Armenian Genocide (1915–1923), thousands of Armenian refugees settled in Cyprus. In the 1920s and 1930s, the process of reorganising the Armenian community of Cyprus started, new bodies of the Armenian Ethnarchy were formed, and the Armenian Prelature of Cyprus played the most important role in all these. As of the mid-1920s, the Prelature came officially under the jurisdiction of the Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia. The reorganisation of the Armenian community of Cyprus was important in preserving the identity of local Armenians and integrating them into the island's socio-political life. Using Armenian-speaking sources, this article offers significant information, events, and insights about the Armenian-Cypriot community, some of which are available for the first time in English. Finally, examining the inner workings of this Armenian community serves as a paradigm for the formation of the broader Armenian Diaspora.

Keywords: Armenian Diaspora; Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia; Armenian-Cypriot community; Armenian Prelature of Cyprus; Armenian refugees

Introduction

References about Armenians in Cyprus start as early as 578 AD, during Byzantine rule.³ The relations of Armenians with Cyprus increased during the time of the Ar-

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³ Arshag Alboyadjian, 'Gibros gëghzin' ('The island of Cyprus') in Teotig (ed.), *Amenoun Daretsouytsë (Everyone's Almanac)* (1927) 1(21), Paris, 210–212; Susan Paul Pattie, *Faith in History: Armenians Rebuilding Community* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997) 33; Sossie Kasbarian, 'Rooted and Routed: The Contemporary Armenian Diaspora in Cyprus and Lebanon' (PhD thesis, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 2006) 53–54; Alexander-Michael Hadjilyra, *The Armenians of Cyprus* (Larnaca: Kalaydjian Foundation, 2009) 10; John Matossian, *Silent Partners: The Armenians and Cyprus - 578–1878* (Nicosia: Lusignan Press, 2009) 9–13; Alexander-Michael Hadjilyra,

menian Kingdom of Cilicia;⁴ since then, the number of Armenians who settled in Cyprus increased further. The Armenian Prelature of Cyprus was first mentioned in 1179, during the pontificate of Catholicos Gregory IV.⁵ In subsequent centuries, Cyprus became an important spiritual and cultural centre for the Armenians, with the Armenian Church playing a key role. Archival documents reveal that the Prelature's 'administrative organisation' began mid-19th century.⁶

The Armenian Genocide, perpetrated during World War I, was fateful to the Armenian people. More than 1.5 million Armenians were massacred and over 800,000 had to abandon their ancestral homes.⁷ Armenian cultural heritage was also destroyed:⁸ because of the Genocide, Armenian spiritual and religious institutions were abandoned in the historical homeland.⁹ For example, in 1915, the Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia had to abandon its historical seat in Sis, to be exiled to Aleppo, Idlib, Jerusalem, and, finally, Damascus; in 1919, it returned to Adana, set-

The Armenians of Cyprus (Nicosia: Press and Information Office, 2016) 7–8; Edgar Hovhannisyan, *Gibrosi temi veragazmoutiunë yev gibrahayoutiunë (1920–1940 tt) Bedros Arkebisgobos Saradjian (The reorganisation of the Diocese of Cyprus and the Armenians of Cyprus (1920–1940) Archbishop Bedros Saradjian)* (Yerevan, 2021) 3.

⁴ Pagouran, *Gibros Gëghzi (The Island of Cyprus)* (Nicosia: National Educational Orphanage Printing Press, 1903) 52–55; Archbishop Papken Gulesserian, *Hay Gibros (Armenian Cyprus)* (Antelias: Printing House of the Seminary of the Catholicosate of Cilicia, 1936) 39–43; Sir George Hill, *A History of Cyprus, Volume Three* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948) 85–95; Kasbarian (no 3) 54; Matossian (no 3) 19–41, 45–54; Alboyadjian (no 3) 212–213; Hadjilyra (2009) 11–12; Hovhannisyan (2021) 4; Pattie (no 3) 39. Originally a principality (1080), it became a Kingdom in 1198, until it was seized by the Mamelukes in 1375.

⁵ Bishop Ghevont, *Hishadagaran Gibrahay Kaghouti (Repository of Memories of the Armenian-Cypriot Community)* (Antelias: Printing House of the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia, 1955) 17; Puzant Yeghiayan, *Zhamanagagits Badmoutiun Gatoghigosoutian Hayots Giligio, 1914–1972 (Contemporary History of the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia, 1914–1972)* (Antelias: Printing House of the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia, 1975) 283; Archbishop Varoujan (ed.), *Gibrosi temi hovëvagan garkë yev temagan gazmavoroutiunë (The pastoral succession of the Cyprus Diocese and the diocesan formation)* (Nicosia, 2011a) 7, 11; Alboyadjian (no 3) 212; Gulesserian (no 4) 28, 241–242; Hovhannisyan (2021) 4; Matossian (no 3) 69; Pagouran (no 4) 49; Pattie (no 3) 34.

⁶ Varoujan (2011a) 24–54.

⁷ Vahakn Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic Conflict from the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1995) 185–356; Raymond Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide: A Complete History* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011) 289–690; Alexander-Michael Hadjilyra, *The Melkonian Educational Institute: An Island within an Island* (La Verne, California: Collegiate Press, 2023) 2, 119, 131; Hadjilyra (2009) 14; Hadjilyra (2016) 30; Pattie (no 3) 43–44.

⁸ Kévorkian (no 7) 272–278.

⁹ Simon Payaslian, 'The Destruction of the Armenian Church during the Genocide' 2006 1(2) *Genocide Studies and Prevention* 163–164; Hadjilyra (2023) 3; Kévorkian (no 7) 272–278, 755.

ting up temporary premises. When the French Forces¹⁰ evacuated Cilicia in 1921, Catholicos Sahag II Khabayan¹¹ followed his flock to refugeehood: for the next nine years, he was without a permanent home, moving between Aleppo (his temporary premises), Damascus, and Beirut.¹²

In the 1920s, the Armenian Diaspora began to form, along with Armenian political, philanthropic, as well as spiritual-religious institutions.¹³ In this decade, when the Catholicosate did not have a permanent seat, the idea of establishing it in Cyprus was periodically discussed.¹⁴ However, the imperative need to be closer to the majority of Armenian refugees made the suburb of Antelias in Lebanon the next headquarters of the see of Cilicia in 1930, previously the site of an Australasian Near East Relief Foundation orphanage (1922–1928).¹⁵

Under the new circumstances of the mid-1920s, the Armenian Prelature of Cyprus gradually came under the jurisdiction of the Catholicosate of Cilicia. The Catholicosate made huge efforts towards organising the communal life of the Armenian refugees who had settled in Cyprus and preserving their ethnic identity. The island of Cyprus thus became a ‘historic host state for the diasporic Armenians’.¹⁶

This article presents the process of resettling thousands of Armenians in Cyprus following the Armenian Genocide, and reorganising the local Armenian community

¹⁰ According to the terms of the Armistice of Mudros (30 October 1918), Cilicia was placed under a French mandate. A High Commissioner was appointed, and the Légion d'Orient (later called Légion Arménienne) and other French military forces were deployed in the region. Eventually, however, the French left two months after the Treaty of Ankara (20 October 1921).

¹¹ Archbishop Varoujan (ed.), *Tēghtagsoutiun Sahag P. Gatoghigosi yev Bedros Ark. Saradjiani* (*Correspondence of Catholicos Sahag II and Archbishop Bedros Saradjian*) (Nicosia, 2010b) 11–16; Seta B. Dadoyan, ‘The Move of the Catholicosate from Armenia, to Cilicia, to Antelias’ in Seta B. Dadoyan (ed.), *The Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia: History, Treasures, Mission* (Antelias: Armenian Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia, 2015) 49–54; Ghevont (no 5) 74, 76; Gulesserian (no 4) 123, 156–157; Yeghiayan (no 5) 62–63, 313, 484–485, 897. Born Kapriel Khabayan (Kharpert, 1849 – Antelias, 1939), he graduated from the Theological Seminary of Jerusalem (1871). In 1902, he was elected Catholicos of Cilicia, the last in the ancient throne of Sis and the first one in Antelias. The survival of the Catholicosate of Cilicia is, in many ways, attributed to his tenacity and immense efforts. Catholicos Sahag II visited Cyprus four times: 5 June–5 August 1922, 9 July–6 October 1931, 10 July–8 October 1933, and 16 August–4 September 1934.

¹² Dadoyan (no 11) 49–51, 53; Hadjilyra (2023) 121–122; Hovhannisyan (2022) 1277–1278; Yeghiayan (no 5) 52–66, 84–91, 166, 207–241.

¹³ Edgar Hovhannisyan ‘The Restoration of the Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia after Exile’ (2022) 10(4) *Quaestio Rossica* 1277–1284.

¹⁴ Varoujan (2010b) 107–108; Yeghiayan (no 5) 222, 286–287, 290–291; SA1/1129/1921.

¹⁵ Dadoyan (no 11) 53; Hovhannisyan (2022) 1281–1282; Yeghiayan (no 5) 321–336, 474–475.

¹⁶ Kasbarian (no 3) 56.

in the 1920s and 1930s. Using the Armenian community of Cyprus as an example, the article aims to illustrate the formation of the Armenian Diaspora. A small portion of Genocide survivors settled in Cyprus and chose the path of the Diaspora, that is, not to assimilate, and to preserve their identity in a foreign environment. As a result, the old Armenian community of Cyprus, with its structures, was reorganised in the 1920s–1930s, with the Armenian Church playing an important role.

This research is mostly based on Armenian-language works; they have scientific value because they were written at the time of the Armenian-Cypriot community's reorganisation. Armenian-speaking scholars tend to be familiar with most of these works. For non-Armenians, especially those in academia, this article offers significant information, events, and insights about the Armenian population in Cyprus.

The research was substantially based on the archival materials available at the Cyprus State Archives, and the archives of the Armenian Prelature of Cyprus. Some of these documents have been scientifically analysed for this article and circulated for the first time. The article's development was also significantly influenced by Armenian publications in Cyprus.

The Establishment of Cilician Armenian Refugees in Cyprus

The number of Armenians in Cyprus remained small until the Armenian Genocide. In 1877, priest Hovhannes Shahinian¹⁷ registered 152 Armenians in Cyprus; in 1879, according to the census carried out a year after the island was leased to the British, there were only 166 Armenians.¹⁸ Their number began to gradually increase during British rule: the first official population census, in 1881, recorded 201 Armenians; ten years later, there were 291 Armenians on the island, who by 1901 had increased to 553; the 1911 census recorded 611 Armenians in Cyprus.¹⁹

¹⁷ Fr. Hovhannes Shahinian (Constantinople, 1855 – Halevga, 1922) came to serve in Cyprus in 1877 and started gathering church archives, as well as birth, marriage, and death records. Other than serving in Nicosia, for which at times he was the only Armenian priest, he also officiated in Larnaca, when there was no resident Armenian priest, and Magaravank.

¹⁸ Alboyadjian (no 3) 226; Hadjilyra (2009) 20; Hovhannisyan (2021) 14.

¹⁹ Hadjilyra (2016) 16. These figures are the combined numbers of those registered as Armenians by religion and speakers of Armenian, which explains the discrepancy with figures cited in Hadjilyra (2009) 20–22 and Pattie (no 3) 245. Nicosia was home to most Armenians (two-thirds of their total population in 1881, 60% in 1891 and 1901, and almost 50% in 1911), followed by Larnaca (rising from 7% in 1881 and 1891, to 11% in 1901, and 28% in 1911), with the rest living around the monastery and other places.

In 1912, according to the Parish Council of Cyprus, 480–600 ‘local and refugee’²⁰ Armenians resided on the island.²¹ The influx of Armenians to Cyprus began to increase after the Hamidian massacres of 1894–1896 and the Adana massacre in 1909.²² Up until 1921, only a small number of displaced Cilician Armenians had settled in Cyprus, however they did not intend to permanently settle on the island, and yearned to return to their homes;²³ amongst them were many orphans.²⁴ According to the 1921 census, there were 1,573 Armenians in Cyprus, of whom 1,197 were Gregorian.²⁵

The Armenians who had settled in Cyprus before the Armenian Genocide were considered locals by the refugees. After the Genocide, the image of the Armenian-Cypriot community changed completely. Following the final uprooting of the Armenians of Cilicia, the influx of Armenian refugees started on 8 November 1921.²⁶ Over the next few years, about 8,000 to 10,000 refugees displaced from various locations in Cilicia, Western Armenia, and Asia Minor²⁷ arrived on the island.²⁸ Alongside the

²⁰ Varoujan (2010b) 388. At the time, only the Armenians who resided on the island before the arrival of the British in 1878 were considered locals, as well as their descendants.

²¹ Archbishop Varoujan (ed.), *Adanayi vganerë yev Sourp Sdepanos vgayaranë* (The martyrs of Adana and the testimony of Saint Stephen) (Nicosia, 2010a) 11–112; Hadjilyra (2016) 30.

²² Archbishop Varoujan (ed.), *Darakroutiun, Vorper, Melkonian Hasdadoutiun* (Exile, Orphans, Melkonian Institute) (Nicosia, 2011b) 20–21; Alboyadjian (no 3) 226; Dadrian (no 7) 179–185; Gulesserian (no 4) 89–91; Pagouran (no 4) 82; Pattie (no 3) 54–56, 58–59; Varoujan (2010a) 4; Varoujan (2010b) 57; SA1/2196/1896; SA1/2271/1896; SA1/2285/1896; SA1/2426/1896; SA1/1106/1909; SA1/1781/1909. Because of the Hamidian massacres, about 1,000 Armenians arrived in Cyprus, of whom only about 100 remained (mostly from Diyarbakir/Dikranagerd, Aintab and Kilis), due to the poor state of the local economy; after the Adana massacre, about 2,000 Armenians fled to Cyprus, most of whom returned to their homeland or emigrated abroad shortly afterwards.

²³ Pattie (no 3) 59–60; Varoujan (2011b) 32, 51, 275.

²⁴ Hovhannisyan (2021) 84–87; Pattie (no 3) 86; Varoujan (2010b) 32, 34; Varoujan (2011b) 40–317; Yeghiayan (no 5) 99, 101.

²⁵ Hadjilyra (2009) 20–21; Pattie (no 3) 245. Of these, 1/3 lived in Nicosia, 13% in Larnaca, 3% in Famagusta, and the rest in Amiandos (c. 30%), around the monastery, and various other places. The term ‘Gregorian’ was used to denote Apostolic Orthodox Armenians, who venerate Saint Gregory the Illuminator as the founder of their Church, as opposed to Catholic and Protestant Armenians.

²⁶ Hovhannisyan (2021) 14–15, 25; Varoujan (2010b) 57; Varoujan (2011b) 20–21; SA1/1401/1921.

²⁷ Safavid Persia and Ottoman Turkey split the territory of ancient Armenia in 1502, resulting in the Ottoman-Persian wars in the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries. Western Armenia was the name given to the Armenian lands that joined the Ottoman Empire. Most of the Armenian population of Western Armenia was massacred during the Genocide perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire between 1915 and 1923. Hundreds of thousands of Armenian Genocide survivors emigrated from their motherland, and settled in various countries, forming the Armenian Diaspora.

²⁸ Kevork Keshishian & Margarit Baghdasaryan, ‘Gibros’ (Cyprus), *Hay Spiurk Hanrakidaran* (Arme-

Armenian refugees, there were Greek refugees as well.²⁹ However, only a fraction of these refugees settled on the island—many found the living conditions unfavourable, and soon emigrated to other countries across Europe and the USA, or oftentimes to Syria and Lebanon.³⁰

A report prepared by Prelate Bedros Saradjian on 16 November 1923 recorded 3,648 Armenians in Cyprus, of whom 319 were locals, 3,029 had settled from late 1921 onwards, while 300 had arrived between 1896 and late 1921.³¹ According to another report Saradjian prepared on 7 April 1931, there were 3,471 Armenians in Cyprus in 1930.³² The 1931 official census recorded 3,617 Armenians, of whom 3,377 were followers of the Apostolic Church,³³ the rest being Armenian Catholics and Armenian Protestants (mostly Evangelicals); the population of Cyprus was 347,959.³⁴ On 6 June 1935, Saradjian prepared another report on the island's Armenian population: overall 3,819 persons, of whom 102 were locals (i.e. they were here before the Genocide), and 370 resided at the Melkonian Educational Institute.³⁵

The Armenians who settled on the island primarily came from Cilicia; however, there were also some from Western Armenia, and various other Armenian-populated settlements of the Ottoman Empire.³⁶ According to Arshag Alboyadjian (1927), they hailed from 66 cities, towns, and villages in Cilicia, Western Armenia, and Asia Mi-

nian Diaspora Encyclopaedia) (Yerevan: Armenian Encyclopaedia Publishing House, 2003) 343; *Arev* (27 January 1930, No. 3340) 1; Hadjilyra (2016) 11; SA1/1172/1922; SA1/1216/1922; SA1/426/1923; SA1/1205/1923; SA1/1430/1927; SA1/520/1930.

²⁹ *Arev* (19 December 1922, No. 1167) 1.

³⁰ *Arax* (16 July 1924, No. 5) 5; *Arax* (16 August 1925, No. 31) 4; *Arev* (27 January 1930, No. 3340) 1; Varoujan (2010b) 190.

³¹ Varoujan (2011a) 201; Varoujan (2011b) 193. Of these, 52% lived in Nicosia, 41% in Larnaca, 3% in Amiandos, 2% in Famagusta, and the rest around the monastery, and various other places.

³² Varoujan (2010b) 441, 444, 456–459. Of these, 59% lived in Nicosia, 23% in Larnaca, 7% in Amiandos, 4% in Famagusta, 4% in Limassol, and the rest around the monastery, and various other places.

³³ Hadjilyra (2016) 16; Hovhannisyan (2021) 16. Of these, 48% lived in Nicosia, 22% in Larnaca, 3% in Limassol, 2% in Famagusta, and the rest around the monastery, and various other places.

³⁴ Hadjilyra (2009) 21; Pattie (no 3) 245.

³⁵ Gulesserian (no 4) 90–91; Hadjilyra (2009) 21. Of the refugees, 64% lived in Nicosia, 20% in Larnaca, 6% in Limassol and 3% in Larnaca; the rest lived in Amiandos, around the monastery, and various other places. The Melkonian grounds were not considered part of Nicosia at the time.

³⁶ Gulesserian (no 4) 91; Varoujan (2010b) 444. The majority of these refugees came from Adana, Seleucia (Silifke), Caesarea (Gessaria), Hadjin, Aintab, Marash, Kharpert, Sis, Tarsus, and Mersin.

nor.³⁷ According to Archbishop Saradjian, those who had remained by 1935 hailed from 51 places in present-day Turkey.³⁸

The Armenians of Cyprus were mainly craftsmen and merchants, but there were also renowned photographers, doctors, dentists, lawyers, as well as government officials, factory owners, and land owners.³⁹ Thanks to their multilingualism, many worked as interpreters and translators for the colonial government, and the various consulates.⁴⁰

Along with ordinary people from Cilicia and Western Armenia, clergymen, public figures, and educators settled on the island as well. Amongst them was the former Prelate of the city Hadjin in Cilicia, Bishop Bedros Saradjian,⁴¹ who in fact became the island's Armenian Prelate, having also served as such earlier, between 1899 and 1905. Saradjian wrote letters, in his words, 'to the 20th century representatives of humankind' in Paris, London, Washington, Rome, and elsewhere, seeking assistance to the displaced Armenians; he did not receive any response or support.⁴² He also sent letters to the Armenian National Delegation and to Armenian circles, describing the urgent state of Cilician Armenians.⁴³

Saradjian played an important role in facilitating the immigration of Armenian refugees to Cyprus, and organising their communal life. In particular, he made huge efforts towards obtaining permission from the local authorities for the Armenian refugees to arrive on the island—the colonial government had restricted the entry of Armenian refugees, and refused to provide significant material assistance.⁴⁴ To this end, Saradjian approached the government and guaranteed that the arriving refu-

³⁷ Alboyadjian (no 3) 226; Hovhannisyan (2021) 17.

³⁸ Gulesserian (no 4) 91; Hadjilyra (2016) 33. Present-day Turkey encompasses Eastern Thrace, Asia Minor, Anatolia, Cilicia, Western Armenia, and the Pontus region.

³⁹ *Arax* (31 May 1924, No. 2) 4; *Arax* (16 June 1924, No. 3) 5, *Arax* (September–December 1927, No. 68) 4; Alboyadjian (no 3) 239; Gulesserian (no 4) 258; Pagouran (no 4) 88–90; Pattie 61–64, 90–92; Varoujan (2010b) 444.

⁴⁰ Hadjilyra (2009) 14; Hovhannisyan (2021) 18–19; Pattie (no 3) 50–53.

⁴¹ *Arev* (8 June 1940, No. 6522) 2; *Arev* (1 October 1940, No. 6620) 1–2; Alboyadjian (no 3) 228; Gulesserian (no 4) 250–251; Varoujan (2010b) 18, 23–28, 94; Yeghiayan (no 5) 462, 489–490, 897–898. Born Bedros Saradjian (Sivrihisar, 1870 – Antelias, 1940), he graduated from the Theological Seminary of Jerusalem (1891). During his two terms as Armenian Prelate of Cyprus (1899–1905 and 1920–1940), he realised various projects. In 1936, he was appointed Vicar-General of the Catholicosate of Cilicia, and initiated numerous construction works in Antelias, serving until he was elected Catholicos in 1940.

⁴² Varoujan (2010b) 57.

⁴³ Varoujan (2011b) 55–73; Hovhannisyan (2021) 20.

⁴⁴ Varoujan (2011b) 118; SA1/1130/1915. Originally, the island's government was negatively disposed towards the settling of Armenian refugees in Cyprus, see Andrekos Varnava & Trevor Harris "It is quite

gees would not cause a ‘financial burden to anyone’.⁴⁵ The work done by Saradjian in terms of the numerous mediations to the local government was equally important on the issue of receiving the refugees.⁴⁶ Ultimately, because of their industriousness, these refugees did not become a burden on the local authorities, the local Armenian Ethnarchy, or the Armenian institutions. That is also why the local authorities eventually allowed Armenian refugees to settle on the island, unlike Greek refugees,⁴⁷ despite the fact that the latter were not large in number.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, had there been no restrictions for the Armenian refugees arriving in Cyprus, their number could well have been even greater.

Most newly-settled Armenian refugees experienced extreme hardship. For many years, they were not granted British citizenship,⁴⁹ which placed barriers in their living situation and work opportunities. On 21 December 1926, Saradjian met with the newly-arrived Governor of Cyprus, Sir Ronald Storrs,⁵⁰ to once again raise the issue of granting British citizenship to Armenian refugees in Cyprus; five years earlier, the issue had been raised, and was rejected by the British. Here, let us note that local Armenians, as well as Armenians who had settled in Cyprus up until 5 November 1914,⁵¹ were considered British subjects, while those who arrived later were not. As the pleas made to the local authorities had not received a positive response, Saradjian suggested to Catholicos Sahag II to apply to the British Colonial Office.⁵²

The issue of their citizenship would only be settled in December 1929—an Armenian who had been residing for five years on the island could become a British subject

impossible to receive them”: Saving the Musa Dagħ Refugees and the Imperialism of European Humanitarianism’ (2018) 90(4) *The Journal of Modern History* 834–862.

⁴⁵ Varoujan (2011b) 118.

⁴⁶ For example, Saradjian was instrumental in securing funds to pay the government for the mandatory 40-day quarantine period in Dhekelia and elsewhere, see Pattie (no 3) 60–61, 67.

⁴⁷ Varoujan (2011b) 146.

⁴⁸ An argument used at the time was that the Greeks had a State of their own, whereas the Armenians did not (the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic founded in 1920 was not a sovereign State, rather a constituent republic of the Soviet Union).

⁴⁹ Hovhannisyan (2021) 23; Varoujan (2010b) 223.

⁵⁰ *Arax* (16 August 1926, No. 54–55) 1; *Arax* (September 1926, No. 56) 1; Varoujan (2010b) 190. Sir Ronald Storrs (Burry, UK, 1881 – London, 1955) graduated from Pembroke College, Cambridge (1903). After serving as Military Governor of Jerusalem (1917–1920), and Governor of Jerusalem and Judea (1920–1926)—where he became well-acquainted with both the Armenians and the Armenian Church—he arrived in Cyprus on 30 November 1926, serving until 9 June 1932.

⁵¹ Hill (no 4) 412–414, 521; Hovhannisyan (2021) 14, 23; Pattie (no 3) 34. Cyprus was annexed by the British Empire on 5 November 1914.

⁵² Varoujan (2010b) 221.

if they were known by at least four British persons, a positive testimony was given about them, and they were able to pay ten pounds sterling.⁵³ Thus, the Armenian refugees were gradually naturalised as British subjects.

The Reorganisation of the Armenian Prelature of Cyprus and the Formation of the Armenian Ethnarchy's Bodies

The Prelature's organisation and clarification of which hierarchical see of the Armenian Church⁵⁴ it belonged to was of critical importance for the reorganisation of the communal life of Armenians in Cyprus. Although historically under the Catholicosate of Cilicia, since the mid-18th century (except between 1837–1861, when it reverted to Cilicia) it had been alternating between the Armenian Patriarchates of Jerusalem and Constantinople.⁵⁵ Most Armenian refugees had previously been under the jurisdiction of the Catholicosate of Cilicia; under the new circumstances, they expressed their desire to maintain this affiliation. In the early 1920s, uncertainty abounded regarding the Prelature's administrative attachment. The Armenian refugees started raising the issue of where the island's Armenian Prelature should belong spiritually. Meanwhile, the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople was not officially against relinquishing the Diocese to the Catholicosate of Cilicia.⁵⁶ Saradjian played an important role in this matter, too. Soon after settling in Cyprus,⁵⁷ he became the Vicar of

⁵³ Varoujan (2010b) 282.

⁵⁴ Archbishop Malachia Ormanian, *The Church of Armenia: Her History, Doctrine, Rule, Discipline, Liturgy, Literature, and Existing Condition* (London: A. R. Mowbray & Co., 1912) 131–138, 316; Dadoyan (no 11) 46–47; Ghevont (no 5) 68–70; Hadjilyra (2009) 27; Hovhannisyan (2022) 1276; Kasbarian (no 3) 178; Payaslian (no 9) 149–150. There are four hierarchical sees in the structure of the Armenian Church: the Catholicosate of All Armenians (in Etchmiadzin, Armenia), the Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia (in Antelias, Lebanon), the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, and the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople.

⁵⁵ Alboyadjian (no 3) 223–228; Ghevont (no 5) 68–70; Gulesserian (no 4) 243–247; Varoujan (2010b) 96–97, 389; Yeghiayan (no 5) 285–289. Cyprus was at times under the Armenian Patriarchates of Constantinople (1759–1775, 1799–1812, 1861–1864, 1877–1888, 1897–1898, 1908–1921) and Jerusalem (1775–1799, 1812–1837, 1848–1861, 1865–1877, 1888–1897, 1898–1908), even—unilaterally—under the Catholicosate of Etchmiadzin (1864–1865). The Prelature's administrative attachment had become a matter of debate between the Catholicosate of Cilicia and the Patriarchate of Constantinople even before World War I, when a large number of Cilician Armenians had settled on the island after the Adana massacre of 1909; however, World War I and the Genocide did not provide an opportunity to resolve the issue.

⁵⁶ Ghevont (no 5) 71–72; Hovhannisyan (2021) 5–6, 25, 37; Varoujan (2011a) 183–184.

⁵⁷ Gulesserian (no 4) 250–251; Varoujan (2010b) 18, 26–27, 94; Varoujan (2011a) 21; Varoujan (2011b) 71. Saradjian arrived in Larnaca on 12 April 1920, moving to Nicosia the following day. After his

the Prelature, and then assumed the leadership of the island's Armenian Ethnarchy. The latter's reorganisation continued to be an important issue in subsequent years.

The first reorganisation of communal affairs occurred at the introduction of Education Law XXIV/1920. On 24 December 1920, the colonial government appointed a four-member Committee of Management⁵⁸ for 'Armenian Church Schools';⁵⁹ previously, these schools had been managed by the Parish Council, without any governmental involvement.⁶⁰

Since the Armenian National Constitution had been ratified by Sultan Abdülaziz,⁶¹ the Armenian community of Cyprus almost always governed its affairs via an elected Parish Council.⁶² Saradjian took steps towards forming new bodies, and eventually placing the Prelature under the jurisdiction of the Catholicosate of Cilicia. By his initiative, and according to the Armenian National Constitution, a five-member Auditing Council was elected on 28 January 1923, responsible for overseeing the activities of

supporters made Archbishop Taniel Hagopian step down from the helm of the Prelature in May 1920, he retained the title of Prelate of Hadjin until the fall of Hadjin on 15 October 1920.

⁵⁸ SA1/1476/1920; SA1/854/1921. The following Parish Council members were appointed: Apisoghom Utidjian, Apkar Guvezian, Aram Kevorkian, and Movses Soutanian.

⁵⁹ The schools under its purview were the following: a) the Vartanants boys' school, and Shoushanian girls' school (1886 & 1902, Nicosia; Shoushanian had been established by Saradjian himself); and b) the Mousheghian co-ed school (1909, Larnaca). This Committee was not responsible for private Armenian schools, i.e. a) at the Adalia settlement, near the monastery (1910–1922); b) at Saint Joseph's convent in Larnaca, under Armenian Catholic Abbot Jean Kouyoumdjian (1921–1923); c) three small schools in Larnaca run by Haroutiun Kalaydjian, Verkin Abadjian, and Protestant Satenig Derderian (1922–1923); d) a kindergarten in Larnaca taught by Josephine Gulesserian, under the Reformed Presbyterian Mission (1923–1939); and e) an elementary school operating within the Larnaca American Academy (1923–1936).

⁶⁰ Indeed, in 1921 Saradjian assumed the position of Headmaster for all public Armenian schools of Cyprus, until in 1933 Setrak Guebenlian took over for Nicosia's Melikian School, serving until 1949; in Larnaca, Haigazoun Hagopian became the first Headmaster (1933–1937), followed by Assadour Magarian (1937–1945).

⁶¹ Dadoyan (no 11) 49, 52; Hovhannisyan (2021) 124; Ormanian (no 54) 93, 153–156; Yeghiayan (no 5) 60–68, 241, 532–535, 881–886. The National Constitution, compiled in Constantinople in 1863 in the spirit of the *Hatt-ı Hümayun* edict (1856), regulated internal Armenian communal life. Following the Genocide, and the depopulation of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, it remained in force within the Armenian Diaspora communities until it was first amended in 1941, and then in 1965, when it became known as the Constitutional Charter of the Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia.

⁶² *Arev* (24 March 1932, No. 4006) 3; Ghevont (no 5) 88; Varoujan (2010b) 397. According to available records, there was a Parish Council at least since 1872.

the Parish Council, which also prepared the community's budget.⁶³ On 25 February and 4 March, the Parish Council was elected, also consisting of five members.⁶⁴

On 26 March 1923, Saradjian announced the appointment of a five-member Parish Council for Larnaca,⁶⁵ with Bishop Yeghishe Garoyan⁶⁶ as its President, who was resident there between 1921 and 1929.⁶⁷ Also in 1923, the Larnaca Armenian cemetery was established,⁶⁸ and a larger school building was erected in Larnaca, to which a second floor was added in 1926,⁶⁹ thanks to a donation by Agha Garabed Melkonian.⁷⁰

In a letter dated 24 March 1924, Saradjian requested from Catholicos Sahag II to confirm the island's elected national bodies with a pontifical encyclical, and to con-

⁶³ Varoujan (2010b) 97–98, 142. This body operated until 1927, consisting of Hampartsoum Kevorkian, Toros Goudsouzian, Dickran Ouzounian, Stepan Eramian, and Raphael Philipposian.

⁶⁴ *Arev* (1 March 1923, No. 1226) 2; *Arev* (14 March 1923, No. 1237) 2; Varoujan (2010b) 97–98; SA1/1476/1920. Sarkis Kradjian, Aram Kevorkian, and Michael Topdjian were elected on 25 February 1923, whereas Garabed Nigoghossian, and Armenag Nassibian were elected on 4 March 1923; these five were appointed by the High Commissioner as the Committee of Management for Armenian Church Schools on 11 May 1923. Except for Aram Kevorkian, the others completely replaced the previous members (elected on 3/16 March 1919), namely Apisoghom Utidjian, Movses Soultanian, Aleksan Eramian, and Apkar Guvezian (the latter had served since 7 February 1888).

⁶⁵ Hovhannisyán (2021) 27; Varoujan (2011b) 159–160. Its members were Dr. Aram Geokdjian, Baghdig Nishanian, Setrak Guebenlian, Diran Kazandjian, and Oksen Kouyoumdjian.

⁶⁶ Ghevont (no 5) 65; Yeghiayan (no 5) 532, 549–551, 898. Born Garabed Garoyan (Kharpert, 1873 – Beirut, 1943), he graduated from the Theological Seminary of Sis (1891). The last Catholicos Vicar of Adana (1920–1921), he found refuge in Larnaca (1921–1929). After serving as Catholicos Vicar of Lebanon (1929–1940), he became locum tenens of the Catholicosate (1940–1943).

⁶⁷ Hovhannisyán (2021) 22–23, 27, 42; Varoujan (2010b) 86; Varoujan (2011a) 202; Varoujan (2011b) 159–160.

⁶⁸ Hadjilyra (2016) 28; SA1/1418/1912. The government granted the burial ground to the community in 1921, but the first burial took place in 1923, as the surrounding wall needed to be constructed; the cemetery was enlarged in 1932 from the original 3 evleks (669 m²) to 2 donums, 2 evleks and 1,944 sq. ft. (3,525 m²).

⁶⁹ Alboyadjian (no 3) 236–237; Ghevont (no 5) 84–85; Gulesserian (no 4) 112–113; Hadjilyra (2023) 122; Varoujan (2010b) 94, 182–183, 450; Varoujan (2011b) 250, 259–264. The construction of this school building was co-financed by the Prelature, and the Adana Educational Association, based in Watertown, Massachusetts.

⁷⁰ Hadjilyra (2023) 3–9, 26, 31–33, 122; Yeghiayan (no 5) 392, 397, 444–446; SA1/827/1925; SA1/999/1925. At Saradjian's request, Garabed Melkonian financed the uniforms and shoes of the students of the Melikian School in Nicosia (1926–1928) and the Armenian School in Larnaca (1925–1928), and donated money for the construction of a 7.1 km paved road linking Magaravank with the town of Kythrea. Thanks to Archbishop Papken Gulesserian's intercession, Garabed Melkonian also became the first benefactor of the Catholicosate of Cilicia in 1930, with an annual donation of £1,000.

firm him as Prelate,⁷¹ which the latter did on 8 April.⁷² With this important historical document, the Catholicosate of Cilicia established its jurisdiction over the Armenian Prelature of Cyprus.⁷³ The contents of the aforementioned encyclical were announced to the island's Armenian national bodies and to the people, who received them with great enthusiasm.

On 20 December 1924, Catholicos Sahag II elevated Saradjian to an Archbishop.⁷⁴ In addition to being a form of appreciation for his intense work, this was also an act of protecting Saradjian's position from the ambitions of Archbishop Zaven Der Yeghiayan,⁷⁵ who appeared to have designs for the same role. Thus, the Prelature officially came under the jurisdiction of the Catholicosate of Cilicia, to which the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople had given its consent.⁷⁶

In early August 1925, the Larnaca Parish Council was dissolved, as some members had resigned; on 28 August, Saradjian announced the appointment of a new three-member Parish Council.⁷⁷ The next elections for the Nicosia Parish Council

⁷¹ Hovhannisyan (2021) 27; Varoujan (2010b) 96.

⁷² Ghevont (no 5) 71–73; Varoujan (2010b) 100; Varoujan (2011a) 205–206; Yeghiayan (no 5) 287.

⁷³ In a letter found in the archives of the Armenian Prelature of Cyprus addressed to the Archbishop of Canterbury Cosmo Gordon Lang and dated 14 December 1934, Catholicos Sahag II and Co-adjutor Papken I stated that 'The Island of Cyprus has become a diocese of this Catholicosate (sic) of Cilicia since June 27, 1914', the date of the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople's Mixed Council's relevant decision. However, previously there was a genuine fear that if Saradjian were to leave, Cyprus could become a Diocese of Jerusalem or Constantinople, or even Etchmiadzin, as per what is recorded in Varoujan (2010b) 228–230 and Yeghiayan (no 5) 288–290.

⁷⁴ Hovhannisyan (2021) 29; Varoujan (2010b) 125. Khabayan shared a deep spiritual link with Saradjian, as he had ordained him a deacon (21 September 1891), an archdeacon (29 August 1892), and a Bishop (1 May 1914), and had also bestowed upon him the rank of Senior Archimandrite (12 June 1912).

⁷⁵ Vatche Ghazarian (ed.), *Zaven Der Yeghiayan: My Patriarchal Memoirs* (Barrington, Rhode Island: Mayreni Publishing, 2002) 260–261; *Arev* (2 January 1925, No. 1781) 1; Gulesserian (no 4) 110; Hadjilyra (2023) 18. Born Michael Der Yeghiayan (Mosul, 1868 – Baghdad, 1947), he graduated from the Theological Seminary of Armash (1895). Having served as Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople (1913–1922), Archbishop Zaven arrived in Cyprus on 22 December 1924 to oversee the construction and administrative affairs of the Melkonian, serving as its first General Headmaster between 25 June 1925 and 18 December 1926, remaining President of the Trust until mid-May 1927. Afterwards, he moved to Baghdad.

⁷⁶ Ghevont (no 5) 71–72; Varoujan (2011a) 183–184. In 1916, the Young Turks' government abolished the Armenian Patriarchates of Constantinople and Jerusalem; the former was restored after the Armistice of Mudros (1918), and the latter in 1919. After the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, the status of the Constantinople Patriarchate was precarious.

⁷⁷ *Arev* (10 September 1925, No. 1991) 2; Varoujan (2011b) 262–265. Initially appointees included Hagop Bohdjelian, David Hadji Azirian, and Serovpe Torossian; when Torossian declined, the position was filled by Haroutiun Hampalian.

took place on 26 June 1927;⁷⁸ the Council consisted of five members, who were elected from the Armenian population of the island for a four-year term. According to the compiled electoral list, 712 Armenians who belonged to the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church had the right to vote; 631 of those participated in the elections.⁷⁹ Eligibility to vote was granted to those aged 25 and over, who had been resident on the island for at least two years; meanwhile, candidates had to be at least 30 years old, and live in the city of Nicosia.⁸⁰ As President of the Parish Council, Saradjian presented the new composition of the elected Parish Council for the approval of Catholicos Sahag II;⁸¹ the Parish Council was the island's only body competent on matters pertaining to its Armenian community.⁸²

These elections were extremely important for strengthening the island's Armenian institutions. After the elections, in the autumn of 1927, the Parish Council formed or reorganised a number of bodies to shape communal life. Among them, the Poor Board (established in 1907),⁸³ which had an important role: to elicit donations, and use the money to pay the house rents and provide a monthly allowance for poor Armenians.⁸⁴ The School Board was appointed by the government, at the recommendation of the Parish Council, on 2 September 1927.⁸⁵ Its duty was to organise and supervise the activities of the island's public Armenian educational institutions. Also appointed in October 1927 was the four-member Larnaca Church/School Committee.⁸⁶ Catholicos Sahag II ratified the bodies formed by the Prelature on 29 October 1927.⁸⁷

⁷⁸ *Arev* (5 July 1927, No. 2550) 1; *Arev* (18 October 1927, No. 2639) 2; *Arax* (May–June 1927, No. 64–66) 2; Hovhannisyan (2021) 40–41; Varoujan (2010b) 207, 244, 441. Those elected included Aram Kevorkian (Chairman), who had received the most votes, Vahram Levonian, Haroutiun Bohdjalian, Armenag Djivelikian, and Nazaret Yirigian; Yirigian left the island in 1929.

⁷⁹ *Arev* (18 October 1927, No. 2639) 1; Hovhannisyan (2021) 41; Varoujan (2010b) 207.

⁸⁰ Varoujan (2010b) 441.

⁸¹ Varoujan (2010b) 207.

⁸² Varoujan (2010b) 223–224.

⁸³ Varoujan (2010b) 441; Varoujan (2011b) 194. Stepan Derounian, Dickran Epremian, Toros Boghossian, and Garabed Iskenderian were appointed in October 1927. The Poor Board (Աղքատախնամ Մարմին) took care of the needy, the widows, the orphans and the sick, and it also took care of the church.

⁸⁴ Hovhannisyan (2021) 41; Varoujan (2010b) 444.

⁸⁵ *Arev* (21 October 1927, No. 2642) 2; Varoujan (2010b) 441–442; SA1/1476/1920. Its members were Dr. Haroutiun Toumayan, Aram Kevorkian, Vahram Levonian, Dr. Raphael Armadouni, and Raphael Philipposian.

⁸⁶ Varoujan (2010b) 442. Its members were Krikor Andekian, David Azirian, Senekerim Odabashian, and Hagop Bohdjelian; the latter resigned in 1929 and was replaced by Krikor Andrikian.

⁸⁷ Varoujan (2011b) 223; Varoujan (2011a) 212.

The Governor appointed a new School Board on 1 March 1930.⁸⁸ In late June 1931, the term of the Parish Council expired, thus Saradjian proposed to Catholicos Sahag II to allow new elections, and the creation of a Diocesan Council to replace the Parish Council.⁸⁹ The rationale for having a Diocesan Council was based on the growth of the community: the island's Armenian population—previously 400–500 persons—had become about 3,500 after the arrival of the refugees.⁹⁰ Therefore, it was no longer suitable to govern the Armenian-Cypriot community with a five-member Parish Council. Instead, a proposal was put forth to establish a new Constitutional Charter and a Diocesan Council.⁹¹

The suggestion to have a Diocesan Council was correlated with the *modus operandi* of the Armenian National Constitution.⁹² Catholicos Sahag II gave his consent for its formation on 9 December 1931.⁹³

From the angle of organising communal life, it was important to have a new Charter, which needed to be prepared before the Diocesan Council elections. Bearing in mind the peculiarities of the Armenian-Cypriot community and the approval of Catholicos Sahag II in 1926, Saradjian submitted the Charter that had originally been prepared in 1907;⁹⁴ its draft indeed reflected local particularities, thus providing a co-ordinated and effective function for the island's Armenian Ethnarchy.⁹⁵ The final processing and approval of this new Charter would take place a few years later.

On 12 January 1932, the Prelature's Charter—consisting of 25 Articles—was approved by Catholicos Sahag II.⁹⁶ The Diocesan Council would consist of 11 members—9 laymen and 2 clergymen—who would serve an eight-year term. The laymen would be elected by a secret ballot from the Armenian-Cypriot community, whereas the clergy members would be appointed directly by the Prelate. The Diocesan Coun-

⁸⁸ SA1/1476/1920. Dr. Haroutiun Toumayan, Dr. Karekin Amadian, Aram Kevorkian, Mardig Hagopian, and Raphael Philipposian were appointed; Dr. Amadian left Cyprus in the summer of 1930.

⁸⁹ Varoujan (2010b) 310.

⁹⁰ Hadjilyra (2016) 16; Varoujan (2011a) 215–216.

⁹¹ Varoujan (2010b) 451–452.

⁹² *Arax* (16 July 1926, No. 52–53) 1; *Arax* (16 August 1926, No. 54–55) 1.

⁹³ Ghevont (no 5) 88–89; Hovhannisyan (2021) 42; Varoujan (2010b) 311, 316; Varoujan (2011a) 218–219.

⁹⁴ Hovhannisyan (2021) 43; Varoujan (2010b) 386. The Charter, dated 6/19 May 1907 and consisting of 45 Articles, had been submitted for inspection to the Catholicos of Cilicia before World War I; however, subsequent events stalled the process.

⁹⁵ Varoujan (2010b) 224.

⁹⁶ Varoujan (2010b) 460–463; Varoujan (2011a) 225–230.

cil would elect the Prelate, and a five-member Administrative Council composed of Nicosian Armenians, for a period of four years.⁹⁷

The Prelate was the President of the Diocesan Council, the Administrative Council, and all the other councils and committees of the Prelature.⁹⁸ Armenians who had been resident in Cyprus for at least two years, aged 25 and over, and had paid the national tribute were eligible to vote; Armenian-Cypriots over the age of 30 were eligible for election. People with psychological issues, those who had demonstrated dishonourable behaviour in national affairs and had been reprimanded by national bodies, or those who had been sentenced to six months or more in prison by local courts did not have the right to vote.⁹⁹

With permission from Catholicos Sahag II,¹⁰⁰ the Diocesan Council elections took place on 7 February (Larnaca, Limassol, Famagusta), and on 14 February 1932 (Nicosia).¹⁰¹ The newly-elected Diocesan Council was presented to Catholicos Sahag II for approval, who quickly ratified it with an encyclical on 24 February.¹⁰² At the Diocesan Council's recommendation, on 1 March 1932, the government appointed a new School Board.¹⁰³ Finally, on 25 March 1932, the Diocesan Council elected the five members of the Administrative Council.¹⁰⁴

To organise communal life, the Administrative Council formed a number of bodies: the Church Committees for Nicosia and Larnaca¹⁰⁵ were responsible for the

⁹⁷ Varoujan (2010b) 316–317, 460–461; Varoujan (2011a) 225–227.

⁹⁸ Varoujan (2010b) 463; Varoujan (2011a) 229.

⁹⁹ Varoujan (2010b) 461; Varoujan (2011a) 226.

¹⁰⁰ Varoujan (2010b) 316–317, 323–324; Varoujan (2011a) 218–221.

¹⁰¹ *Arev* (24 February 1932, No. 3980) 2; *Arev* (24 March 1932, No. 4006) 1; Varoujan (2010b) 323–327; Varoujan (2011a) 219–220. Aram Kevorkian once again received the most votes, followed by Vahram Levonian, Movses Soultanian, Haroutiun Bohdjalian, Krikor Guiragossian, Dickran Melikian, Hagop Kalaydjian, Dr. Krikor Mangoian, and Haroutiun Nassibian. The clergy members were Fr. Benjamin Vanerian (Nicosia) and Fr. Krikor Bedrossian (Larnaca); Guiragossian left Cyprus in January 1936.

¹⁰² Varoujan (2010b) 324, 326, 328–329; Varoujan (2011a) 219–222.

¹⁰³ SA1/1476/1920; SA1/1216/1932. Aram Kevorkian, Vahram Levonian, Raphael Philipposian, Melik Melikian, and Aram Ouzounian were appointed; their collective term was successively renewed until 30 September 1947; Kevorkian would go on to serve until 4 October 1956, whereas Levonian and Melikian until 30 September 1960.

¹⁰⁴ Hovhannisyan (2021) 45; Varoujan (2010b) 334. Aram Kevorkian, Vahram Levonian, Armenag Djive-likian, Setrak Touloumdjian, and Stepan Derounian were elected; Derounian passed away in September 1933, and Touloumdjian in August 1936.

¹⁰⁵ *Arev* (8 June 1932, No. 4069) 2; Varoujan (2011b) 311. For Nicosia, only the names of Garabed Shahnazarian, and Garabed Naltchadjian were found in available sources. Hagop Kalaydjian, Krikor Andrikian, Senekerim Odabashian, Donig Yessayan, and Hovagim Saradjian were appointed in late May for Larnaca.

maintenance and the finances for each of the two churches, while the Poor Board¹⁰⁶ managed the community's finances according to the budget approved by the Administrative Council.¹⁰⁷

Dr. Roupen Takvorian¹⁰⁸—who accused Saradjian of gross mismanagement and nepotism, and also claimed that the elections were fraudulent and against the Armenian National Constitution¹⁰⁹—challenged the new Charter and the elections in court; the latter issued a writ of summons on 12 April 1932 for all Prelature officials to appear on 16 May.¹¹⁰ Judge Mustafa Fuad Bey¹¹¹ requested on 12 October 1934 all relevant documents pertaining to the case, which Saradjian submitted on 3 December.

On 23 December 1936, Judge Fuad declared the Prelature's Constitutional Charter null and void; it was subsequently replaced by Law 6/1937 (dated 14 May 1937), whose provisions were extended by Law 10/1942 and Law 3/1945. During this period, the Prelature was governed by the elected Diocesan Council and the appointed Administrative Council, whose establishment and actions were deemed legal and valid by the aforementioned legislation.¹¹²

A new Charter was prepared in 1942, and ratified by Catholicos Karekin I Hovsepian¹¹³ on 1 October 1944. It consisted of 104 Articles, and provided for a 14-member Diocesan Council (12 laymen and two clergymen) and a seven-member

¹⁰⁶ Toros Boghossian, Krikor Shadarevian, Garabed Iskenderian, Stepan Derounian, Kapriel Reisian, Dickran Epremian, and Toros Yeghiayan were appointed; Reisian passed away in September 1936, Boghossian in July 1938, and Epremian in February 1942.

¹⁰⁷ Varoujan (2010b) 461–463; Varoujan (2011a) 227–229.

¹⁰⁸ Dr. Roupen Takvorian (Arapgir, 1886 – Nicosia, 1977) graduated from Vahan Kurkjian's National Armenian Orphanage in Nicosia, and received his dentistry degree from the American University of Beirut (1913). He was an orator and very much involved in community affairs, affiliated with AYMA and the ARF Dashnaksoutiun party.

¹⁰⁹ *Arev* (8 March 1932, No. 3992) 1; Armenian Prelature of Cyprus archives.

¹¹⁰ District Court of Nicosia-Kyrenia Action 172/1932 and Divisional Court Action 553; *Arev* (31 May 1932, No. 4062) 1; Armenian Prelature of Cyprus archives. Earlier on, Dr. Takvorian had brought these claims to the attention of Governor Storrs via two memoranda, dated 17 October 1927 and 8 February 1932.

¹¹¹ Judge Mustafa Fuad Bey (Nicosia, 1888 – London, 1968) served as a judge in the District Court of Nicosia (1913–1927) and the Supreme Court (1927–1939). After serving in Ghana (1939–1945), he returned to Cyprus, working as a lawyer.

¹¹² Hovhannisyan (2021) 45; Armenian Prelature of Cyprus archives.

¹¹³ Dadoyan (no 11) 54–55; Yeghiayan (no 5) 532, 625–627, 898. Born Karekin Hovsepian (Maghavouz, Artsakh, 1867 – Antelias, 1952), he graduated from the Kevorkian Seminary of Etchmiadzin (1890), and received his Philosophy doctorate from the University of Leipzig (1897). After serving as Primate of the Diocese of Crimea and Nor Nakhichevan (1927–1934), and Primate of the Eastern Diocese of North America (1938–1943), he was elected Catholicos of Cilicia in 1943, eventually arriving in Lebanon in 1945. Cathol-

Administrative Council.¹¹⁴ The increase in the members of these Councils reflected the increase of the Armenian population of Cyprus, which, according to the 1946 census, was 3,962 persons, of whom 3,686 were Armenian Orthodox.¹¹⁵ According to Law 3/1945, the new Charter came into effect on 13 May 1946. Prior to that, new Diocesan Council elections were held,¹¹⁶ whose results were eventually ratified by Catholicos Karekin I on 15 April 1946. With the finalised adoption of the new Charter on 13 March 1950, and the formation of new bodies of the Ethnarchy, the process of reorganising the Armenian community of Cyprus was complete.¹¹⁷

The Issue of the National Tribute

The collection of the national tribute¹¹⁸ in the Armenian Diaspora communities was a crucial issue. In the 1920s, a system of national tribute collection had not been introduced yet in Cyprus, so Catholicos Sahag II would periodically send exhortations to the Prelature's officials towards this direction.

In Article 3 § 6 of the ratified 1932 Charter of the Prelature, a national tribute was stipulated for the first time; the Diocesan Council also decided to stipulate an annual diocesan tribute in support of Antelias:¹¹⁹ 'A proportional national tribute, according

icos Karekin I visited Cyprus three times: 18 October–6 November 1946, 30 May–14 June 1947, and 28 September–12 October 1948.

¹¹⁴ Ghevont (no 5) 89; Yeghiayan (no 5) 807.

¹¹⁵ Hadjilyra (2009) 21–22; Pattie (no 3) 245. Of these 3,686 persons, 61% lived in Nicosia, 22% in Larnaca, 6% in Limassol, 3% in Famagusta, and the rest in other places.

¹¹⁶ *Arev* (24 January 1946, No. 8239) 2; Armenian Prelature of Cyprus archives. Senior Archimandrite Paren Melkonian arrived in Cyprus on 15 November 1945, as Catholicos Delegate, to organise and oversee the Diocesan Council elections. The eventful elections were held on 2 December (Famagusta), 9 December (Limassol), 16 December (Larnaca), and 23 December 1945 and 13 January 1946 (Nicosia), with complimentary elections in Nicosia on 3 February 1946. The elected members were: Aram Kevorkian, Onnig Chakarian, Levon Mangoian, Melik Melikian, Kevork Mherian, Yervant Bodikian, and Nshan Arakchindjian (Nicosia); Levon Boyadjian, Hagop Bohdjelian, and Hagop Kalaydjian (Larnaca); Vahram Avedikian (Limassol); and Vahram Bezdigian (Famagusta); the two clergymen were archpriest Khoren Kouligian (Nicosia) and Fr. Krikor Bedrossian (Larnaca). Paren Melkonian left the island on 28 May 1946.

¹¹⁷ Ghevont (no 5) 89; Yeghiayan (no 5) 807; Armenian Prelature of Cyprus archives. Indeed, that Charter was amended on 7 November 1960, and remained in place until the current Charter was ratified by Catholicos Aram I Keshishian on 3 December 2010.

¹¹⁸ This was a voluntary monetary contribution to the Prelature, like an ecclesiastical tithe, which enabled the financing of construction works, subsidisation of the local Armenian schools, and also the provision of financial aid to sick and needy individuals; along with the money it derived from the leasing of the carob and olive trees in the vicinity of the monastery, the national tax was the Prelature's only income.

¹¹⁹ Hovhannisyan (2021) 46; Varoujan (2010b) 340.

to the means of each Armenian of Cyprus, is imposed and at the same time a diocesan tribute to the Catholicosate is stipulated'.¹²⁰

Formalising the national tribute of the Armenian-Cypriot community was an important step to effectively organise their communal life. Catholicos Sahag II, in his encyclical ratifying the outcome of the 1932 Diocesan Council elections, dated 24 February 1932, once again addressed the issue of stipulating a national tribute in the Armenian Prelature of Cyprus.¹²¹ Two years later, on 1 January 1934, with a special encyclical addressing the Armenians of his subordinate Dioceses, Catholicos Sahag II exhorted everyone to participate in the national tribute, according to their resources.¹²²

As the effective organisation of communal life and the functioning of national institutions largely depended on its systematic collection, the Armenian communities that went through the diasporisation path reformulated this idea of national tribute enshrined in the Armenian National Constitution and reintroduced it. The national tribute became a practical manifestation of national responsibility, a means of earning the right to participate in national affairs, resisting assimilation, and establishing a working Diasporan identity.

Armenian Places of Worship and Education in Cyprus

Along with the issue of administrative subordination of the Prelature, especially thanks to Prelate Bedros Saradjian's consistent efforts, the Ethnarchy's bodies were gradually reshaped and reorganised, playing an important role in the socio-political, educational, and cultural life of the Armenian-Cypriots, and the work of preserving Armenianism. New churches were also built.

According to a report prepared by Saradjian on 7 April 1931, there were five Armenian churches in Cyprus:¹²³ a) the Virgin Mary cathedral in Nicosia, next to the Prelature,¹²⁴ originally established in 1116 and rebuilt between 1308 and 1310;¹²⁵ b)

¹²⁰ Varoujan (2010b) 460; Varoujan (2011a) 225.

¹²¹ Varoujan (2010b) 329.

¹²² Varoujan (2010b) 464.

¹²³ For information about the Armenian churches and chapels that existed in Cyprus prior to this period, see Alboyadjian (no 3) 233–234; Ghevont (no 5) 59–61; Gulesserian (no 4) 59–61; Hadjilyra (2016) 9–10; Hovhannisyan (2021) 55–56; Keshishian & Baghdasaryan (no 28) 345; Matossian (no 3) 76–78, 82–84, 89; Pagouran (no 4) 69–71.

¹²⁴ The Prelature was built in 1789; previously, it was housed at the Melikian family mansion, just behind the cathedral.

¹²⁵ Alboyadjian (no 3) 231–233; Ghevont (no 5) 37–50; Gulesserian (no 4) 75–88; Hadjilyra (2016) 13,

Saint Paul's chapel, in Nicosia's Armenian cemetery,¹²⁶ which was built in 1892 by the will of Constantinopolitan benefactor Boghos Odadjian;¹²⁷ c) the well-known monastery of Saint Makarios, located in Halevga, about 15 miles (23 km) to the north-east of Nicosia, originally established circa 1000 and rebuilt in 1425, with a chapel erected between 1811 and 1814;¹²⁸ d) Saint Stephen's chapel in Larnaca, built through fundraising between 1909 and 1913;¹²⁹ and e) the ruined and unused Virgin Mary chapel in Famagusta, also known as Ganchvor monastery, which was constructed in 1346.¹³⁰

Earlier, thanks to Saradjian's efforts, the monastery's chapel and belfry were renovated by commission of Dickran Ouzounian,¹³¹ Ashod Arslanian, and Garo Balian (1926), and its consistory was renovated and an iron gate was placed by commission of Boghos and Anna Magarian (1929).¹³² Moreover, in 1931 and 1933, two monuments were erected in its vicinity, the former to honour Abbot Mekhitar of Sebaste and the Mekhitarists,¹³³ and the latter on the occasion of opening of the square next to the monastery.¹³⁴

21; Keshishian & Baghdasaryan (no 28) 345; Matossian (no 3) 42–44, 55, 116–118, 124–127, 133–135, 153, 156–164; Pagouran (no 4) 61–69, 111–112.

¹²⁶ SA1/1417/1912. Given its proximity to walled Nicosia, coupled with sanitary concerns, and the fact that the small cemetery (covering just 3 donums and 2 evleks, or 4,682 m²) was nearly full, the government did not allow new burials there as of 10 October 1931.

¹²⁷ Alboyadjian (no 3) 233; Ghevont (no 5) 50, 53–54; Gulesserian (no 4) 61; Matossian (no 3) 153; Pagouran (no 4) 87; Pattie (no 3) 61. Boghos G. Odadjian (Constantinople, 1853 – Nicosia, 1891) was a translator for the island's colonial government.

¹²⁸ Alboyadjian (no 3) 228–230; Ghevont (no 5) 21–36; Gulesserian (no 4) 61, 147–166, 257; Matossian (no 3) 92–93, 169; Pagouran (no 4) 91–106, 113; Pattie (no 3) 34, 52–53, 55, 102; Yeghiayan (no 5) 284.

¹²⁹ Alboyadjian (no 3) 234–235; Ghevont (no 5) 57–58; Gulesserian (no 4) 61; Varoujan (2010b) 32; Yeghiayan (no 5) 287.

¹³⁰ Alboyadjian (no 3) 234; Ghevont (no 5) 55–56; Gulesserian (no 4) 65–74; Matossian (no 3) 72, 86–88, 153, 165–168; Pagouran (no 4) 70; Pattie (no 3) 34; Varoujan (2010b) 442–443, 459.

¹³¹ Dickran Ouzounian (Diyarbakir/Dikranagerd, 1870 – Nicosia, 1957) arrived in Cyprus with his wife, Touma, in 1897. A shrewd businessman, he partnered with Movses Soultanian in 1920, with the two national benefactors eventually becoming in-laws in 1936. In 1938, Dickran and Touma Ouzounian commissioned the construction of the Ouzounian School in Nicosia.

¹³² Ghevont (no 5) 27, 29; Gulesserian (no 4) 267–269; Hadjilyra (2009) 26.

¹³³ Born Manoug Bedrossian (Sebaste, 1676 – Venice, 1749), he was admitted as a monk at the Monastery of Sourp Nishan in 1691. Setting out for Rome in 1695, Mekhitar stayed briefly at the Magaravank. In 1701, he established the Mekhitarist Armenian Catholic Religious Order in Constantinople, which moved to Methone, Peloponnese (1703), and eventually to the island of San Lazzaro in Venice (1715). Between 1773 and 1805, a branch also existed in Trieste, Italy, which moved to Vienna, and erected their current monastery between 1835 and 1837.

¹³⁴ Ghevont (no 5) 29; Gulesserian (no 4) 155–157, 258.

By Saradjian's initiative, the cathedral was renovated in 1930,¹³⁵ and the Armenian Genocide monument was erected in the Nicosia church courtyard in 1932.¹³⁶ Thanks to his initiative, the aforementioned Ganchvor church in Famagusta was leased to the Prelature in 1936, and was restored between 1937 and 1944.¹³⁷ In 1938, a new chapel dedicated to the Holy Resurrection was erected in the new Armenian cemetery of Nicosia (established in 1931)¹³⁸ by Haroutiun Bohdjalian.¹³⁹ Finally, thanks to the land donation of benefactor Satenig Soultanian,¹⁴⁰ the contribution of Stepan Kavafian, and the Prelature, Saint George's church was constructed between 1939 and 1940 in Limassol.¹⁴¹

From the angle of identity preservation, the next important direction was the organisation of national educational life. Thanks to the efforts of Saradjian, and by donation of the heirs of the late national benefactor Artin Bey Melikian,¹⁴² the Melikian Armenian Elementary School was erected and started operating in 1921 in Nicosia, replacing the previous boys' and girls' Armenian schools.¹⁴³ That school was chiefly maintained through revenue collected from the leased rooms, lands, and estates of

¹³⁵ Hovhannisyan (2021) 58; Varoujan (2010b) 302.

¹³⁶ *Arev* (4 May 1932, No. 4039) 1; Gulesserian (no 4) 100, 257; Hadjilyra (2016) 26, 30.

¹³⁷ SA1/880/1935. Owned by the government, it is a listed ancient monument, leased to the Prelature on 7 March 1936, for a period of 99 years.

¹³⁸ Hadjilyra (2016) 28; SA1/1417/1912; LRS1/24866. The new cemetery in the suburb of Ayios Dhometios (area: 7 donums and 2 evleks, or 1,034 m²), to the west of Nicosia, was granted to the community thanks to arrangements made by Saradjian.

¹³⁹ Ghevont (no 5) 53–54; Hadjilyra (2016) 20; Hovhannisyan (2021) 58–59; Pattie (no 3) 73–74. Haroutiun (Artin) Bohdjalian (Caesarea, 1891 – Nicosia, 1957) was a wealthy businessman, famous for his carpets across Cyprus. The word/name 'Haroutiun' in Armenian means 'Resurrection'.

¹⁴⁰ Satenig Kevorkian-Soultanian (Nicosia, 1891–1973) was the wife of national benefactor Movses Soultanian (Nicosia, 1884–1977). She was involved in various activities of the community, from the church to the AGBU club.

¹⁴¹ Ghevont (no 5) 59–60, Hadjilyra (2009) 25; Keshishian & Baghdasaryan (no 28) 344–345; Matossian (no 3) 153. Satenig Kevorkian donated the plot (1 donum, 1 evlek and 4,012 sq. ft., or 1,744 m²) for a church to be built, in memory of her late father-in law, Kevork.

¹⁴² Artin Bey Melikian (Nicosia, 1858–1921) was a well-known merchant of agricultural products, a landowner in Kythrea and Nicosia, and a national benefactor who donated land and buildings to the Prelature.

¹⁴³ Alboyadjian (no 3) 235–236; Ghevont (no 5) 82–83; Gulesserian (no 4) 112–113; Hadjilyra (2009) 23; Pattie (no 3) 58; Varoujan (2010b) 37, 94.

the Sourp Magar monastery,¹⁴⁴ covering numerous other expenses.¹⁴⁵ In 1923, there were 320 students and 12 teachers in the elementary school and the kindergarten next to it,¹⁴⁶ while in the 1927, there were 420 male and female students, with 11 teachers.¹⁴⁷ In the following years, more Armenian schools were built:¹⁴⁸ in Famagusta (1927), Limassol (1928),¹⁴⁹ Amiandos (1928),¹⁵⁰ and in Nicosia the Ouzounian School (1938), operating henceforth as the Melikian-Ouzounian School.

The famous Melkonian Educational Institute was built in Aglandjia, on the outskirts of Nicosia, between 1924 and 1926, thanks to the generous donation of brothers Krikor and Garabed Melkonian,¹⁵¹ initially to house and educate Armenian Genocide orphans.¹⁵² The Melkonian was a beacon of hope and culture for Armenianism and Armenophony, with Armenian students from all over the globe. It evolved from an orphanage (1926–1940) to a renowned secondary school (1934–2005) with a boarding section, organising a multitude of cultural, sports, and scouts events. In June 1926, there were 231 students and 18 teachers; 350 students and 29 teachers in June 1935;¹⁵³ and 276 students and 29 teachers in June 1938. Known for years as the ‘Armenian Orphanage’, it had its own administration.¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁴ *Arev* (20 October 1926, No. 2333) 2; *Arev* (10 February 1938, No. 5811) 2–3; Alboyadjian (no 3) 229; Gulesserian (no 4) 159; Varoujan (2010b) 31. According to official *kochans* (title deeds), dated 20/07/1925 and 29/07/1929, the monastery’s vast lands covered 8,914 donums, 2 evleks and 2,600 sq. ft. (1,192.6 hectares); there were about 30,000 olive and carob trees, whose exploitation constituted the Prelature’s main source of income, about £600 in 1921.

¹⁴⁵ *Arev* (31 August 1925, No. 1982) 2.

¹⁴⁶ Hovhannisyan (2021) 71; Varoujan (2011b) 194.

¹⁴⁷ Alboyadjian (no 3) 236; Varoujan (2010b) 216; Varoujan (2011b) 284, 293–294.

¹⁴⁸ Alboyadjian (no 3) 236–237; Ghevont (no 5) 83–84; Gulesserian (no 4) 114; Hadjilyra (2009) 23.

¹⁴⁹ This school was established by Saradjian’s initiative.

¹⁵⁰ The school in Amiandos was operated by Tunnel Asbestos Cement Ltd. between 1928–1939.

¹⁵¹ Krikor (Caesarea, 1843 – Alexandria, 1920) and Garabed Melkonian (Caesarea, 1849 – Alexandria, 1934) are amongst the greatest benefactors of the Armenian nation. After settling in Alexandria (1880), they gradually became the largest tobacco manufacturers in the Middle East. As they were both unmarried, they decided to use their immense fortune to educate the young Armenian orphans who survived the Genocide. After Krikor’s death, Garabed made all necessary arrangements, constructing— among others—the Melkonian Educational Institute in Nicosia (1924–1926).

¹⁵² Alboyadjian (no 3) 237–239; Ghevont (no 5) 81–82; Gulesserian (no 4) 102–111; Hadjilyra (2023) 14–22; Pattie (no 3) 75–77; SA1/1481/1923. The Melkonian was built on a land covering 139 donums and 3 evleks (186,289 m²), comprising about 20 buildings, and a grove planted by the first orphans in memory of their perished relatives: each cypress tree is like a cross for a family perished in the Genocide.

¹⁵³ Gulesserian (no 4) 109; Hadjilyra (2023) 35.

¹⁵⁴ *Arev* (19 June 1936, No. 5308) 3; Hadjilyra (2023) 38, 126. Initially, the Melkonian was managed by its General Headmasters, appointed by the AGBU Central Board, namely Archbishop Zaven Der Yeghiayan (1925–1926), Krikor Guiragossian (1927–1936), and Dr Hagop Topdjian (1936–1944), aided by Deans

Armenian-Cypriot Social Life, Printing Houses and Publications

Although the Armenian-Cypriot community was not large in the early 20th century, it stood out for its active social and cultural life.¹⁵⁵ The Armenian Club (1902), the Armenian Women's Association (1916), the Armenian Young Men's Association (AYMA, 1934), as well as the Armenian Women of Cilicia Association (1938), were active in Nicosia. A local chapter of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU)¹⁵⁶ was also established in Nicosia in 1913.¹⁵⁷ Already in 1912, an AGBU chapter had been established in Larnaca. Active in Larnaca was also the Armenian Bibliophiles' Association (*Krasirats*), a reading room established in 1923; two years later, *Krasirats* established a women's chapter called the Armenian Women's Association, which supervised the local Sunday school. In 1931, *Krasirats* and the Armenophony Association merged and became known as the Armenian Club. In Limassol's small Armenian community there was the Armenian Ladies' Association, formed in 1934, and an AGBU chapter, established in 1936. During the 1920s and 1930s, one of the three traditional Armenian parties,¹⁵⁸ the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF Dashnaktsoutiun),¹⁵⁹ was active on the island, which had a chapter based in Larnaca.

of Students Levon Tashdjian (1925–1927), Vahan Tekeyan (1934–1935), and Boghos Kevorkian (1935–1945). Following Vahan Malezian's visit to reorganise the Melkonian, in June–July 1936, a temporary three-member Committee was appointed (Movses Soultanian, Aram Kevorkian and Mikael Topdjian). In 1940, a proper five-member School Board was appointed (Aram Kevorkian, Onnig Chakarian, Melik Melikian, Dr. Raphael Armadouni, and Movses Soultanian); Soultanian served until 1951, whereas the others until 1956.

¹⁵⁵ Alboyadjian (no 3) 239; Gulesserian (no 4) 114–115; Keshishian & Baghdasaryan (no 28) 347; Pattie (no 3) 73–74, 79, 93–94, 99–100.

¹⁵⁶ Established in 1906 in Cairo, the AGBU is currently the largest non-profit Armenian organisation in the world, with chapters and offices in 33 countries, and it is involved in a plethora of fields and programmes in the Armenian Diaspora, from education, scouting and sports, to cultural and youth activities, the press, humanitarian aid, internships, etc.

¹⁵⁷ This chapter was established thanks to Saradjian's efforts, who visited Cyprus between 25 February–21 May 1913.

¹⁵⁸ The other two parties, the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (ADL Ramgavar) and the Social Democrat Hunchakian Party (SDHP Hunchakian), were not active in Cyprus at the time; officially, ADL Ramgavar first appeared on the island in 1956, whereas SDHP Hunchakian much later, in 2005.

¹⁵⁹ ARF Dashnaktsoutiun was established in 1890 in Tiflis, Georgia. It is an Armenian nationalist-socialist political party, with a presence in 32 countries, exerting considerable influence across the Armenian Diaspora via its affiliated organisations (Armenian Relief Society, Homenetmen Armenian General Athletic Union, Hamazkayin Armenian Educational and Cultural Society, Armenian National Committee, and Armenian Youth Federation), publications and online activity. As of 1947, AYMA in Nicosia and the Armenian Club in Larnaca have been affiliated with it.

Finally, in 1921, by initiative of Saradjian, the Sourp Asdvadzadzin church choir was established in Nicosia, under maestro Vahan Bedelian.¹⁶⁰

Thus, after the process of reorganisation, the Armenian community of Cyprus, although not large, enjoyed an active social life. At the same time, sports teams (mainly football and basketball) and scouts groups were active in both Nicosia and Larnaca, as well as two bands in Nicosia.¹⁶¹

Printing presses that published Armenian newspapers emerged in the 1920s and 1930s. In 1921, following the uprooting of the Armenians in Cilicia, Mardiros Mosditchian¹⁶² came to Cyprus from Mersin and relocated his printing press in Larnaca. There, he started printing the *Arax* newspaper in 1924, which only lasted for five years. Initially a fortnightly publication (1924–1926), it later became a monthly (1926–1929);¹⁶³ in addition to Armenian, Mosditchian's press also printed in Greek, English, and Turkish.

Between 1922 and 1923, Haroutiun Arslanian published and edited the *Azad Gi-brahay* weekly newspaper in Nicosia. Originally, it was handwritten, and reproduced using a cyclostyle, while in 1923 it was printed at the Mosditchian printing house in Larnaca, and then in Nicosia.¹⁶⁴ In 1923, the Armenophony Association was founded by Armenian students of the Larnaca American Academy; in 1925, it started publishing the handwritten monthly newspaper *Lousarpi*, which was originally prepared in one copy, and read out to the members of the Association; in 1926, Manuel Kassouni¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁰ Hadjilyra (2016) 25; Pattie (no 3) 81–82. Vahan Bedelian (Adana, 1894 – Nicosia, 1990) graduated from Saint Paul's College in Tarsus (1920). He arrived in Cyprus the following year, becoming a famous musician, maestro, violin teacher, educator, composer, and cantor, who taught thousands of students from all communities of the island.

¹⁶¹ Hovhannisyan (2021) 75; Pattie (no 3) 82–83, 100–101. Thanks to Saradjian's friendship with King of Hejaz Hussein bin Ali, who was exiled to Cyprus between 1925 and 1930, the Melikian school band received new musical instruments in 1926; the other band, also under the direction of Vahan Bedelian, was that of the Melkonian.

¹⁶² Mardiros N. Mosditchian (Caesarea, 1874 – Larnaca, 1954) attended the Anatolia College in Merzifon. In 1904, he settled in Mersin, where he worked as a printer. Since 1921, he was a printer and stamp maker in Larnaca. In 1932, he moved his printing house to Nicosia, which worked until 1963.

¹⁶³ Alboyadjian (no 3) 239; Gulesserian (no 4) 116; Hadjilyra (2009) 29.

¹⁶⁴ Alboyadjian (no 3) 239; Gulesserian (no 4) 119; SA1/471/1923.

¹⁶⁵ Manuel Kassouni (Aintab, 1887 – Fresno, 1974) graduated from Aintab's Central Turkey College (1915), and taught at the American Academy of Larnaca (1922–1962), while at the same time he served as an Armenian Evangelical preacher (1954–1962). He also established a small printing house to print Armenian and English books and periodicals.

established a small printing press that allowed the publication of *Lousarpi* to continue for three more years.¹⁶⁶

Between 1923 and 1925, *Krasirats* published the *Kraser* weekly newspaper in Larnaca. The editors were Kevork Chakmakdjian, Hagop Kouyoumdjian, and Giragos Geokbashian.¹⁶⁷ In 1928, the literary and scientific monthly magazine *Ovasis* was published by the printing press founded by Maxoud Maxoudian in Nicosia; this magazine was published until 1930, and its editor-in-chief was Samuel Toumayan (1928–1929), followed by Diran Luledjian (1929–1930).¹⁶⁸ In Nicosia, in 1932, another printing press was established by teacher and later Headmaster Setrak Guebenlian,¹⁶⁹ who published the biannual *Nshouil* newspaper of the Melikian School between 1936 and 1938.¹⁷⁰ Finally, the Melkonian published *Ayk*, the oldest secondary school magazine of the Armenian Diaspora, and the longest-running Armenian-Cypriot publication. It first appeared in 1930, as an unofficial publication by the Melkonian's senior students, published once or twice a year. As an official school magazine, *Ayk*'s first issue appeared in 1937, initially as a fortnightly magazine, which became quarterly in 1938, biannual in 1939, and yearly in 1940. During this period, its editor-in-chief was Vahe Vahian (Sarkis Abdalian),¹⁷¹ and it was printed at Guebenlian's printing press.¹⁷² Another printing press in Larnaca was that of Messiah Ohanian, established in 1933.¹⁷³

The aforementioned publications played various roles: a) they created links between the Armenian community in Cyprus, Armenia, and other countries in the Armenian Diaspora; b) they informed Armenians, both in Cyprus and abroad, of local

¹⁶⁶ Alboyadjian (no 3) 239; Gulesserian (no 4) 117; SA1/607/1926.

¹⁶⁷ Gulesserian (no 4) 119; Hovhannisyan (2021) 83; Keshishian & Baghdasaryan (no 28) 347.

¹⁶⁸ Gulesserian (no 4) 118; Varoujan (2011b) 288; SA1/651/1928.

¹⁶⁹ Setrak Guebenlian (Dörtyol, 1887 – Nicosia, 1962) was a teacher, a journalist, a printer, and a founding member of the ADL Ramgavar party. He taught at the Melikian school as of 1921, eventually serving as its Headmaster (1933–1949). Afterwards, he taught at the Terra Santa College, whereas between 1960–1962 he was a member of the Armenian School Board. Between 1959 and 1962, he published the *Henaran* newspaper in Nicosia.

¹⁷⁰ Gulesserian (no 4) 119.

¹⁷¹ Talented poet and writer Vahe Vahian (Gürün, 1908 – Beirut, 1998) graduated from Aleppo's Armenian Evangelical College (1925), and the American University of Beirut (1930). He taught at the Melkonian (1935–1946), becoming the first editor-in-chief of *Ayk*. In 1944, he founded and became the first President of the Friends of Armenia Association (*Paregamats*) in Nicosia, serving until 1946, when he moved to Beirut.

¹⁷² Hadjilyra (2023) 82, 85–86.

¹⁷³ Gulesserian (no 4) 118; Keshishian & Baghdasaryan (no 28) 348; SA1/870/1933.

and international current affairs, which was especially important for those who did not read Greek and/or Turkish; c) they documented Armenian-Cypriot life in the 1920s and 1930s, providing valuable insights up to the present day; and d) they gave a voice to the Armenians of Cyprus to express themselves and their concerns.

Epilogue: Administrative Affairs Between 1936 and 1956

After the death of Co-adjutor Catholicos Papken I Gulesserian,¹⁷⁴ and due to Catholicos Sahag II's advanced age and failing health, the Synod of Bishops in Antelias appointed Saradjian as Catholicos Vicar-General on 20 July 1936;¹⁷⁵ he accepted, on condition he would remain Prelate of Cyprus. To handle local affairs, he appointed Archimandrite Barouyr Minassian¹⁷⁶ as his Vicar-General on 9 October 1936.¹⁷⁷

On 8 November 1939, Catholicos Sahag II passed away; two days later, Saradjian was elected Catholicos locum tenens. He remained Prelate of Cyprus even after he was elected Catholicos on 30 May 1940 and then consecrated on 2 June 1940.¹⁷⁸ On 5 August 1940, he suggested to the Diocesan Council that a proper Prelate should be elected.¹⁷⁹ He passed away on 28 September 1940, with the sombre record of the Catholicos with the shortest term in office (less than five months). In contrast, also taking into account his previous tenure (7 September 1899–1 October 1905), he served the longest as Armenian Prelate of Cyprus, nearly 26 years.

After Minassian left Cyprus on 13 September 1940, Fr. Khoren Kouligian¹⁸⁰ served as locum tenens, until 24 December 1946, when Senior Archimandrite Ghevont Che-

¹⁷⁴ Ghevont (no 5) 74–76; Gulesserian (no 4) 108, 146, 154; Yeghiayan (no 5) 312, 383–389, 395, 454–897. Born Haroutiun Gulesserian (Aintab, 1868 – Antelias, 1936), he graduated from the Theological Seminary of Armash (1895). As of 1923, he aided exiled Catholicos Sahag II. In 1932, he founded the *Hask* journal, whereas in 1936 he was elected Co-adjutor to Catholicos Sahag II; in the same year, he published the monumental reference work *Hay Gibros (Armenian Cyprus)*. Co-adjutor Catholicos Papken I visited Cyprus twice: 25 March–9 May 1934, and 16 August–4 September 1934.

¹⁷⁵ *Arev* (21 July 1936, No. 5335) 1; *Arev* (25 July 1936, No. 5339) 1; Yeghiayan (no 5) 523; SA1/1164/1936.

¹⁷⁶ Born Hrant Minassian (Constantinople, 1910 – Pennsylvania, 1988), he graduated from the Theological Seminary of Jerusalem (1934). He taught at the Melkonian (1935–1940), returning to Jerusalem in 1940. He was defrocked in 1943. Nothing else is known about his life afterwards.

¹⁷⁷ *Arev* (17 November 1936, No. 5436) 1; SA1/924/1923; SA1/1424/1936.

¹⁷⁸ *Arev* (30 July 1940, No. 6566) 1–2; Hovhannisyan (2021) 93–109, 117, 120; Yeghiayan (no 5) 489–528. Having embarked on extensive construction works in Antelias, he earned the title of Shinogh (Ktetur).

¹⁷⁹ Varoujan (2011b) 236–237.

¹⁸⁰ Ghevont (no 5) 65. Fr. Khoren Kouligian (Zeitoun, 1896 – London, 1972) started teaching in 1918 and

beyan¹⁸¹ arrived on the island as Catholicos Vicar, elected as Prelate on 6 March 1952; on 17 November 1956, newly-elevated Archbishop Chebeyan left Cyprus to serve in Aleppo.

Conclusion

Following the Adana massacre in 1909, and the ultimate uprooting of the Armenians in Cilicia in 1921, thousands of Armenians migrated to Cyprus, of whom nearly 3,000 settled on the island permanently. By studying the archives, we can see how the Armenian refugees changed the island. The process of forming the bodies of the Armenian Ethnarchy of Cyprus started following the reorganisation of the Armenian Prelature of Cyprus, and after coming under the jurisdiction of the Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia. Due to their numerical superiority, the Armenian refugees from Cilicia who had settled on the island dominated communal life. They formed new community bodies in the main cities and towns of Cyprus, as well as schools, cultural associations, and newspapers.

The process of reorganisation of the Armenian community of Cyprus after the Armenian Genocide represents a part of the Armenian Diaspora formation. Despite its small size, the Armenian-Cypriot community has been a significant hub for the Diaspora. The study of this process allows us to clarify the historical context and peculiarities of reshaping this community. Studying the process of diasporisation of Armenians who survived the Genocide by the example of one community reveals many similarities, as well as peculiarities regarding the skills and practices of Armenians who settled in a foreign environment and preserved their national identity, by reorganising their spiritual-religious, educational, and cultural life.

After persistent efforts in the 1920s, the Armenian Prelature of Cyprus and the local Armenian national bodies were restored under the Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia. Already in the 1930s, the Armenian community of Cyprus, having overcome numerous difficulties in reorganisation, experienced an active social, educational, and cultural life—all primarily directed at preserving national identity.

in 1927 he was ordained a priest. In Nicosia, he served as a parish priest (1938–1966), and also taught at the Melkonian (1940–1961). In 1942, he was awarded the title of archpriest.

¹⁸¹ Ghevont (no 5) 65; Yeghiayan (no 5) 585, 595, 737, 900; SA1/404/1947. Born Jirayr Chebeyan (Adapazar, 1911 – Antelias, 2006), he graduated from the Theological Seminary of Antelias (1936). In Cyprus, he served as Catholicos Vicar (1946–1952), and then as Prelate (1952–1956); in 1955, he published the valuable reference work *Hishadagaran Gibrahay Kaghouti (Repository of Memories of the Armenian-Cypriot Community)*.

The integration of the island's Armenians into the general life of Cyprus was also an important issue, which was accomplished effectively as well. After receiving their citizenship, the large part of the Armenians in Cyprus became law-abiding and useful citizens, contributing to public life on the island to this day.

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