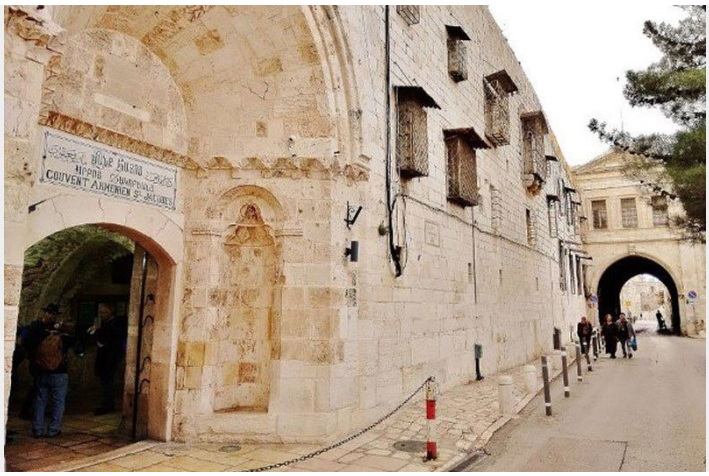
A COMMUNIQUÉ THAT DOESN'T COMMUNICATE

Posted on September 9, 2021 by Keghart



Category: Opinions

Keghart.org Editorial, 10 September 2021

On September 6, the Jerusalem Armenian Patriarchate issued a communiqué in response to Keghart.org's August 31 editorial about the deplorable 99-year-lease which would see a hotel built at Goverooun Bardez at the strategic southwest corner of the Armenian Quarter by Australian developer Daniel Rubinstein. Unfortunately, the communique doesn't add anything to our knowledge of the scandal and instead spreads a thick layer of obfuscation and misleading information. It hides the truth while pretending to impart it.

The Keghart article began by accusing the Patriarchate of signing the crucial real estate deal in secrecy. The Patriarchate's communique said the transaction was "no more secret than any other discrete affair and privileged information of the Patriarchate to any other person or entity." Keghart has no argument re the necessity of conducting business with a degree of secrecy. What Keghart objects to is a) the signing of the deal without obtaining the required green light from the Holy Synod; Keghart also objects to renting Armenian lands to a foreign entity for 99 years when it's a fact that such long leases have a habit of becoming permanent change of ownership in Jerusalem.

"Ill-founded rumors are spread by interested parties trying to harm the Patriarchate" is the next allegation of the Patriarchate's communique. Count the loaded words in the single sentence: ill-founded rumors, interested parties, and trying to harm the Patriarchate. Who are these interested parties? Why is this secret cabal spreading ill-founded rumors to hurt the Patriarchate? This is a good example of begging the question. Why is being an "interested party" objectionable? What proof does the Patriarchate have that these "interested parties" are out to harm the Patriarchate?

"The agreement was signed with a fully owned subsidiary of a corporate for the United Arab Emirates" said the next paragraph of the Patriarchate's communique. This is bad English and thus incomprehensible. Why is a UAE "corporate" involved in the transaction of the Patriarchate?

To justify its wrong-headed signing of the deal, the Patriarchate promised in the communique that the hotel deal would bring higher financial returns to the Patriarchate than the revenues from the existing parking lot. This is misdirection clear and simple: the issue is not about incomes from Patriarchate properties but the giving away of a huge and strategic parcel of land for 99 years. History has shown that such long-term leases in Jerusalem have a tendency to become permanent losses to the land's owner. For example, the 99-year lease of the Old City police station (once owned by the Patriarchate) has morphed into a permanent loss for the Patriarchate.

The communique alleges that the Holy Synod was consulted and had given its blessings to the deal. The communique fails to explain when and where the consultation took place. It doesn't say when and where the Holy Synod met and approved the deal. It doesn't say whether some members opposed the deal or whether the Holy Synod gave its (ahem) unanimous approval. Several members of the Holy Synod have said they were not consulted and the Holy Synod was not presented with the deal. We can't release their names because they rightly fear dismissal from the Brotherhood if

their names become known to the Patriarchate.

According to the Sts. James Brotherhood's constitution, the Synod (Dnoren Joghov) has to approve leases of up to 25-year duration. For leases of longer duration, it's the General Assembly of the Brotherhood which decides. Since the lease under discussion is for almost 100 years, it's the Brotherhood and not the Patriarch and his right-hand man who have the right to approve or disapprove the lease.

The communique says that the transaction had been contemplated for a very long time with care and consideration. If it had been contemplated for a very long time, why did the approval come as a surprise to the Sts. James Brotherhood members and to the community? Besides, if a decision is wrong, it's wrong even if it has been deliberated to exhaustion.

The communique alleges that the Sts. James Brotherhood had also deliberated and determined in favor of the lease. This too must come as a surprise to Brotherhood members who heard about the misguided transaction only recently. The communique doesn't provide a date as to when the Patriarchate informed the Brotherhood and received its fantasy wholehearted backing.

The communique reminds one of the long ago conflict between two of America's leading writers—Mary McCarthy and Lillian Hellman. During a 1979 TV interview, McCarthy said of Hellman that "every word she writes is a lie, including 'and' and 'the'."

Comments

H – 2021-09-15 16:45:53
Responding to Armenag Derderian. What would it take for the "patriarchate" to come up with fake documents. That won't solve anything. The patriarch should be made to declare the land grab agreement with the developer null and void, and officially, in the presence of the community, return the bribes and payments they received. They have proven themselves unworthy to be called clergy let alone have power. Yeretsian and the patriarch should go. During the tenure of Yeghishe Derderian as patriarch, years ago, the Armenian community rose in unison, against the Pariarch Derderian, Archbishop Hairig and others. That conflict was for power grab of a different sort. The community spoke then fearlessly. They can and should do so now!

H – 2021-09-15 16:24:45
Karekin Vanetsian makes great point. Why are Armenians silent about pashinyan and turkish azeri land grab. Where are the protest marches worldwide, to demand return of the occupied Armenian lands and properties. Pashinyan should be made to go, with all those behind him, in Yerevan or elsewhere. Those, along with Baret Yeretsian and patriarch Manougian of Jerusalem. They are all merchants manipulating their positions for personal gains, thus betraying the Armenian Nation.

Armenag Derderian – 2021-09-11 15:35:13
I know both of them very well! They are very dangerous and corrupt people. Patriarch Nourhan must show the contract! If not all Armenians should stand now and raise their voices to stop this catastrophe, before we lose other lands in Jerusalem. Our long history and presence are in danger because of these two.

Karekin Vanetsian – 2021-09-10 09:05:35
If you are keeping silent or not condemning when Prime Minister Pashinyan lets Azerbaijan grab lands so easily, why are you interested how the patriarchate conducts its business in a vicious part of the world?

Ara Manoogian – 2021-09-09 15:22:59
Until the Patriarch provides dates and details, this so called communiqué is an attempt to cover wrong doings. I would strongly encourage that an independent audit committee be formed to investigate ALL real estate holding, including hundreds of properties in Turkey, in order to make sure they are being managed correctly.



Toros – 2021-09-09 13:14:11

The Patriarchate falsely alleges the Sts. James Brotherhood's Synod approved the deal. A key figure of the Synod is the Patriarch's right-hand man: Fr. Baret Yeretsian, the director of the Patriarchate real estate department. The Brotherhood's constitution forbids a director of real estate department from becoming a member of the Synod because of the conflict of interest. Fr. Yerestian is a vociferous propagandist of the lease.