

Galladzhev, Aleksei Georgievich (1888–1974)

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Dmitry O. Yunak graduated in Finance and Economics from a Soviet secular educational institution and completed a six-year course of Theology at an underground SDA Theological Institute (Moldova, USSR). In the Soviet times, he served as a pastor, administrator, and bible/history professor in the underground Theological Institute. In 1990, he was appointed as Treasurer and Publishing Ministries Director for the USSR Division. After the Euro-Asia Division was organized in 1991, Dmitry O. Yunak served as ESD auditor and under treasurer. He was the author of a dozen of SDA history books and scores of other publications. He owns a major SDA history archive.

Aleksei Georgievich Galladzhev served the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a pastor and administrator in South Caucasus, Russia, and Ukraine. He served the Church during the years of Soviet power, including the terrible decades of Stalin's totalitarian rule.¹

Early Years

Aleksei Georgievich Galladzhev was born on November 7, 1888, into the family Galladzhyan, who had immigrated to Russia and settled down on the skirts of the city of Rostov-on-Don. As time passed, their last name was "russified" and spelled, "Galladzhev". The parents belonged to the Armenian Gregorian Church. Having graduated from middle school, Aleksei Galladzhev first entered the Armenian church seminary but, in a short time, transferred to a different school. His craving for religion made him study different holy books. It so happened that Aleksei became acquainted with the teachings of Tolstoy. He even sent a letter to this great author to share his doubts. In the letter of response, Tolstoy wrote: "What's most important, my son, that you should act according to your conscience." After graduating from gymnasium, A. G. Galladzhev went to the Moscow Teacher's Institute. One day he happened to attend the worship service in an Adventist Church and



Aleksei Gallajev, 1928.

Photo courtesy of D.O. Yunak.

very soon received baptism by immersion.

Ministry and Administrative Work

After the baptism, A. G. Galladzhev was offered a job of a secretary at the Moscow office of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In 1928, he was ordained to pastoral ministry, and in 1930, he was sent to serve as a pastor in the city of Tbilisi, Georgia. He was also elected president of the Transcaucasian Mission Field.² Once he went to a small shoe-repair shop at which three full brothers, the Armenians, were employed. On that day, only one of them, Bagram by name, was taking orders. They started a discussion on the subject of religion, and Bagram invited Aleksei to visit his house. The Bagram brothers took also an interest in Adventist message, and before long, all of them received baptism. The first worship services were conducted in a two-story house owned by those Armenian brothers. In 1932, a small group of believers turned into a strong Adventist congregation headed by Bagram. Meanwhile, Aleksei Galladzhev moved to Tbilisi. In 1939, he was arrested on a charge of religious propaganda and sentenced to four years of imprisonment. However, he was discharged from prison three years after.

Marriage

In 1928, when he was 40, Aleksei Galladzhev married H. J. Loeb sack's daughter, Amalia. The Galladzhevs did not have their own children, and in 1935, they adopted a five-year-old girl, Rosanna, from a poor German family. After Aleksei was arrested, Amalia lived together with her mother, Maria Katharina, and adopted daughter, Rosanna. Amalia had to go through double grief when she heard of the death of her father in prison, and then she supported, as best she could, her arrested husband. In 1941, two weeks after the beginning of World War II, Amalia was herself arrested. It was only in 1946 that Aleksei Galladzhev obtained information from the Ministry of State Security that his wife had been executed by shooting in prison on February 4, 1942.³

Little Rosanna and her grandmother Maria Katharina were left without any means of support. Luckily, the members of local Church sustained them. It didn't take long before the government ordered the banishing of the people of German origin from cities. Rosanna and Maria Katharina were then forced to leave their home and eventually came to be not far from the city of Tashkent. The room in which they lived was occupied by several families. Then, Alexei unexpectedly came back to them following his premature release. He had the luck to keep his graduate diploma from the Moscow Teacher's Institute and could find a job of a teacher at the Kazakh school in the nearby village. Every day he had to travel 12 kilometers on foot, over hedge and ditch, to get to the school and then return home. At the time of war, such a journey was rather dangerous. But Aleksei Galladzhev commended himself to God. One day, it just so happened that he found on his way two sacks: one filled with wheat grain and another with dried fruit. In the days of hunger and food scarcity, this lucky find saved the lives of the Galladzhev family.

Later Years

In 1945, following a request by G. A. Grigoriev, Aleksei Galladzhev moved to Moscow to serve as a secretary of the All-Union Council of Seventh-day Adventists and a pastor for the Moscow Adventist Church. Since a good wife was needed to bring up Rosanna, in 1947, Aleksei married Lyubov Ivanovna Skiratova. In 1952, Aleksei was re-arrested on the charge of restoring an Adventist congregation in the city of Leningrad. He walked free in 1954 under an amnesty in connection with the death of I. V. Stalin. However, he was not allowed to live in Moscow any longer.⁴ Therefore, upon the recommendation of the All-Union Council of Seventh-day Adventists, Aleksei Galladzhev moved to serve as a local pastor at a church in his birth city, Rostov-on-Don. The Lord blessed the labors of His servant there. Alexei could bring together brothers and sisters who had survived Stalin's excesses and helped them grow strong in faith.

In 1955, Aleksei Galladzhev took charge of the Adventist Church in Ukraine. He settled down in the town of Belaya Tserkov and, in 1956, moved to Kiev. In 1958, he was invited to come to Moscow for pastoral service for the Moscow Adventist Church. At that time, he reached the age of 70 and, in the short run, took retirement.

At the age of 84, Aleksei Galladzhev lapsed into serious illness. He was bedridden for nearly a year and passed away on January 31, 1974. Aleksei Galladzhev was buried in the Vagankovsky Cemetery in Moscow.

Contributions

Aleksei Galladzhev served as a minister of the Seventh-day Adventist Church during difficult times. In spite of persecutions, he played an essential role in the governance of the Church in various territories of the former Soviet Union.

SOURCES

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NOTES

1. This article was translated from Russian by Vladimir Ivenko.

2. "Transcaucasian Mission Field," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C: Review and Herald, 1930), 270.
 3. Pavel and Nina Kulakov, email message to Daniel Heinz, April 11, 2019.
 4. Daniel Heinz, A. A. Oparin, D. O. Yunak, and Andris Pešelis, *Dushi pod zhertvennikom. Kniga Pamyati Tserkvi Adventistov Sed'mogo Dnia, posviashchennaya zhertvam religioznykh repressiy vo vremya Tsarskoi Rossii i Sovetskogo Soyuz (1886-1986)* (Khar'kov: Fakt, 2010), 140-142.
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