

IT IS VENGEANCE AND DISGRACE AT THE SAME TIME

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*“Hayots Ashkharh” has already touched upon the scandalous developments, which took place recently in the Armenian National Academy of Sciences (ANAS) during the maintenance of doctoral dissertation of historian and political scientist Armen Aivazian, titled “The Armenian Church at the Crossroads of the Armenian Liberation Movements in the XVIII Century”. Correspondent Armen Hakobian conducted interview with the ANAS academician **Hrachik Simonian** regarding this and some other events.*

- Despite all three opponents giving positive mark (or assessment?) to the doctoral dissertation of A. Aivazian, it wasn't confirmed by the votes of the Specialized Scientific Council. As a scholar being present at the discussion of the dissertation how would you evaluate this event?

- If characterize it in one word – disgrace. I say so since the same Council during the last several years has passed doctoral theses, which were not even on the level of candidate (U.S. equivalent of Ph.D. – K. T.). Obviously, an atmosphere has been created where the voting of the Scientific Council has mostly an arbitrary character. It means that the decisions are being made not on the basis of value of the presented work, but on the basis of liking or disliking the person, who is defending the dissertation. That is the main problem, which has taken deep roots in the Institute of History and Scientific Council.

By the way, regarding the Scientific Council, it is twice as painful that the Chairman of the Council Vladimir Barkhudarian, who is the vice-president of the ANAS as well, encourages all this manipulations. I would like to emphasize that he has organized the disgraceful proceedings concerning A. Aivazian's dissertation.

Regarding the dissertation itself, four substantiated opinions have been presented, one of which is the positive opinion of Matenadaran (the The Yerevan Institute of Old Manuscripts – K. T.). I want to mention that this talented young man has worked on his thesis in Matenadaran for over ten years. I will not hesitate to say that he has written a brilliant dissertation, where he didn't restate the previous works as many others do, but presented a totally new work with dozens of corrections and profound general scientific conclusions. In other words, the work is unique both in its context and structure.

- If the presented work was so good, why did they fail it?

- To answer that question we should go back a little. The thing is that A. Aivazian some time ago wrote a well-known book *“The History of Armenia as Presented in American Historiography”* (its English translation will be published in 2004 – K. T.), where he criticized the American -Armenian and non-Armenian historians, who made the revisionism of the important concepts and problems of the Armenian history their business. In other words, A. Aivazian has exposed the modern falsifications of our history and their authors. That work caused a sensation in the circles of historiography both in Armenia and abroad, especially in the United States.

The main problem is, however, that these falsificators have their friends and “brothers” here, in Armenia, who defend them fiercely. Why do they do so? Sad to say, but they defend them because several times a year they travel abroad by invitation of these “Armenologists”, but it's not quite

clear what their activities are in the host countries. The fact is that a very strong alliance has been formed between the revisionists and their supporters here. And whatever they would say, I will insist that it is the main reason of failing A. Aivazian's dissertation.

- *It means you agree that what has happened was a vengeance.*

- Yes. Although some people here are eager to prove that it is not the case. But there is nothing else. I am deeply convinced that the main reason of the failure was vengeance. Although there are two reasons – one is the revenge for the revisionists and the other is envy.

- *O. K., but isn't it strange that in Armenia, and moreover, among the specialists of the Armenian history there are people who defend the falsifiers of history?*

- Of course it is strange. Moreover, it means that these defenders stand next to falsifiers. It would seem that the distortion of the history of Armenian people is not important for them at all. It seems like they think - the hell with it - if they will consider us newcomers or consider Khorenatsi an "unreliable source". For some people material benefits are much more important than the truth.

- *What dangers do you see in these phenomena?*

- The first danger is that they shut the door on talented young people, while it is time for generation change. It is time for us to go. Therefore it is the succession that bothers me the most. It must be done with people of proper intellectual level, not with mediocre. And the subject of my worry is today's reality. If they treat this young man in such a way, how would they treat others?

Let us go back to the danger of revisionists. In my speech at the ANAS general meeting I had an opportunity to explain that they are at the service of the corresponding foreign institutions. That's what is indicated by the comparison of the facts, flow of the events, thoughts they express and concepts they offer, anyway. In fact, except Vahakn Dadrian there is no one who would oppose the Turkish propagandist "historiography". There is no one to confront the revisionists. As if it is not enough that they don't write anything [against], now they declare that the Armenians are newcomers [in the Armenian highland]. Someone from St. Petersburg stands up and declares that Karabagh is the cradle of culture of Armenian and Azerbaijani people. In the United States Suny and others question the [credibility of] data and information communicated by ancient Armenian historians. And so on.

Based on all this the Turks develop their anti-Armenian theories. Thus, they say the same thing as the Turks do. In this situation they add grist to the mill of Turks and Azerbaijanis. This is the most horrible danger.

Translated by

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