

## **FALSIFICATION OF THE HISTORY OF THE AZERBAIJANI-ARTSAKH WAR IN AZERBAIJANI SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS\***

**Hovik Avanesov**

**Keywords:** Artsakh Liberation War, Artsakh, Azeri military aggression, "Khojalu (Aghdam) events", Sumgait, Russian language textbook.

*Artsakh Liberation War (1988-1994) began as a result of the Azeri military aggression, which, from 1988 to April 30 1991, was of a local character. Subsequently, Azerbaijan undertook an open military intervention, with seizure of territories and the forced deportation of the Armenian population. To counter this and to preserve the country, Artsakh liberation struggle began, which was of paramount military and political importance in the new history of Armenia. Thanks to the panarmenian struggle, part of our Motherland restored the Armenian statehood.*

*The mention of the Azerbaijan-Artsakh war is one of the first in the textbook on the "World cognition" subject for the third class: "Our country is currently at war with the Armenian Republic. Part of our territory was captured by the Armenian Republic. In this war, Azerbaijan lost many of its citizens who became shahids"[1]. In the textbook of the same subject for the 7th grade we read: "The seizure of our lands by Armenian armed forces was accompanied by the destruction of historical and cultural monuments. As a result of the occupation hundreds of historical monuments and museums were destroyed. This continues up to day"[2]. We consider it appropriate to note that:*

*a. Armenian volunteer troops - in the future, the Armenian Defense Army, did not "occupy" any foreign lands, but liberated part of their historical homeland;*

*b. neither during the Azerbaijan-Artsakh war, nor nowadays the Armenians have destroyed any monuments belonging to other peoples' culture. On the contrary, the Armenians spend money on the restoration and preservation of such monuments. Destroying is the handwriting of the Azerbaijani authorities - to destroy the ground not only Armenian, but also other Christian monuments of architecture and cemeteries. As a vivid example of this the destruction of Russian graves in the city of Sumgait in 2015 can be brought.*

*In the textbook of the same subject for the 9<sup>th</sup> grade in the context of tolerance, the authors write about the "deportations" of Azerbaijanis from Armenia and the "Khojalu tragedy"[3].*

*Representatives of the official Azerbaijani "historiography" not only accuse Armenians of "Khojalu (Aghdam) events"<sup>1</sup>, qualifying it as "genocide", but also put their blame for ethnic cleansing of Sumgait Armenians on the Armenians in their works. The same tendency is also observed in Azerbaijani school textbooks [4,5].*

*After the USSR collapse and Azerbaijan's independence proclamation, a new stage in the history creation, with falsification of not only the history of Armenia, but also the region, began in*

---

\* Հոդվածն ընդունվել է 31.03.20:

Հոդվածը տպագրության է ներառվել Վ.Գ.Ք., ղեկնւմ Մ.Հարությունյանը: 07.04.20:

<sup>1</sup> Avanesov H., Elibegova A., Falsifications of Khojalu Events in Azerbaijani School Literature, Materials of International Conference "History and Politics: Falsification, Phobia, Mythmaking", Stepanakert Dizak Plus, 2020, p. 100-112, Elibegova A., Avanesov H., Anti-Armenian Policy in Azerbaijan Educational Institutions and its Influence on Safety of Armenian Statehood, Scientific Artsakh, №1, 2018, Yerevan UYSSA, 2018, p. 169-170.

Azerbaijan. After Aliyev's regime came to power, this process recorded a new progress. This is confirmed by the words of an expert in the field of education, Nabatali Gulamoghlu, who in an interview with the BBC stated that modern history textbooks in Azerbaijani schools are written from a nationalistic point of view.

According to the expert, who was a member of the group, monitoring textbooks published in Azerbaijan: "Those who write our textbooks are prone to populist sentiments; they present fictitious and illogical things as an indisputable fact. The political position also has strong influence on this. The authors of textbooks believe that they are serving people thus, but they do not understand the true meaning of these words. They are not independent." [6].

In the "History of Azerbaijan" - a methodical manual of the 5<sup>th</sup> grade for the teacher, the authors mention the "Khojalu events" and the "participation" of the 366<sup>th</sup> motorized rifle regiment in it [7].

In the "World History" textbook for the 7<sup>th</sup> grade, in the task 7 to the topic "The Crusades. The fall of the Granada Emirate" we read: "Compare the massacres committed by the Crusaders against the Turkic-Muslim population in the East, to the massacres of civilians by Armenians in Garabag (Karabakh-Artsakh, ed. A.H.), including the Khojalu genocide, and give an assessment of these murders." [8].

In the second edition of the textbook "History of Azerbaijan" for the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, at the end, the territories allegedly "occupied by Armenian invaders" are listed [9]. Using the method of comparative analysis, we found that in 2016 edition of this textbook, in Chapter 7 a topic called "The Karabakh War" appeared, where the authors write about "participation" of Russia and the Russian soldiers in the Azerbaijan-Artsakh war [10].

The authors of the textbook "History of Azerbaijan" for the 11<sup>th</sup> grade also write about the "interference" of the military-political forces of the USSR and then Russia: "Since 1991, Armenia, with the help of military-political forces first of the USSR and then Russia, has begun large-scale military operations against Azerbaijan" [11]. The authors of this textbook and their colleagues also write about the "Khojalu events" and, continuing the tradition of their fellow brothers, mention the "participation" of the 366<sup>th</sup> motorized rifle regiment [12].

In Hayk Demoyan's and Levon Melik-Shahnazaryan's book "**Khojalu case: Special folder**" we read: "Actually, the servicemen of the CIS 366<sup>th</sup> motorized rifle regiment did not take part in the assault on Khojalu. Strictly speaking, this was not necessary, since the armed units of the Armenians had armored vehicles in service. Back in early December, they undertook the disarmament of the Soviet police regiment, which was sent to Stepanakert to provide for a state of emergency. As a result of this action, Armenian detachments obtained a large number of small arms and several armored vehicles. A small part of this weapon, even if we do not count captured from the Azerbaijanis equipment, would be enough for a successful operation. It seems to us that the myth of the 366<sup>th</sup> Regiment participation in the battles for Khojalu was born:

**- as a consequence of attempts by the Azerbaijani defenders of Khojalu to "justify themselves" before their compatriots;**

**- in view of the fact that during the assault of Khojalu Armenian armed forces used military armored vehicles for the first time since the beginning of the conflict" [13].**

The abovementioned textbook also refers to the city-fortress of Shushi liberation in 1992: "On the night of May 7-8, the city was subjected to heavy artillery fire, 6000 enemy soldiers and 72 tanks moved to the city. Military equipment and the human resources of the 366<sup>th</sup> Regiment also had their "services" here" [14].

It should be noted that on March 10 1992, the 366<sup>th</sup> motorized rifle regiment was withdrawn from the territory of the Republic of Armenia (NKR). Here a question arises: how can the mentioned motorized rifle regiment "partake" in the liberation of Shushi if two months ago it was withdrawn from Artsakh. This thesis is unambiguously intended for the internal audience.

According to the historian Edik Minasyan, *"in Azerbaijani textbooks, as well as historical works, the policies of falsification, historical facts distortion and formation of the image of the enemy-Armenian continue. It is common knowledge that creating an enemy image helps any ruler to dump all his failures, both in domestic and foreign policy, against this fictional enemy"*[15].

The subject of "Khojalu" is an integral part of not only the school textbooks on the "History of Azerbaijan", but also, for example, the Russian language subject for the 4th grade.

In the Russian language textbook for the 4th grade we read: "The preparation for the offensive was launched on the evening of February 25. Storming of the city began with a two-hour shelling of tanks, armored personnel carriers, guns with shells "Alazan." Khojalu was blocked from three sides, and people tried to escape, fleeing to the forest in the Askeran direction. But it soon became clear that this was an ominous trap. Near the village of Nakhichevan Armenian groups opened fire on unarmed people"[16].

Ex-president Ayaz Mutalibov confessed in March 1992: "... the Armenians had left the corridor, by which people could leave the zone. Why should they shoot then? Moreover, it was on the territory close to Aghdam, where by that time there were enough resources to go out and help people"[17]. The following words of Ayaz Mutalibov testify to the fact that the Azerbaijani country was warned about the operation: "... the attack on Khojalu was not unexpected, in Baku they knew about its preparation well. They also knew about the Askeran corridor left by the Armenian side for the evacuation of civilians"[18].



It can be claimed that the educational process in Azerbaijan is made contingent on the ideology that cultivates armenophobia.

Arif Yunusov, conflictologist, in his publication entitled *The myths and the images of the 'enemy' in historical science and in the history textbooks of the independent Azerbaijan* notes that

*"amid the Karabakh conflict, the schoolbooks in Azerbaijan had the mission of "breeding patriots who know how to distinguish friend from foe and are prepared to take part in another conflict if need be"<sup>2</sup>.*

*The goal of the Russian language textbook should be teaching students the Russian language but this textbook has become another tool of anti-Armenian propaganda in the hands of Azerbaijani officials and their entourage.*

*"The Khojalu (Aghdam) events" are the result of dirty domestic political games. This is evidenced by the words of political and public figures of Azerbaijan, who at that time held high government posts. Below, there are the words of some of these figures.*

**Rustam Gajiyev, member of the Aghdam PFA board:**

*"...We could have helped the Khojalu people, there were resources and opportunities. But the leaders of the republic wanted to demonstrate the people that they do not have the strength, and again call for the help of the CIS army, suppressing by it the opposition as well"[19].*

**E. Mamedov, Mayor of Khojalu:**

*"...After receiving the information on the upcoming operation of capturing the town, I asked Aghdam to send helicopters to evacuate the old, the women and the children. We were assured: tomorrow we will carry out the operation and break through the blockade. Help did not come" [20].*

**M. Safaroghlu, journalist:**

*"...Khojalu was located in an important strategic position. The loss of Khojalu meant a political fiasco for Mutalibov"[21].*

**A. Yunusov, historian and conflictologist:**

*"The city and its inhabitants were deliberately sacrificed for the political goal: to prevent the PFA coming to power"[22].*

*Another goal of "Khojalu (Aghdam) events" is to create equality with the Armenian Genocide in Sumgait, Baku and other cities and settlements of Azerbaijan and Artsakh.*

**Training manual for 9th grade students Biology: Human Biology: Laboratory Work**

*Approved at the session (March 27, 2003) of Biology Panel of the Scientific and Methodical Commission, Ministry of Education of the Azerbaijani Republic. The authors intended "...to impart theoretical knowledge and nurture patriotic individuals through practical activities (laboratory works, tests, math problems, crossword puzzles)".*

*Section Characteristics of Locomotor System, exercise: "Who can say the approximate number of the disabled people who lost their limbs in the Karabakh war?"*

**Exercise:** *Find out the reason! In times of the Nagorno-Karabakh war, several young people aged 20 or 21 threw themselves from a high cliff in an attempt to divert the enemy's attention. Despite of the treatment, they are disabled now. Many of them cannot move their lower limbs, and some suffer enuresis. Explain the reason!"*

*Section Brief Information on Blood and Hematopoietic System, problem: "During the Nagorno-Karabakh events of 1992, a group of people (children, teenagers, pregnant women and elderly people), fled from the enemy as fast as their legs could carry them into the forests, mountains and valleys. Indicate approximately the heart rate of those people and explain the underlying cause".*

*Section Brief Information on Respiratory System, problem: "When Azerbaijanis were banished from Zangezur, every second of them suffered health deterioration and needed artificial ventilation. Some of them perished, and some survived. Explain the reason underlying the state of those people"[23].*

---

<sup>2</sup> Юнусов А., Мифы и образы «врага» в исторической науке и учебниках по истории независимого Азербайджана, [www.kavkazoved.info/news/2011/10/11/mify-i-obrazy-vraga-v-istoricheskoy-nauke-azerbajdzhana-i.html](http://www.kavkazoved.info/news/2011/10/11/mify-i-obrazy-vraga-v-istoricheskoy-nauke-azerbajdzhana-i.html), 11.10.2011.

**Conclusions:**

*This policy of Azerbaijani state officials pursues several goals:*

- a. bringing up a zombie generation that hates Armenians;*
- b. shifting their blame on others for their own failures and defeats in the war over primordially Armenian territories, accusing the USSR, and later Russia, of "participating" in the Azerbaijani-Artsakh war;*
- c. on the basis of pseudoscientific facts to prove to the world community that the primordially Armenian territories "belonged to Azerbaijan from times immemorial".*

**ABBREVIATION**

**USSR-** *The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics*

**CIS-** *Commonwealth of Independent States*

**NKR-** *Nagorno-Karabakh Republic*

**PFA-** *People's front of Azerbaijan*

**REFERENCES**

1. Мехтиева Г., Байрамова Ф., Познание мира, учебник по предмету «Познание мира» для 3-го класса общеобразовательных школ, Баку, «Aspoliqraf», 2017, стр. 61.
2. Мамедова Н., Махмудова К., Бахрамова С., Познание мира-7, учебник по предмету «Познание мира» для 7-го класса общеобразовательных школ, Баку издательский дом «Şərq-Qərb», 2014, стр. 50.
3. Мамедова Н., Махмудова К., Бахрамова С., Познание мира-9. учебник по предмету «Познание мира» для 9-го класса общеобразовательных школ, Баку издательство «Шарг-Гарб», 2016, с. 88.
4. Махмудлу Я., Алиев Г., Абдуллаев М., Гусейнова Л., Джаббаров Х., «История Азербайджана», для 9-го класса общеобразовательных школ, Баку издательство «Шарг-Гарб», 2016, с. 155.
5. Мамедов И., Каффаров Т., Мамедов Х., Тагиева Ш., Велиев М., Мамедова Ш., Гусейнов А., Годжаев А., История Азербайджана. Учебник для 11-го класса общеобразовательных школ. Баку. «Чашьюглу», 2009, стр. 149.
6. Азербайджан: как пишут учебники истории. Режим доступа: [http://www.bbc.com/russian/international/2013/11/131028\\_history\\_textbook\\_azerbaijan\\_31.01.2019](http://www.bbc.com/russian/international/2013/11/131028_history_textbook_azerbaijan_31.01.2019).
7. Мусаева О., Гусейнова Л., Джаббаров Х., «История Азербайджана-Отечество» 5-ый класс. Методическое пособие для учителя, Баку «Тəhsil», 2012, сс. 132-133.
8. Махмудлу Я., Агаев С., Хубьяров Б., Алишова Х., Гусейнова Л., Бахрамова С., «Всеобщая история», для 7-го класса общеобразовательных школ, Баку «Aspoliqraf», 2016, стр. 94.
9. Мамедов С., Велиев Т., Годжаев А. История Азербайджана (учебник для IX класса). II издание. Баку, «Тахсил», 2002, стр.256.
10. Махмудлу Я., Алиев Г., Абдуллаев М., Гусейнова Л., Джаббаров Х., «История Азербайджана», сс. 171-174.
11. Мамедов И., Каффаров Т., Мамедов Х., Тагиева Ш., Велиев М., Мамедова Ш., Гусейнов А., Годжаев А., История Азербайджана, с. 168.
12. Там же, стр. 170-171.

13. Демоян Г., Мелик-Шахназарян Л., Ходжалинское дело: особая папка, Ереван., 2003, стр. 19-20.
14. Мамедов И., Каффаров Т., Мамедов Х., Тагиева Ш., Велиев М., Мамедова Ш., Гусейнов А., Годжаев А., История Азербайджана, стр. 171.
15. Минасян Э., Фальсификация истории арцахского движения и Нагорно-Карабахской Республики в азербайджанских учебниках// Вестник Арменоведения. 2013 N1 (1) , стр.186.
16. Нуриева Б., Мустафа-заде Н., Русский язык 4. Учебник по предмету Русский язык (как язык обучения) для 4-го класса общеобразовательных школ, BakI «Şərq-Qərb», 2017, стр. 117.
17. «Независимая газета» 2.4.1992.
18. «Огонек», N14-15, 1992 г.
19. «Известия», апрель 1992 г.
20. «Мегаполис-экспресс», N17, 1992 г.
21. «Независимая газета», февраль 1993 г.
22. «Зеркало», июль, 1992 г.
23. Adibekyan A., Elibegova A., Armenophobia in Azerbaijan, Yerevan “Information and Public Relations Center” of the Administration of the President of the Republic of, Armenia 2015, p 163-164, <http://misinformative.info/?p=322>.

## **SUMMARY**

### **Falsification of the History of the Azerbaijani-Artsakh War in Azerbaijani School Textbooks Hovik Avanesov**

Coverage of the Azerbaijani-Karabakh war is one of the key areas of Azerbaijani "historiography". In the works of Azerbaijani authors, events are presented not based on historical realities, but in accordance with the style of the state agitprop. The Azerbaijani-Artsakh war and the events that occurred during this period were described not only in "academic" publications, but also in school textbooks.

## **ԱՄՓՈՓԱԳԻՐ**

### **Ադրբեջանա-արցախյան պատերազմի պատմության կեղծումը ադրբեջանական դպրոցական դասագրքերում Հովիկ Ավանեսով**

**Բանալի բառեր՝** Արցախյան ազատագրական պատերազմ, Արցախ, ադրբեջանական ռազմական ագրեսիա, «Խոշալուի իրադարձություններ», Մումգալիթ, ռուսաց լեզվի դասագիրք:

Ադրբեջան-արցախյան պատերազմի լուսաբանումը ադրբեջանական «պատմագրության» առանցքային ոլորտներից է: Ադրբեջանցի հեղինակների աշխատություններում իրադարձությունները ներկայված են ոչ թե ելնելով պատմական իրողությունից այլ շարադրված պետական քարոզչամեթոդային ոճին համահունչ: Ադրբեջանա-արցախյան պատերազմը և այդ ժամանակահատվածում տեղի ունեցած իրադարձությունները ապագիտականորեն են շարադրված ոչ միայն «ակադեմիական» հրատարակություններում այլ նաև դպրոցական դասագրքերում:

РЕЗЮМЕ

**Фальсификация истории азербайджано-арцахской войны в азербайджанских  
школьных учебниках  
Овик Аванесов**

**Ключевые слова:** Арцахская освободительная война, Арцах, азербайджанская военная агрессия, "Ходжалинские события", Сумгаит, учебник русского языка.

Освещение азербайджано-карабахской войны является одной из ключевых сфер азербайджанской «историографии». В трудах азербайджанских авторов события представлены не исходя из исторических реалий, а в соответствии с стилем государственного агитпропа. Азербайджано-арцахская война и события, произошедшие в этот период, были изложены не только в «академических» изданиях, но и в школьных учебниках.