



ASSESSMENT ON THE THIRD BOOK OF THE SERIES

On the reader's table is the 3rd book¹ of the series "Famous Figures of Artsakh", which gives a brief outline of the information, as stated in the annotation, of "the life and activity of figures originally born in Hadrut region – leaders born in the families of historical Dizak, people who contributed to the military, science, culture, education, sports and other fields".

The book was compiled by staff members of the Artsakh Scientific Center² S.V. Dadayan (group leader), L.E. Mirzoyan, N.V. Avagimyan and K.E. Balayan. The editor of the book is S.A. Khanyan - Doctor of Philology, Professor, honored figure of science of NKR. The publication of the work is guaranteed by the scientific council of the Artsakh Scientific Center.

The idea is welcome, since, especially, as stated in the editor's speech, the publication of the series is a means of "communication with generations" (see the mentioned book, page 4).

In his speech entitled "Rings of hope, faith and return", philologist K. Balayan records that "researchers of the Artsakh scientific center are trying, within the limits of the opportunities provided (M.H.), to present the famous figures of the region of different periods – people who left their word in the political, economic, spiritual, cultural history of centuries old Dizak, both in the region, in Artsakh, and abroad" (p. 5). Anyhow, a significant part of the compiled biographical information does not provide full opportunity to be sure about the detailed contribution or public achievements of the given person. Basically, no criteria for the choice of personal names or for determining (evaluating) the

¹ Famous figures from Artsakh. Hadrut district. Book III, comp.: S.V. Dadayan (team leader), L.E. Mirzoyan, N.V. Avagimyan, K.E. Balayan. Edited by S.A. Khanyan. Artsakh Scientific Center, Stepanakert, ["Dizak Plus"], 2022, 232 [actually 230] pages(in Armenian) (from now on, the pages of quotations from the book under review will be indicated in the text and in brackets).

² The activity has been stopped since October 1, 2023.

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public significance of activities are defined for peer-reviewed collections. An artificial equality has been introduced in the volumes of biographies, although the memorable undertakings and achievements of outstanding figures with a weighty contribution are represented less than they actually managed to obtain, and, on the contrary, the biographies of those of modest merit are burdened with unimportant and inadequate information.

The compilers managed to summarize 316 biographies in the book according to the list of names (pages 8–16). Anyhow, the list of outstanding people of the region (page 229), whose biographical data failed to have been collected at the time of the publication of this book, contains 32 names. The last name on that list, Levon Ohanyan (Arakel city), is mentioned as the Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Armenia. The official website³ of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Armenia lists the former ministers of agriculture where Levon Ohanyan's name was not available.

The content incompleteness of the biographies is due to the poor source base. All biographical publications, as a rule, Armenian encyclopedias and many publications of informational-biographical nature could be significantly suitable in the case of the book under discussion. However, judging by the list of the literature used (p. 230), a surprisingly superficial approach was taken not only to the selection of sources and thematic literature, but also to the requirement to verify or supplement the information extracted from one source with other sources, which is mandatory for all publications of a scientific and encyclopedic, as well as of informational character.

Depending on the year of publication of the original source used by the authors of the book under peer-review or the content of the reported data, the life and activity of many figures, especially their last years, have remained inexplicably dark in the book. Thus, 6 years of the biography of Alexander Abalyan [1976–1982] (p. 17), about 30 years of Andranik Abrahamyan's biography [1987–2017] (p. 18), 32 years of Ashot Abrahamyan's biography [1990–2022] (p. 19), 15 years of Liana Abrahamyan's biography [2018–2023] (p. 23) and so on still remain missing.

The compilers of the book failed to specify the dates of death of many figures. For example, Armen Atayan [1922–] (p. 29), Georgy Alaverdyan [1928–]

³ Available at <http://old.minagro.am/> (Downloaded: 07.03.2023).

(p. 33), Alexander Aghajanyan [1904–] (p. 38), Grisha Ayvazyan [1926–] (p. 51), Mikayel Asryan [1882–196⁴] (p. 55), and we hope that the dates of the others' death can be corrected and presented within a reasonable time in future revised editions of the book.

There are no photos of almost five dozen figures presented in the book, moreover, very few of them belong to the XVIII–XIX c.c. figures, the vast majority lived in the XX century and passed away in our days. Many have had their photographs published in separate publications and can also be found in digital repositories on the Internet or in other open sources.

There are also obvious historical errors or unreliable pieces of information. Thus, in the section “Instead of the Preface” by the head of the group S. Dadayan, it is written that “Hadrut region (historical Dizak) was inhabited in the distant past, BC. in the first millennium” (p. 7). Meanwhile, as a result of studies with the participation of international specialists, it was found out that the ancient man lived in the Azokh cave of Hadrut region much earlier, in the Middle Pleistocene and Holocene eras (1250–700 thousand years ago – about 12 thousand years ago)⁵.

It should also be a mistake to consider Armenak Khanperyants (S. Khudyakov) only a figure of the 40s of the XX century and Artur Mkrtchyan only a figure of the 90s of the XX century (p. 7), because as we read in this book (p. 128), Khanperyants was active during the civil war (1918–1920), and in 1924–1936 had a respectable military career in the ranks of the Red Army. As for Arthur Mkrtchyan, one of the prominent figures of our time, according to page 180 of the book under review, he stood out in the 1980s as a scientist-ethnographer, a skilled organizer of museum work, and since 1986, not only as an active participant of the Artsakh movement but also, especially in Hadrut, one of its ideologists and leaders.

Regrettably, the book does not contain memorable biographies of many meritorious figures who were once left under the shadow due to political

⁴ 196 is mentioned.

⁵ Y. Fernandez-jalvoa, T. King, P. Andrews, L. Yepiskoposyan, N. Moloneya, J. Murray, P. Dominguez-Alonso, L. Asryan, P. Ditchfield, J. van der Made, T. Torres, P. Sevilla, M. Nieto Diaz, I. Caceres, E. Allue, M.D. Marin Monfort, T. Sanz Martin, The Azokh Cave complex: Middle Pleistocene to Holocene human occupation in the Caucasus, https://eprints.ucm.es/id/eprint/14577/1/Azokh_JHE_2010_1.pdf(download: 04/06/2023).

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expediency, but deserve to be popularized within the realms of independent statehood, within the limits of the opportunities provided by the national authorities. Among such figures, one can name Suren Semyon Baghdasaryan (born 1911, Karmrakuch village, Dizaki region – born 1989, Yerevan), lecturer of the Department of History of the Communist Party of Yerevan Polytechnic Institute, candidate of historical sciences, Associate Professor, veteran of the Great Patriotic War, one of the ideologues of the Artsakh movement, whose biography is presented under review in order to contribute to the editing of the book. In his youth, he lived in Baku, worked as a laborer in 1929–1932, later in committee and party positions in 1931–1941. While studying at the Faculty of History of Azerbaijan State University named after S.M. Kirov (1936–1941), he was simultaneously the deputy secretary of the party committee of the university, taught in preparatory courses of the university, worked jointly at the Institute of Party History named after Stepan Shahumyan. During the Great Patriotic War, more precisely, in 1941 June 24 – 1946 July, he served in the ranks of the Soviet Army. He was a police officer, and after completing the training, he was a company commander. He also participated in the defense of Stalingrad but he was wounded by gunshots and shrapnel twice. After the shards were removed, he was sent to the Stalingrad front, and as part of the 254th tank brigade, he took part in the defeat of the German-fascist troops near Stalingrad. After the victory against fascist Germany in 1945–1946, he accompanied the tank formations from Chelyabinsk to replenish the armament of the Soviet Army.

After the Patriotic War, he completed his YSU postgraduate studies. For more than 35 years, he worked as a lecturer and Associate Professor delivering lectures on the history of the Communist Party of Armenia in the Russian departments of universities in Yerevan .

On May 31, 1965, Suren Semyon Baghdasaryan presented the discriminatory policy of the authorities of Azerbaijan SSR against the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh in a letter sent to the Central Committee of the CPSU where he elucidated the historical and legal-political arguments for the realization of the right to self-determination of the people of Artsakh. Another letter and application with the same content was sent by the historian to the Central Committee of the CPSU in 1978–1979, and in 1985 he sent a letter to M. Gorbachev – the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

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We believe that these letters and applications, the generalization of which can be considered as the application addressed to the XXVII Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, were of great importance for popularizing and justifying the mature issue of realizing the right to self-determination of the people of Artsakh through reunification with the Armenian SSR⁶.

Not at all intending to disparage the initiative of publishing the series about prominent figures of Artsakh, especially the work accomplished by the working group, we would like to hope that the remarks and suggestions mentioned above will be taken into account in future publications so that the biographical information of our elders is as complete, reliable, and eloquent as possible, and serves as a personal example of acting with unfailing dedication for the homeland, the Armenian people, and a message addressed to generations.

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⁶ Факты о геноцидной политике Азербайджана. «Качар» (Ежегодник НЦК). Книга 14 (167–178), Шуши. Издательство научного центра «Качар», 2020, с. 8–9, 14–16, 182–183. (Facts about Azerbaijan's genocidal policy. "Kachar" (KSC Yearbook). Book 14 (167–178), Shushi. Kachar Science Center Publishing House, 2020, pp. 8–9, 14–16, 182–183(in Russian).