HANDS OFF THE DIASPORA!

Posted on June 22, 2011 by Keghart

Category: Opinions

Keghart.com Board Editorial, 30 June 2011

The events unfolding in the Armenian communities of Nice and Switzerland may have far reaching consequences for the Armenian Apostolic Church in particular and Armenia/Diaspora relations in general.

The individuals--lay and clergy--who are involved in the ongoing disputes, the choices they have made and may continue to make, will shape the future status of the Church. However, the matter has gone far beyond a simple dialogue and national discourse on how to address the inter-relation between lay people, entrusted with managing the organizational aspect of the institution. and the clergy whose sole *raison d'être* is to provide spiritual guidance.

Keghart.com Board Editorial, 30 June 2011

The events unfolding in the Armenian communities of Nice and Switzerland may have far reaching consequences for the Armenian Apostolic Church in particular and Armenia/Diaspora relations in general.

The individuals--lay and clergy--who are involved in the ongoing disputes, the choices they have made and may continue to make, will shape the future status of the Church. However, the matter has gone far beyond a simple dialogue and national discourse on how to address the inter-relation between lay people, entrusted with managing the organizational aspect of the institution. and the clergy whose sole *raison d'être* is to provide spiritual guidance.

Nobody is blind to the constant foreign pressures Armenia is subjected to because of its geopolitical significance. Russia and its rivals (USA and the major countries of the European Union) are investing time, manpower and finances to "normalize" relations between Armenia and Turkey, in accordance with their own respective interests. The infamous Protocols were the expression of that ongoing pursuit--to formalize relations and get rid of the "thorn" that Armenia and Armenians pose in the eyes of the movers and shakers of international politics and economy. The US administration has not given up on TARC. Activities of similar nature may have undergone a facelift but continue to be carried through a variety of venues.

In the Diaspora several prominent personalities, organizations, some clerics and lay people, engaged in the activities of various councils overseen by Etchmiadzin-oriented churches, willingly or unwillingly, knowingly or not, in self interest or otherwise, are promoting ideas in line with the general direction of the Protocols. Trying to revive the Protocols, they cite arguments out of context

and deploy a misleading chronological sequence of events. This is a futile exercise and an insult to our intelligence.

Meanwhile, in Armenia a ruling elite that seeks legitimacy by pleasing foreign interests has lost its trajectory. It has "suspended" the Protocols. Suspension entails the distinct possibility of reviving the Protocols when circumstances are favourable. People who follow Armenian affairs--in Armenia and in the Diaspora--are only too aware of the amicable relations that have developed between the rulers of Armenia and Protocol-promoters in the Diaspora.

"You scratch my back and I´ll scratch yours" describes what goes on between the Armenian oligarchs and Etchmiadzin as the latter has become an institution devoid of any "holiness." Examples to support this negative perception abound in Armenia. The citizens of Armenia have condemned the Church leadership and have created a folklore replete with unflattering remarks and anecdotes about the "Supreme Leader" of the Church.

It would be naive to think that Etchmiadzin's recent activities in the Diaspora have been undertaken without the knowledge and blessings of the government of Armenia.

The tripartite confluence of interests among the Diaspora Protocol-promoters, the oligarchs of Armenia and Etchmiadzin provide opportunities for the "Supreme Leader" to pursue his Diaspora dreams that are not far from delusions of grandeur. Etchmiadzin´s hectic activities remind us of the story of Shara and the Plains of Shirag with the difference that the "Supreme Leader" has an appetite seemingly exceeding that of Shara. He will exploit whatever pretext to devour what he can in the Diaspora. Entering from the back door, this unscrupulous endeavour in the Diaspora will try to achieve what the president failed to accomplish last year when he tried to drum up support for the discredited Protocols.

The scandalous incidents in Nice and Switzerland are not isolated events. They seem to be part-and-parcel of a plan to subjugate Diaspora communities to the will of disgraceful rulers in Yerevan. Is it too far fetched to suppose that Jerusalem might be the next target of this unholy tripartite alliance? Will the Diaspora muster enough courage to tell--in no uncertain terms--to the "Supreme Leader" that his games have nothing to do with the Church as a religious institution and everything to do about power, politics, authoritarian attitudes and personal ambition?
Enough is enough; hands off the Diaspora!