

My Karabakh or The Karabakh Knot

Hamlet Isaxanli

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My Karabakh or The Karabakh Knot

Introduction

Beautiful Karabakh has long been a source of tensions and confrontations; it has long exacerbated hostilities, and as a result, it has given rise to wars between Azerbaijan and Armenia and between Azerbaijanis and Armenians. How did this happen? Why did this happen? What is the root of this issue? How did this difficult situation, this jumbled knot, arise? How can this knot come untangled? These and similar questions, as well as thoughts on the Second Karabakh War in the fall of 2020, compelled me to complete this work. I have thought about Karabakh a lot, discussed it with many people, written small papers, and jotted down numerous unpublished notes. The fact that the pandemic kept us under house arrest also prompted me to continue research between October and November 2020 without hindrance, allowing me to accelerate and complete the work.

There are numerous aspects of this publication that I feel might be of interest to readers, including the history of relations between the Azerbaijani and Armenian people, my own personal observations and experiences, passages from Azerbaijani and Armenian literature, articles in the media on the life and concerns of the Azerbaijani and Armenian people, possible solutions for the current situation, and possible outcomes for the future of Karabakh. First of all, I appeal to both Azerbaijani and, especially, Armenian readers. I think there is a strong need for such a conversation between our people...

I am a citizen of Azerbaijan. I am an inhabitant of the Caucasus. I believe that I know the Caucasus quite well. I am an Azerbaijani Turk. I was born and raised in Georgia, spending my childhood and school years there with my family. To this day, I often go to Georgia, visiting my rural family home and taking trips to Tbilisi and other parts of the country, such as its universities. I have Georgian friends with whom I am still in touch and often meet with great pleasure. I have also traveled to and vacationed in the North Caucasus, including the regions of Dagestan, Chechnya, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Krasnodar, and Stavropol. I am also well-acquainted with Armenia and the Armenian people. For almost 40 years, I vacationed there every summer, camping in a tent with my family in the mountains of Armenia. I am familiar with the Armenian world of science and art. I want the people of the Caucasus to live peacefully as neighbors, to cooperate with one another, and to maintain deep friendships. It seems that at one point such a

Caucasus existed, but then disagreements arose, and nations started to clash with one another. The Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict sparked, ignited, and started to blaze, bringing with it great misfortune.

I am Azerbaijani. Every Azerbaijani has their own “Karabakhname” - that is their own story, book, work, their own conception of Karabakh. Every Azerbaijani, regardless of their place of birth, their profession or their gender, has a specific love, as well as a distinct pain they feel in their heart for Karabakh. Karabakh has a special place in the culture and history of the Azerbaijani people. Karabakh, both as a subject and problem, plays a major role in the life of Armenians as well.

I would like to start this work by explaining what Karabakh means for Azerbaijan, including its role in the nature of Azerbaijan, in the world of music, literature, culture, and art. I continue to remember the days I spent in the mountains of Armenia for many years while at the same time not being able to visit Karabakh and Shusha. Based on Azerbaijani and Armenian literature as well as on my own personal observations, I have tried to understand and analyze how Armenians and Azerbaijanis knew one other, how they got along and how they managed to live in the same region, in the neighborhood for so many centuries. I came across what the Armenian press wrote about Azerbaijani Turks during the Tsarist period. I have remembered how people of art with Armenian origin were tied to Azerbaijan. I have also paid attention to the existence of some provocative writings, along with the literature and the press, which in the majority of cases, glorified friendship and love.

Almost all conflicts between nations are connected with the creation of historical myths, the exaggeration of historical events, and the claims of being a nation elected and superior to others. History is used to blame other peoples and to sow seeds of enmity in the present and future. I have dived into the philosophy of history, which reminds us of the danger of history. Whether we like it or not, it is necessary to return to history and observe how it has been distorted and instilled in us. I am talking about the history of the Caucasus and Azerbaijan, about statehood, in a very short way. I tried to examine Armenian history and historiography as well as the fog around Caucasian Albanian history. At the same time, it is impossible to properly understand nowadays without analyzing the recent history of the region, paying particularly close attention to Russia’s arrival in the Caucasus, to the issue of Azerbaijani khanates and Armenians, and to the role of migration and ethnic diversity.

We have to remember the bloody pages of history. These pages may infuriate us and aggravate hostilities, but they also pose an opportunity for us to ask ourselves vital questions: Why did such tensions arise? Were they avoidable? These questions urge us to think and be careful. Unfortunately, the “Armenian issue,” the “Armenian-Tatar massacres of 1905-1906,” the attempts of Armenians and Azerbaijanis to establish an independent state, their subsequent confrontations on this journey,

and the territorial conflict, massacres, and terrorism that followed, have all left a mark on our history. I followed this aforementioned path and became immersed in thought.

When talking about Armenian history and politics, I decided to appeal to western authors and Armenians themselves - not to Azerbaijani or Turkish authors. I have primarily referenced Armenian poets, writers, politicians, and statesmen with various political views as well as western historians and political scientists. For the purpose of completeness and in order to provide my audience with a broader picture, I have chosen to present both those who showed the right way, called for peace, and thought about the future, as well as those who called for war, waving the flag of historical memory in their hands.

I have covered the Soviet period of Nagorno-Karabakh, the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the First Karabakh War, post-war life and politics, as well as the ideas of war and peace of some Armenian statesmen and intellectuals. I have not forgotten about the work I have done and about the meetings I have held on the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict. I commented on the reasons for the Second Karabakh War, on the untwisting of the painful Karabakh knot, and on the ways we can increase the probability of peace. While discussing various issues, I did not hesitate to allow for slight repetition for the sake of integrity. Finally, I conclude this work with a wish for a peaceful and prosperous future, looking for answers to questions, such as what to do, how to achieve a lasting peace, how such a peace can be preserved, and what Azerbaijanis and Armenians should do in order to live together peacefully.

Note. The lack of universal English spelling of personal and geographical names of Azerbaijan creates certain difficulties. In the countries of the former Soviet Union, the Russian and English spelling of these names has been written on the basis of a conditional agreement. For example, the original Azerbaijani name of the famous region is Qarabağ, but it has been transliterated into English as Karabakh. Another example, how should the name of Azerbaijani writer Cəfər Cabbarlı be written in Russian or English? Russian does not have a letter corresponding with “C” (that is “J” in English). Accordingly, the Russian Version of Cəfər Cabbarlı is Джафар Джаббарлы or Джабарлы in Russian Cyrillic. When the Azerbaijani Cyrillic alphabet was in use-for most of the Soviet period-it was customary to write the name Cəfər Cabbarlı (to be precise, its Cyrillic version: Цəфəр Чаббарлы) as Jafar Jabbarli or Jabbarly in English. In the case of Cyrillic, the English transliteration was based mostly on the phonetic sound of letters. What to do now then with the modern time Latin-based Azerbaijani alphabet? Should we keep Azerbaijani form, Cəfər Cabbarlı? Or maybe to preserve Jafar Jabbarli or Jabbarly of the Soviet era? By the way, the related Turkish spelling is Cafer Cabbarlı, that is, by replacing the first letter “ə” in Azerbaijani (which is lacking in Turkish) with “a.” In general, letters “ə,” “ı,” “x” of the Latin-based Azerbaijani alphabet may create some difficulties in transliterations. For instance, the phonetic equivalent of the letter “x,” which was transplanted (I think in an unnatural way) from Cyrillic into the Latin-based

Azerbaijani alphabet, is “kh.” So, what is to do with my surname of “İsaxanlı?” Reserve “İsaxanlı,” change a little with the first and last letters as “Isaxanlı,” use the form “Isakhanli,” or see for other forms?

Unfortunately, there is no common agreement on the transliteration of Azerbaijani personal and geographical names. For each special Azerbaijani name, in English I will use the original Azerbaijani Latin-based form or another English equivalent left over from the Soviet past. I hope that the last technical-informational part of the work labeled as the *Index*, will include all forms of transliterations, thus facilitating this task.

Paradise of Songs

How did I know Karabakh as a child born and raised in a Georgian village far away?

These verses from the famous poem “Azerbaijan” by Səməd Vurğun (Samad Vurghun) were memorized in languages:

Könlüm keçir Qarabağdan
Gah bu dağdan, gah o dağdan
Axşam üstü qoy uzaqdan
Havalansın Xanın səsi
Qarabağın şikəstəsi.

Through Karabakh my spirit fares,
Wings over mountain here, now there
From far away down through the twilit air
Drifts the song of Khan -
Shikeste of Karabakh.

Note. Here, in this work, I prefer a word for word translation of poetry.

This poem emphasizes that Karabakh is a country of mountains and a great musical place, praising the famous song “Karabakh shikestesı” and its unique performer Xan Şuşinski (Khan Shushinsky). These poetic lines have a special place in my conception of Karabakh.

Note. They say that once, when S. Vurghun met Khan Shushinsky on the street, he said: “Khan, you are in history, I have entered you into history.” Seeing that Khan did not understand, the poet read these (above) verses to him.

The song “Şuşanın Dağları” (Mountains of Shusha), the exact history of which is little known, was created in the first half of the 20th century and is widely recognized as a folk song. Directly related to the name of the great Khan Shushinsky, this song reminds listeners of Shusha’s “mountains, gardens, and its maiden’s place,” as well

as the spring of İsa (“İsa bulağı”), and its evenings. The composition, written in the Segah style, belongs to Khan, and, perhaps, these are his words:

Şuşanın dağları başı dumanlı,
Qırmızı qoftalı, yaşıl tumanlı,
Dərdindən ölməyə çoxdu gümanım.

Nəqarət:

Ay qız, bu nə qaş - göz, bu nə tel,
Ölərəm dərdindən, onu bil,
Danışmasan da balam, barı gül.

Şuşada axşamlar yanar ulduzlar,
Onlardan gözəldi gəlinlər, qızlar,
Oturub yol üstə yarımı gözlər.

Nəqarət.

Şuşanın hər yandan gəlir sorağı,
Tərifə layiqdir İsa bulağı,
Dağları, bağları, qızlar oylağı.

Nəqarət.

The peaks of Shusha's mountains are covered in fog,
The one in the red blouse, in the green skirt,
I could easily die of love for you.

Chorus / Refrain:

Hey girl, what eyebrows, what eyes, what hair,
I will die of grief, know this,
Even if you will not talk, at least laugh.

Stars shine in Shusha in the evenings,
The brides and girls are even prettier than them,
Sitting on the side of the road, waiting for their lovers.

Chorus / Refrain.

The sound of Shusha is coming from everywhere ,
İsa Spring deserves such praise,
Mountains, gardens, a maiden's meadow.

Chorus / Refrain.

It is almost impossible to find a singer who does not know and sing this song. I especially enjoyed the performances of Əbülfət Əliyev (Abulfat Aliyev), Yaqub Məmmədov (Yagub Mammadov), Vəli Məmmədov (Vali Mammadov) and Arif Babayev.

Besides “Qarabağ şikəstəsi” and “Şuşanın dağları,” the song “Qarabağın maralı” (Karabakh’s deer), which I listened to in my childhood, was very popular in our village. This song, which was performed by Şövkət xanım Ələkbərova (Shovkat khanum Alakbarova) and Sara xanım Qədimova (Sara khanum Gadimova), was sometimes called “Azerbaijani deer.”

Turşsu olsun yaylağımız
Gözəl Şuşa oylağımız
Sən olaydın qonağımız
Qarabağın maralı.

Çıxaq Qırxqız yaylağına
Ceyran-cüyür oylağına
Enək İsa bulağına
Qarabağın maralı...

“Turshsu” is our plateau
Beautiful Shusha is our home
You would be our guest
Karabakh’s deer.

Let’s go to the “Girkgiz” plateau
To the abode of gazelle-roe
Go down to “Isa” spring
Karabakh’s deer.

Thus, in my imagination, I walked through Turshsu, through Shusha and its many mountains, across the Girkgiz (Forty Girls) Plateau, and along the Isa Spring, all beside Karabakh’s beautiful girl-Karabakh’s deer. I was a guest there, walking along the Cıdır Plain (“Jidir”; race-course, hippodrome).

Although I do not have a very pleasant voice, I have always loved to sing and hum. One of the songs I enjoyed and sang in high school was a simple song called “Qarabağın qızları” (Karabakh girls) composed by Əşrəf Abbasov (Ashraf Abbasov) and beautifully performed by Mobil Əhmədov (Ahmadov).

El bilir ki, gözəldir
Qarabağın qızları
Od salır ürəklərə
Hər baxanda gözləri

Gülə bənzər üzləri
Şirin olur sözləri
Nə gözəldir, nə qəşəngdir
Qarabağın qızları...

Everyone knows that they are beautiful
 Karabakh girls
 Set fire to hearts
 With their eyes every time they look

Faces like flowers
 Words so sweet
 How beautiful, how gorgeous
 Karabakh girls.

One of the popular songs about Karabakh that I listened to when I was studying at university in Baku was composed by Cahangir Cahangirov and known as “Cənnətim Qarabağ” (“My Paradise is Karabakh”). This song was performed by Shovkat khanum and Sara khanum as well as Flora khanum Kerimova, and other singers.

Cənnətim Qarabağ
 Zinətim Qarabağ
 Nəğmələr gülüstanısan
 Sevgi dastanısan.

Gözəl Şuşa
 Bir tamaşa
 Yay günləri sərin...

My paradise is Karabakh
 My adornment is Karabakh
 You are the homeland of songs
 You are a dastan.

Beautiful Shusha
 A spectacle
 Cool summer days ...

Note. Dastan, meaning “tale” or “story” is a form of oral history in Turkic countries talking about extraordinary persons who show heroism to protect their people or about lovers facing very much difficulties.

After a while, another Karabakh song that I liked appeared. This song, composed by Bəhram Nəсібov (Bahram Nasibov), was especially popular thanks to the line “Karabakh is always the mother of dreams.” This line was even referenced in a performance by the famous Karabakh singer Arif Babayev.

Bu çəmənlərdə gəzib Vaqifin şux gözəli
 Ruhunu burdan alıb Natəvanın qəzəli
 Anadır arzulara hər zaman Qarabağ
 Danışan dil-dodağım tar-kaman Qarabağ
 Qarabağ, can Qarabağ, ana yurdum.

Vagif's bright beauty walked in these meadows
 Natavan's ghazal took her soul from here
 Karabakh is always the mother of dreams
 Karabakh is tar and kaman - My speaking tongue and lips
 Karabakh, dear Karabakh, my motherland.

Shusha Sings

Popular songs, of course, are irreplaceable in the glorification of a particular place, beauty, or love: such songs reach down to the bottom of our hearts. Is there a language as universal as music? Music is the main substance that makes up the soil, water, and air of Karabakh! Karabakh sings! The people of Karabakh sing! It is an arduous task to list the singers of Karabakh, even to name its famous ones. There are simply too many to count. The prominent Russian poet Sergei Yesenin justified his desire to go to the East, to Shiraz with these words: “Недаром мусульмане говорят: если он не поет, значит он не из Шуши, если он не пишет, значит он не из Шираза”¹ (“Muslims do not say in vain: if he does not sing, then he is not from Shusha, if he does not write, then he is not from Shiraz”)

During my school years, I was very interested in the history of music and theater, reading every possible work of literature that I could find. I tried to procure what I did not have, and I benefited a lot from listening to Azerbaijani radio - that great cultural source. Although we cannot listen to the voice of Haji Husu (1839-1898), one of the famous singers who formed the Azerbaijani mugam, and the art of Sadiqan (1846-1902), a great player and reformer of the Azerbaijani tar, who made a great contribution to the development of Azerbaijani mugam, there are many wonderful memories about them. The years of their activity belong to the period before the recording of sound. Thanks to such advances in technology, future generations, including us, have been able to feel their art and fall under their spell just like previous generations did at their live concerts. Among these artists are Jabbar Qaryaghdioghlu (1861-1944) and some of his contemporaries. Abdulbaghi Zulalov (1841-1927) sang mugam in different languages and was cherished by the name of Bulbuljan, Mashadi Isi (? -1905). Kechachioğlu Mammad (1864-1940) and

¹ Yesenin, S. 1925. *Из письма к Г. Бениславской*. [From a letter to G. Benislavskaya]. chief ed. Prokushev, Y. L., 1999. Complete collection of works: (in 7 volumes). vol. 6. Letters, Moscow: Nauka-Golos. p. 210.

Mashadi Mammad Farzaliyev (1872-1962) are also prominent examples. Qasim Abdullayev (1873-1927), known as *Zabul Qasim* for his excellent performance of Zabul-segah was also an excellent musician. Majid Behbudov (1873-1927), Islam Abdullayev (1876-1964), known as *Segah Islam* for his beautiful performance of segah muğam, and Zulfu Adigozalov (1898-1963) were also recorded.

Gurban Pirimov (1880-1965), a native of Shusha, who took his first lessons from the famous tar player Sadiqcan, also became a celebrated tar player himself. Mashadi Jamil Amirov (1875-1928), also from Shusha, was known as a tar player and composer. Seyid Shushinsky (1889-1965), Bulbul (1897-1961), and Khan Shushinsky (1901-1979) are other notable examples. What do these names mean?! Khan Shushinsky is a descendant of Panahali khan from Karabakh; he is a representative of the 5th generation after Panahali khan. All of these well-known singers are from Karabakh, or more precisely, from Shusha! Abulfat Aliyev (1926-1990) was distinguished among the next generation of Shusha singers. Karabakh's singers are simply innumerable. Many prominent singers and performers who enriched our music were born in Karabakh and are active today, spreading pleasure to millions of people with their own live concerts, radio and television performances, as well as via the internet.

The founder of the Shusha music school and influential mentor of many prominent singers, Kharrat Gulu (1823-1883), and Mir Mohsun Navvab (1833-1918), a musicologist, teacher, and possessor of extensive knowledge and skills, should be acknowledged in particular. Mir Mohsun Navvab, together with Haji Husu created a music festival that trained singers. He also chaired the *Maclis-i-Faramushan* (the Assembly of Forgotten People), which was an assembly of poets.

These great figures were born and raised in or near the city of Shusha, where they were molded by its culture. How much can a single city contribute to the culture of a nation? Shusha was one of the main cultural centers of the Caucasus and especially of Azerbaijan with its rich, unique musical and cultural environment. For this reason, it is called the Cradle of Azerbaijani Culture. From this point of view, it is difficult to think of a second city comparable to Shusha. What is Shusha for Azerbaijanis? How precious is Vienna to Germans, Milan or Florence to Italians, St. Petersburg to Russians, Kyoto to the Japanese, or Jerusalem to Israelis and Palestinians? The same can be said of Shusha for the people of Azerbaijan.

One of Shusha's great gifts to the world came in the form of a genius composer, writer, publicist, pedagogue, musical theorist, and organizer of musical activity Uzeyir Hajibeyov (1885-1948). Uzeyir bey, who grew up in the music and theater environment of Shusha, synthesized Azerbaijani polyphonic music – muğam with European polyphonicism and established the school of composition for Azerbaijan. People of Shusha – Uzeyir's brother, composer Zulfugar Hajibeyov (1884-1950), composer Soltan Hajibeyov (1919-1974), actor and director-producer Shamsi Badalbeyli (1911-1987), opera soloist Surayya Gajar (1910-1992), actress Barat

Shakinskaya 1999), actor and director-producer Mehdi Mammadov (1918-1985), composers Zakir Baghirov (1916-1996), Ashraf Abbasov (1920-1992), Suleyman Alasgarov (1924-2000), and others followed Uzeyir Hajibeyov in the development of musical composition and theatrical art.

People Inspired by Karabakh

Nagorno-Karabakh, together with its environs, including both its lowlands and foothills, forms a single socio-economic space. Its foothills and lowlands are complementary and closely connected, strengthening each other in the agrarian and social sphere, as well as in education and culture. For example, Aghdam and Shusha were side by side in many areas, simultaneously both supporting one another and competing against each other. Among the scientists of Shusha was the botanic scholar Valida Tutayuk (1914-1990). Aghdam has bestowed several talented scientists and art figures to Azerbaijan: the writer S.S. Akhundov (1875-1939), crystallographer scientist Khudu Mammadov (1927-1988), specialist in Fuzzy Systems and management, Professor Rafiq Aliyev (1942), and the singer Sara Gadimova (1922-2005) all hailed from Karabakh. Gadimova was born in Baku, but her father was from Aghdam, and she studied mugham in Karabakh as a child. Singers Arif Babayev (1938), Qadir Rustamov (1935-2011), Sakhavat Mammadov (1953-1991), Mansum Ibrahimov (1960), and the tarist Ramiz Quliyev (1947) are other notable examples... Among the prominent Karabakh singers, Islam Rzayev (1934-2008), who was born in Fuzuli District and Yagub Mammadov (1930-2002) from the Agcabadi region should also be remembered. In addition, the well-known philologist and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Professor Vilayat Guliyev (1952), was also born in Agcabadi. I do not dare to undertake such a difficult task as to count the outstanding people who have grown up in the regions around Nagorno-Karabakh, but this is a list of some of its most influential people.

There are also many well-known people who were born elsewhere but whose roots come from Karabakh. Composer and conductor Niyazi (1912-1984), the son of composer Zulfugar Hajibeyov (1884-1950), was born in Tbilisi. The composer and conductor Afrasiyab Badalbeyli was born in Baku into the family of well-known pedagogue Badal Bey Badalbeyli (1907-1976), who was from Shusha. Famous singer Rashid Behbudov (1915-1989), the son of the singer Majid Behbudov from Shusha, was born in Tbilisi. The world-famous composer Fikrat Amirov (1922-1984) was born in Ganja into the family of Mashadi Jamil Amirov, who was originally from Shusha. The composer Vasif Adigozalov (1935-2006) was the son of singer Zulfu Adigozalov from Shusha. The composer, singer and diplomat Polad Bulbuloglu (1945) was the son of famous Bulbul from Shusha. Well-known pianist and music organizer Professor Farhad Badalbeyli (1947) was born in Baku into the family of the theater director Shamsi Badalbeyli (1911-1987), who was also from Shusha. These prominent composers, singers, and musicians can all be

considered as representatives of the Shusha music school. Among celebrities not related to music, there are also others whose family origins derive from Shusha and Karabakh. An example of this is General Samad bey Mehmandarov (1855-1931), who was born in Lankaran into a family that had previously moved from Shusha.

Karabakh: Art, Living World, School

When we think about Karabakh, naturally, music is the first thing that comes to our minds. People from Karabakh contributed to the fields of literature, science, education, architecture and theater, agriculture, industry and the military. The history and life of Karabakh are distinguished with its various delicate arts, its flora and fauna, and its people who are willing to learn. In the second part of the 18th century, carpet weaving developed in Shusha, spreading throughout the mountainous and lowland areas as well. A variety of Karabakh carpets are known for their bright colors and unique ornaments. Latif Karimov (1906-1991), a carpet artist and scholar, is a member of a generation that is famous for carpet weaving.

It is a pleasure to talk with all one's heart and soul about the natural beauties of Karabakh. The perennial plant known as Khari Bülbül, found near Shusha and in the red book, resembles a bird perched on a flower. This rare plant, belonging to the ophrus group (ophrus mammosa), is considered the symbol of Shusha and Karabakh. Khari Bülbül is also the symbol of love between a nightingale and a flower. Additionally, it would be a sin not to mention the phenomenon of the Karabakh horse, which has brought so much fame to the name of Karabakh. The Karabakh horse, one of the best horse breeds in the East, can be unhesitatingly described as world famous. Since Panahali khan's time, horse breeding has been practised extensively in Karabakh. Khursudbanu Natavan, the daughter of the last khan of Karabakh, Mehdigulu khan, was particularly engaged in horse husbandry and the promotion of horses. The Karabakh horse has been awarded with medals including the gold and other certificates of honor at numerous world exhibitions. Diplomats, travelers, poets and writers, including Lermontov, Pushkin, M.F. Akhundov, L. Tolstoy, and Kurban Said have all spoken about the Karabakh horse, including its features, use, and fame all over Europe, Asia and Russia. "The word *Karabakh* does not suggest an idea of a simple geographical name in Russia; it creates the image of an extraordinarily beautiful and strong breed of horse".² In the USSR, the Aghdam Equestrian Factory was engaged in breeding the Karabakh horse.

After the Caucasus came under Russian rule, thanks to the educational policy of the Russian government and the financial support of the local population, schools

² Шагинян, М., 1946. *Советское Закавказье*. [Shaginyan, M. Soviet Transcaucasia]. Moscow-Leningrad. State Publishing House of Fiction. p. 242.

of a new type began opening. Shusha was one of the educational centers of the Caucasus. The first district (uyezd) school in the territory of Azerbaijan opened on December 30, 1830 in Shusha. During the next 3 years, schools of this type were opened in Nukha, Baku and Ganja subsequently. The first Muslim schools in Azerbaijan opened in 1849 in Ganja, Shusha, Shemakha, and Baku (a Shiite school in Tiflis was opened in 1847 and a Sunni school - in 1848). The first 6-year city school in the Caucasus was established on the basis of district schools, beginning operations in Shusha in 1874. I want to note one thing - in the beginning, the Azerbaijani Turks were in the minority among the students of these schools. Later their numbers began to increase. Ahmad Bey Agaoghlu writes in his memoirs: "I attended the third grade class and only three out of 45 students were Turks".³ The idea of a Russian-Tatar school, first created in Kazan (1871), became popular among Russian Muslims: after Baku, a Russian-Tatar school was opened in Shusha (1893). There was a *real school* (*Realschule*, *реальная школа*) and a school for girls in Shusha as well.

Delicate Bayati

Where there is music, there is also poetry, literature, and theater. Karabakh has been a source of inspiration for its poets and writers, as well as for other writers and creative people who love and glorify Karabakh. Molla Panakh Vagif (1717-1797), the famous poet from the not too distant Gazakh District, lived in Karabakh, rose to the rank of prime-minister (vezir) in the palace of the Karabakh khan Ibrahimkhalil khan, and wrote most of his *qoşmas* (well rhymed meter based couplets) and *ghazals* in Karabakh. However, in my opinion, the most beautiful verses about Karabakh do not belong to Vagif, but to his friend, poet Molla Vali Vidadi (1709-1809), who was also from Gazakh. These verses of Vidadi from a quarrel between Vidadi and Vagif are remembered forever in the following lines:

Külli Qarabağın abi-həyatı
Nərm-i-nazık bayatıdır, bayatı
Oxunur məclisdə xoş kəlimatı
Ox kimi bağrını dələr, ağlarsan!

The vitality of all Karabakh
Is a gentle bayati, yes, a bayati
A kind word is read at the meeting
They will pierce your heart like an arrow and you will cry!

³ Ağaoğlu, Ə., 2019. *Şuşa, Peterburq və Paris xatirələri. Atatürkə iki məktub*. [Aghaoghlu, A., *Memoirs of Shusha, St. Petersburg and Paris. Two letters to Ataturk*]. ed. Ahmad, D. Baku: Chapar Publications. p. 36.

Our poets wrote poems about Karabakh's beauty, about its historical events, and its legends. Samad Vurghun (1906-1956), the great poet from Gazakh, loved Karabakh very much. His poem about the Legend of the Maiden Rock ("Qız qayası") was published in 1938.

Dağların döşündə durur Qarabağ
 Xəyalı gəzdirir hər qaya, hər dağ

 Mən Cıdır düzünü gördüyüm zaman
 Keçmişəm gecələr Çanaqqaladan
 Orda dinləmişəm bir qız səsini
 Bülbülün Qarabağ şikəstəsini.
 Bir yanda tar səsi, bir yanda qaval...
 Boynunu bükmüşdür dağlarda maral
 Çıxmışam dağların göy yaxasına
 Doyunca baxmışam Qız qayasına...

Karabakh stands at the slope of mountains
 Every rock and mountain inspires your dreams

As soon as I saw the Jidir Plain
 I passed through Chanakkala at nights
 And there I heard a girl's voice
 And Bulbul's Qarabagh Shikeste.
 One can hear the sound of the tar and qaval...
 And see how the dear inclines its neck in the mountains
 While climbing the green side of mountains
 I watched the Maiden rock in satiety...

The sights of Karabakh cannot be forgotten, and numerous memories, poems, and other art works confirm this. Of course, a man who was born and raised in Karabakh will miss Karabakh everywhere else. Aghabayim, the daughter of Ibrahimkhalil khan, the khan of Karabakh, was taken hostage by Fatali shah. This heartfelt and intelligent lady could not forget Karabakh.

Mən aşiqəm Qarabağ
 Şəki, Şirvan, Qarabağ
 Tehran cənnətə dönsə
 Yaddan çıxmaz Qarabağ.

I fell in love, Karabakh,
 Shaki, Shirvan, Karabakh.
 Even if Tehran becomes paradise,
 I'll never forget Karabakh.

Note. There are a few different versions of this bayati. For example: “Qara salxım, qara bağ” (“Black bunch, black garden”) is used instead of its second line.

The most famous poet in Karabakh was Qasim bey Zakir (1784-1857). Another two talented poets from Shusha were the khan’s daughter Natavan (1832-1897) and Fatma khanum Kamina (1841-1898). Other writers from Karabakh, such as Najaf Bey Vazirov (1854-1926), Abdurrahim Bey Hagverdiyev (1870-1933), and Suleyman Sani Akhundov (1875-1939) played an unprecedented role in the development of Azerbaijani drama. Hagverdiyev also contributed to the development of music and theatre. S.S. Akhundov is also considered a classic of Azerbaijani children’s literature with his “Qorxulu Nağıllar” (Frightening stories), especially the stories of “Qaraca qız” (“Little Black Girl”) and “Nureddin.”

Yusif Vazir Chamanzaminli (1887-1943), a writer and diplomat from Shusha, begins his life story with a bayatis about Karabakh.

Qarabağda talan var,
Zülfü üzə salan var.
Gedirsən tezcə qayıt
Gözü yolda qalan var.

Əslim qarabağlıdır,
Sinəm çarpaz dağlıdır.
Nə gələm var, nə gedəm
Məgər yollar bağlıdır?

Karabakh is getting plundered
The dishevelled hair tells her story
If you will leave, return as soon as you can
Someone is waiting for you

I am from Karabakh
I feel pain in my heart
No one is coming, no one is going
Are the roads really blocked?

Yusif Vazir remembers the city’s chaotic history, recalling it in the present: “Imagine a city on the top of the mountain dressed in green during the spring and summer and in fog and black during the autumn and winter. This is my city... Every corner in the city tells a history: Ibrahim khan’s cave, Malik Shahnazar’s cave, Shahnishin, Cıdır düzü (Horse-race plain), Dovteleb, Front of Divanxana, Topxana... each of them is a book, a bloody and terrible page. And I was born in this adventurous city. This is my destiny.” Yusif Vazir briefly comments on the Armenian-Turkic (his intent is to refer to Azerbaijani Turks -H.I.) relationship when he attended school in Shusha: “When it came to Armenian-Turkish relations, there were not any acute issues. The people lived in brotherhood and there were no conflicts between them: Armenian

craftsmen - tailors, stonemasters, carpenters... they worked among the Turks; they were god-parents. The masses called Armenians “brothers from another religion.” The people even did not want to be divided into mosques and churches: “I often even witnessed the Turks making vows and sacrifices in the church courtyard as well as Armenians bringing candles to the Turkic sacred places”.⁴

Firidun Bey Kocharli (1863-1920) –“a sensitive person, an impartial writer, and tireless educator” (A. Shaig); Hashim Bey Vazirov (1867-1916) - an educator, journalist and publisher; and Farhad Aghazade (1880-1931), an active member of the *New Turkic Alphabet* movement, were all born in Shusha as well.

Among the celebrities born in Shusha, Ahmed Bey Aghayev (Aghaoghlu, 1969-1939), a great politician, journalist, and thinker plays an important role. Ahmed Bey whose life was full of chaos, and who lived far away from his hometown could never forget his motherland, Shusha: “Karabakh, where numerous partridges, pheasants and bobwhites flew in the winter... Shusha which looked like an eagle nest on top of a mountain at 1200 meter heights with its ice-cold water in the summer time.”⁵

Jeyhun Hajibeyli (1891-1962), who was the youngest of the Hajibeyli brothers, became a member of the Azerbaijani delegation to the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. He never returned to Azerbaijan, living, working and writing in Paris. He collected samples of Azerbaijani folklore, mainly small-scale poetic forms, and published them in *Journal Asiatique*⁶ under the title “Karabakh Dialect and Folklore (Caucasian Azerbaijan)” with the original French translation and short comments.

Of course, I have no goal of counting the outstanding personalities of Karabakh. I have merely compiled a brief review of what I knew during my childhood and early youth about Shusha, Karabakh and Azerbaijani culture in general, about where Karabakh played a crucial role...

Unfulfilled Desire in the Heart

The Leningrad Institute of Finance and Economics announced a contest for the head of the mathematical department at its Baku branch. In the spring of 1988, I had to participate in this contest at the invitation and insistence of Leningrad

⁴ Çəmənzəminli, Y.V., 2005. *Əsərləri. 3 cildə, 3-cü cild. Həyatımın 20 ili*. [Chamanzaminli, Y.V., Works. In 3 volumes, 3rd volume. Twenty Years of My Life]. Baku: Avrasiya Press.

⁵ Ağaoglu, Ə., 2019. *Şuşa, Peterburq və Paris xatirələri. Atatürkə iki məktub*. [Aghaoghlu, A., Memoirs of Shusha, St. Petersburg and Paris. Two letters to Atatürk] ed. Ahmad, D., Baku: Chapar Publications. pp. 27-28.

⁶ Hadjibeyli, Dj., 1933. Le Dialecte Et Le Folk-Lore Du Karabagh. (Azerbaidjan Du Caucase). [Karabakh Dialect and Folklore (Caucasian Azerbaijan)]. *Journal Asiatique*, CCXII, Paris.

mathematicians. At that time, as a result of discussions at the Soviet Political Bureau (Politburo) the Azerbaijani State Institute of Economic Affairs (now Azerbaijan State Economic University) was closed due to widespread bribery. It was decided to create a new university based on that institute and to turn it into a branch institution of the Leningrad Institute of Finance and Economics. A lot of people were involved in the contest. After some adventures, I was elected as the head of department at the Scientific Council of the Leningrad Institute of Finance and Economics and returned to Baku to start the job.

My first step to start was, of course, to get acquainted with the members of my department. We talked about who specialized in which field of mathematics and what subjects they taught. Each introduced himself briefly. Four or five of the teachers were from Karabakh. I had to answer “no” to those who asked me, “Do you know Karabakh well?” I regretted this and was embarrassed. I loved Karabakh for its music and great culture, but I had never been able to go there, including Shusha. One of the teachers quickly reacted: “Now the Armenians in Karabakh have mixed things up. Probably in a month or two everything will be fine, and we will take you to Karabakh and Shusha.”

Unfortunately, this desire remained only in our hearts...

In the Mountains of Armenia

I lived in the Soviet Union during the years when the Soviets challenged the world. I attended both high school and university during this time. I am one of the people who saw both the advantages and disadvantages of socialism. In my opinion, the idea of the friendship of peoples, which was emphasized during this period, was a reality. People, speaking different languages and observing different religions despite the USSR’s atheist nature, at least in terms of historical heritage and culture, lived peacefully side by side. Their representatives made friends, cooperated with one another, studied together and even intermarried. These verses of Samad Vurghun, (1931) expressing the unity of the peoples of the three South Caucasian countries (Transcaucasia), were well known to Azerbaijanis:

Qarışın Qazağa Dilcan dərəsi
Daha da birləşib olsunlar bir can
Yoldaş Azərbaycan, Hinger Hayıstan
Bir də Amxanaqo qızıl Gürcüstan!

Let Diljan Valley join Gazakh!
Let them unify and become one soul!
Yoldash Azerbaijan, Hinger Hayastan
And Amkhanogo Golden Georgia!

Note: “Yoldash” in Azerbaijani, “Hinger” in Armenian, and “Amkhanago” in Georgian all mean “comrade,” “companion”. Gazakh and Diljan are the neighboring regions of Azerbaijan and Armenia correspondingly.

In Georgia, our village (Kosali) and our district (Gardabani, former name Garayazi) as a whole are in the lowlands. In the summer, our people had a tradition of going to the mountains of Armenia, mainly to the Lori side, to the scenic, pleasure-giving areas around the mountains, and to the plateau south of Lori. The purpose of the migration from Aran (lowland) to the mountains was to take sheep and cattle out to pasture as well as to rest. For centuries, our people have pitched tents in the slopes or foothills of mountains called *Garakhach* (Black Cross) and have vacationed there. My peers and our children have remained faithful to this tradition. My grandfather, Gachaq Isakhan (sometimes he was on the run), had his own land there. This land has been described to me as Isakhan’s pasture.

The population of the Lori region was mixed, including Armenians, Azerbaijani Turks, and Russians. The largest village of Azerbaijanis was Ilmazli. Due to a tragedy in our family, I had to continue my first year of school in Ilmazli, only returning to my village upon completion of the grade. From my birth until 1987, I spent the summer months mainly in the mountains of Armenia-in Ilmazli, in and around the village of Garaisali, in the village of Novoselsovo, in the foothills and slopes of picturesque *Dolama Yolu* (Winding Road), and in *Sarı Bulaq* (Yellow Spring).

My father’s two Azerbaijani friends, Valad and Zeynal, lived in the Armenian village of Lorsovkhov. I was 8-9 years old. I stayed that summer at uncle Valad’s house. Their children Elza, Elba, and Eldar studied at school in Armenian and could hardly speak Azerbaijani, while Zeynal’s children spoke well. I learned a little Armenian there. Much later, while we were resting by the foothills of Dolama yolu, Uncle Valad came to us with Elba. He said: “Elba is preparing for medical school; please help him study. He is weak in chemistry.” Subsequently, I started teaching Elba inorganic chemistry. It was an interesting, multilingual affair. For example, I called sulfuric acid Hash Erqu Es O Chors in Armenian, that is, Hash two Es O four (H₂SO₄). So I mixed Russian, Armenian, and Azerbaijani in order to teach Elba; he learned well.

Locals, Azerbaijanis and Armenians reminisced about my grandfather Isakhan, about his life, courage and heroic death. I still remember the words of one old Armenian I had the pleasure of having a conversation with: “I was preparing for my son’s wedding, and I was going down Dolama yolu (Winding Road) with my friend in our full cart. A group of horsemen appeared in front of us, and when they approached, my friend anxiously said that he was Gachaq Isakhan. I was very scared, I heard his name a lot. When they reached us, they stopped and greeted us. Isakhan asked laughing: “*Hey Ermeni (Armenian) there! Why did you fill your cart up so much?*” I became afraid, I lost myself: “*Isakhan, I beg you, my son is getting*

married”, I said. *“All of this is for the wedding. Do not touch us please”*. Isakhan laughed again: *“Why should I touch you? Happy wedding. Take it. This is my gift.”* He gave us a good sum of money. It’s a pity that this hero, a noble young man, was later ambushed and killed...”

In the mountains where we lived and rested, along with the Borchali-Garayazi ashigs, there were sometimes meetings with Armenian singers and actors. I remember Armenian singers performing in front of us in places where we were together, including the so-called Dolama Yolu. This, of course, was during the Soviet era. Armenian singers eagerly sang Armenian, Azerbaijani, and even Turkish (Turkey) songs. I first heard and loved a Turkish oriental as a child in Armenia when an Armenian singer sang with love and enthusiasm:

Yar saçların lüle - lüle
Yar benziyor gonca güle
O gül benim hayatımdır
Ölürüm de, vermem ele.

Yar, yar aman, yar yar aman
Yar yüreğim oldu keman
Kavuşmamız yar ne zaman
Yar, ne zaman, yar, ne zaman?...

My beloved! Your hair is curly, so curly
My beloved looks like a blossoming flower
That flower is my whole life
I will give it to no one, even if I die

My beloved! My beloved!
My heart has been shattered
When are we going to unite?
When my beloved? When?

I later found out that this oriental was very popular in Turkey. I have heard it performed by Zeki Muren, Nesrin Sipahi and other Turkish singers.

I loved those mountains. We used to collect butterflower, mint, thyme, strawberries, and mushrooms there. We used to go to the river for fishing and swimming. Ashigs sang, and it was interesting to see how the motal cheese was pressed and how the meat was divided into equal parts among those wishings. It was a pleasure to sit on the rocks or lie on the grass and read our favorite fiction, poetry, and textbooks. We never got tired of playing football on the natural, green grass. Once the children of the neighboring Armenian village invited us to play football on their playing ground. We went and won. Although some thought of fighting and beating us, the wiser ones did not allow it.

Looking south, one could see Mount Deli (Mad/Crazy) on the right and a range of Aghlaghan (Weeper, Crying) mountains on the left. I formed a small group and climbed to the top of Mount Deli. At the top of the mountain, the fog covered us, and we could not see anywhere. We had to wait until the fog cleared. It was not easy to go down and we were tired. In the middle of the summer, the white-yellow snow on the top and the upper slope of the Aghlaghan mountain surprised us. We went a long way to get there, trudging through the snow. On our way back, we passed an Armenian cattle farm, where Armenian women baking, invited us to have fresh, fragrant bread and cheese...

Even after I got married, we often vacationed in the summer months in these mountains with my family, including my children and brothers. We continued this tradition all the way up until the start of the Karabakh conflict. Afterwards, we went to the Bashkechid (Dmanisi) mountains in Georgia, but I never could enjoy it. Every inch, every rock, every stone, every spring of the mountains I had vacationed by in Armenia contained memories... During the summer, I turned to the mountains not because I was a “savage, nomadic Turk,” but because I loved them...

Armenians in Azerbaijani Literature. Folklore and the 19th Century

The friendship of the Azerbaijani and Armenian peoples, and the fact that religious divisions have historically damaged this friendship and caused tragedies, is widely reflected in Azerbaijani literature. The famous *Asli and Karam* epic is dedicated to the love of an Azerbaijani boy by the name of Karam and an Armenian girl called Asli. Their love is greatly hindered by the cruelty of a priest-Asli's father, who, upset by the young couple's emotional bond, turned it into a tragedy. The burning of Karam, who could not fulfill his desire, was reflected in the ashig melody by the name of *Yanig Karami (On Burning Karam)*. Azerbaijani epics, *Asli and Karam* as well as *Koroglu* and *Ashig Garib*, were also very popular among Armenians. There were even different versions of these and other Azerbaijani epics in Armenian. These epics were adapted to Armenian life and armenianized.

There are hardly any works in Azerbaijani literature that could humiliate other nations, including Armenians. On the contrary, Azerbaijani intellectuals noted the backwardness of their own people in matters such as reading, schooling, theater and newspaper work, inviting them to look at their neighbors as examples. Azerbaijani poets and writers throughout history wrote about the love between the Armenian and Azerbaijani Turkic youth. They did not oppose Christianity in favor of Islam, but gave a large place to self-criticism, self-loathing, satire and humor.

Here is an anecdote from *Mulla Nasreddin*:

The mulla asks a crying Armenian woman why she is crying. “My son has converted to Islam, so I'm crying,” she said. The mulla shares her grief: “Cry, my sister, cry!

It is worth crying over. You are still crying, but only one of your sons is a Muslim. What a miserable man I am that all my sons are Muslims”.⁷

When we talk about folklore, we usually envision it as a relic of the past and especially of ancient times or the Middle Ages. However, there is folk art of every era, including funny stories and decorated gossip. In one such folk tale, a rich Armenian girl from Shusha falls in love with an Azerbaijani boy. The boy kidnaps the girl, but the girl’s father returns her through the police. In the early 1890s, a humorous song⁸ called “Maralim haxchik” (My deer girl) was created in Karabakh. The song became so popular that the police banned it due to complaints from the girl’s father:

Girdim Kilisəyə, gördüm İsanı
Çıxdım kilisədən, gördüm Musanı
Aliksan bek gəldi, dedi: qız hanı?

Nəqarət:

Ay maralım haxçik, balam, ay saritel haxçik
Aman-aman mən yazığam
Ay maralım haxçik, balam, ay ceyranim haxçik

Dərbəndin qapısı dəmir degilmi?
Dəmiri əridən kömür degilmi?
Haxçikin gedən günləri ömür degilmi?
Nəqarət.

Haxçik, haxçik, haxçik, gəl gedək bizə
Mənə layiq deyil mən gəl'im sizə
Mən aşıq olmuşam səndəki gözə...
Nəqarət.

Əyninə geyibdir mahuddan çuxa
Ürəyim olubdur kağızdan yuxa
Səbəbin evini bir Allah yıxa.
Nəqarət.

I entered the church and saw Jesus
I left the church and saw Moses
Alexan Bey came and said: Where is the girl?

⁷ *Molla Nəsrəddin Lətifələri*. [Anecdotes of Mulla Nasreddin]. 1965. Bakı: p. 92.

⁸ Yerevanlı, Ə., 1968. *Azəri-erməni ədəbi əlaqələri. Qədim dövrdən XVIII əsrin sonuna qədər*. [Yerevanlı, A., Azeri-Armenian Literary Relations. From the Old Period Till the End of XVIII Century]. Yerevan: pp. 125-127.

Refrain:

Oh, my beauty, Hakhchik, oh yellow-haired Hakhchik

Oy, oy, poor me

Oh, my beauty, Hakhchik, oh my beauty Hakhchik.

Isn't the door to Darband made of iron?

Doesn't coal melt iron?

Aren't the days lived by Hakhchik part of life?

Refrain.

Hakhchik, Hakhchik, Hakhchik, come to my home

I cannot go to your home

I love your eyes ...

Refrain.

He is wearing a coat made of broadcloth

My heart has become thinner than paper

May God destroy the home of the one causing this.

Refrain.

* * *

The paths of the Azerbaijani poet, calligrapher and pedagogue Mirza Shafi Vazeh (?1795 - 1852) and the German writer, translator, literary critic, culturologist, ethnographer, and historian Friedrich Bodenstedt (1819-1892) intersected in Tiflis in 1844. Their relationship could be best characterized initially as that between a teacher and student, but with time the two became closer and this teacher-student relationship turned into a friendship. Bodenstedt described Mirza Shafi as a poet as well as an interesting and wise man in his memoirs on Caucasian life, "A Thousand and One Days in the East"⁹. He published a collection of poems titled "Die Lieder des Mirza Shaffy"¹⁰ ("Songs of Mirza Shafi"), which gained unprecedented fame in Germany and around the world. By 1917, it had already been published 164 times and translated into a number of different languages. Bodenstedt¹¹ was a Caucasian

⁹ Bodenstedt, F., 1850. *Tausend und ein Tag im Orient*. [A Thousand and One Days in the East]. Berlin: Verlag der Deckerschen Geheimen Ober-Hofbuchdruckerei.

¹⁰ Bodenstedt, F., 1851. *Die Lieder des Mirza Schaffy*. [Songs of Mirza Shafi]. Berlin: Decker.

¹¹ I.Isakhanli, H. 2019. *Friedrich Bodenstedt on the Ethnic and Cultural Diversity of Caucasus In the "A Long-term History of Cross-cultural Transfers in the Caucasus"*. ed. Ed. Espagne, M., Isaxanli, H., Mustafayev, S. Baku: Khazar University Press. pp. 287-314. 2. Isaxanli, H. 2019. *Les écrits de Friedrich Bodenstedt sur le Caucase. Un regard sur la diversité ethnique et culturelle de la région*. [The writings of Friedrich Bodenstedt on the Caucasus. A look at the ethnic and cultural diversity of the region] Ed. Espagne, M., Isaxanli, H., Mustafayev, S., La Montagne Des Langues et des Peuples. Imbrications et transferts dans l'espace du Caucase. [The Mountain Of Languages and Peoples. Nestings and transfers in the Caucasus area] Paris: Éditions Demopolis. pp. 377-407.

scholar who has not received complete recognition for his work.

Bodenstedt wrote in his memoirs that he had traveled from Tiflis to Erivan, and that Armenians knew Tatar (Azerbaijani Turkic – H.I) as their native language. Thus, the most popular Armenian songs were in Tatar.¹²

Returning to Tiflis, Bodenstedt told his teacher, Mirza Shafi, about his visit and described a scene in which he witnessed Armenian women making traditional fuel out of dung. He talked about their dirty hands, which he could see while passing through dirty villages (Indeed, it was customary at this time, and until the modern times, for fuel to be made out of dung in Armenian and Azerbaijani mountain villages – H.I.). Expressing his astonishment with the habit, he remarked that “it is good that they don’t have the tradition of kissing ladies’ hands in this country.”

Mirza Shafi’s worthy attitude and response to these words is respectful. “Mirza Shafi’s face darkened during this conversation” before saying: “Shame on the men whose wives have dirty hands. Teach a woman that men kiss her hands, then she will always keep her hands clean. If you kiss her feet, then she would keep her feet clean.”¹³

Armenians in Azerbaijani Literature in the 20th Century

Jalil Mammadguluzadeh, through his famous “Molla Nasraddin” magazine and his “Molla Nasraddin” literary school, M.A. Sabir and his followers, and intellectual thinkers such as U. Hajibeyov made the shortcomings and backwardness they saw in the Muslim East and the unjust actions of Russia and the West the main target of their criticism. I do not know any well-known Azerbaijani poet or writer who is hostile to the Armenian or Georgian people in any of his or her works. Of course, since 1988, there have been aggressive articles in the new literature criticizing the Armenian political ideology, even going to extremes, but they are not mainstream Azerbaijani literature and should not be evaluated as such.

The Armenian-Muslim conflict, which began in 1905, was condemned by many Azerbaijani poets, writers, journalists and politicians who called for reconciliation between the two peoples. M.A. Sabir wrote a poem entitled “To our Muslim and Armenian citizens:”¹⁴

İki yoldaş, iki qonşu bir vətəndə həmdiyar,
Əsrlərcə ömr edib, sülh içrə bulmuşkən qərar,

¹² Bodenstedt. F., 1850. *Tausend und ein Tag im Orient*. [A Thousand and One Days in the East] Berlin; Verlag der Deckerschen Geheimen Ober-Hofbuchdruckerei. pp. 250-251.

¹³ Ibid., Chapter 14. p. 267-279.

¹⁴ Sabir. M.A., 1905. *Həyat*. [Life]. Müsəlman və erməni vətəndaşlarımızıza. [To our Muslim and Armenian citizens] July 1. No. 19.

Fitneyi-iblisi-məl'un oldu nəgəh aşikar...
Gör cəhalətdən nə şəklə düşdü vəz'i-ruzigar!

.....
Ey süxəndanan, bu günlər bir hidayət vaxtıdır
Ülfəti ünsiyyətə dair xitabət vaxtıdır.

Two friends, two neighbours in the same homeland,
They have lived in peace for centuries,
Satan's sedition appeared out of a sudden ...
You see how ignorance changed the normal route of life!

.....
Intellectuals! It is time to guide people
It is time to invite people to peace and reconciliation.

Here are several excerpts from the relevant feuilletons written by Mirza Jalil in 1906-1908:¹⁵

1906: "One million Muslims and Armenians in the Caucasus give their lives for us every month. How many Muslims and Armenians will remain in the Caucasus in five years?"¹⁶

1906: "There is a village in Irevan province named Samanlik (Chaffness / Straw). The population of the village is half Armenian and half Muslim. One day I was visiting Rahim Bey, a landowner from that village on horseback... In one of the yards, an Armenian child was sitting in the shade of a tree and reading a book. In another yard a Muslim boy, twelve or thirteen years old, tied a rope to a cat's tail and began playing ... In one of the yards, several Armenians were sitting in the shade of a large mulberry tree and eating bread. The priest said aloud three times: *hayrenig, hayrenig hayrenig* (*hayrenig* means *homeland* in Armenian – H.I.)... There are three holy things for the Armenian in the world: *homeland, nation, and language*... Long live those brothers martyred for the homeland! *Getse, getse hayrenik!* ("*Getse*" means *long live* in Armenian - H.I.)... I rode the horse forward and saw four Muslims sitting in the shade of the wall at the crossroads... Molla Qurbanali told the villagers: On Wednesdays, Saturdays and odd days, it is not allowed to go to the cemetery and the bath because these days, jinn and ogres gather at the cemetery and visit the bathhouse for entertainment..."¹⁷

1906: "The Georgians are interlopers... they have started to say that we do not want our clergyman to be appointed by the Russian government, as they still are. We want to manage our own affairs ... See why I said that? Yes ... they say that the

¹⁵ Məmmədquluzadə, C., 1984. *Əsərləri. 6 cildə. 3-cü cild*. [Məmmədquluzadə, J., Works in Three Volumes. Vol. 3]. Baku: Azərnəshr.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 37-39.

melons of Shamakhi and Irevan are very sweet”.¹⁸

1907: “We Muslims have always said to ourselves when it comes to worship and humanity: *Poor Armenians, I wonder what they will answer to God.* But now hungry Muslims running to wheat wagons in Zangezur see that the Armenians have sent all the wheat to the starving Armenians. We are good people, Armenians are bad.”¹⁹

1908: “In the Armenian-Muslim conflict, Muslims from Sheytanbazar (name of a place in Tiflis – H.I.) wrote the verses of the Qur’an on paper and pasted them on the walls of their houses in order to summon God’s protection for their homes. Ironically, when most of these houses caught fire, it was these prayers that burned first: after all, paper burns faster than wood and stone”.²⁰

J. Mammadguluzadeh’s play “Kamancha” (January 1920, Shusha) brings to life an impressive scene from the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict in Karabakh. The work is a deep demonstration of the closeness of both peoples in terms of art and their devotion to art in the most difficult situations.

The lame Armenian Bakhshi is captured and brought to the Qehreman Yüzbaşı (Sotnick, lieutenant, head of squadron. Literally: Hero - Centurion). Bakhshi is a kamancha player; he sees the situation and realizes that he will be killed. He asks someone he knows in the lieutenant’s group to deliver the kamancha to his son. Tired of this confrontation and the actions of the Armenians, the Qehreman lieutenant says to Bakhshi, “Your poor, play for the last time.” Bakhshi begins with *Rast* mugham and goes to *Shikasteyi-fars*. Influenced by the music, the Qehreman lieutenant does not know what to do: “You, cub, Armenian, what do you want from us? ... He damned plays in such a way that he reminds one of one’s past, bringing it all before their eyes.” Bakhshi goes to *Segah-zabul*. The heart of the Qehreman lieutenant, who was burning and seeking revenge for the murder his acquaintances and friends by Armenians, softens in the face of the miraculous influence of music, and he refuses to take revenge: “Look at that!... strange!... well!... Hey, Armenian, quickly pick up the kamacha, get out of here! Or ... I’m going to kill you and myself right now with this dagger! Get out!” He goes out. The Qehreman lieutenant thinks to himself: “Oh, stupid world!”²¹

Every page of Mirza Jalil’s work is golden, every page is a demonstration of the nation’s sorrow. I will mention only a few feuilletons directly related to our topic: “Keçən günlər” (Past Days, 1906), “Erməni və müsəlman övrətləri” (Armenian and Muslim Wives, 1907), “Ot” (Grass, 1908).

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 53.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 126.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 233.

²¹ Məmmədquluzadə, C. 1984. *Əsərləri. 6 cildə. 2-ci cild.* [Mammadguluzadeh, J., Works in Three Volumes. Vol. 2]. Baku: Azerneshr. pp. 101-107.

* * *

Nariman Narimanov's "Bahadır ve Sona" (Bahadır and Sona, 1908), which he called a "little novel," talks about the gap created by religious separation between two lovers. The Azerbaijani Turk Bahadır and the Armenian girl Sona fall in love. On the one hand, Bahadır is looking for an answer to the question "why is our nation left behind by other nations?" and on the other hand, he makes an efforts to understand why "Islam and Christianity invent a chasm between us." He seeks to understand "Why are people divided?" He thinks that it is the "imperfection of the mind" that creates the "abyss." Unable to find a way out, Bahadır commits suicide, and Sona falls into a "madhouse."

Jafar Jabbarli's play, "In 1905." was staged first in 1931. It was dedicated to Armenian-Azerbaijani relations in Karabakh. The work emphasizes the simple people who are brothers, the revolutionaries who call for brotherhood, and the policy of the tsarist government, which seems to confuse them ("Shooters are Cossacks"). At the center of the play are two families - Azerbaijani Imamverdi, Gulsum and their son Bakhshi and Armenian Allahverdi, Nabat, their son Eyvaz, and their daughter Sona. "They were neighbors. They were two families: one was Azerbaijani, the other was Armenian, but their life was the same, their work was the same, and their worldviews were the same. Their sorrows were one, their joys were one, their desires were one, and their labors were one. They raised their children in one house, grazed their cattle in one place, and laid hens in one hen house." The famous scene in the play is when two "enemies," an Armenian and an Azerbaijani, meet on the street, threaten each other, and in the end, both are known to be from Tugh, and, finally, Allahverdi and Imamverdi appear and... embrace.

Note. In high school, we loved this scene and reenacted it.

Azerbaijani Bakhshi and Armenian Sona love each other, but time does not allow them to have a family. It turns out that after Bakhshi got married, he named his daughter Sona, and Sona named her son Bakhshi. Young Bakhshi and young Sona, who lived in the Soviet era, also face religious and national prejudices...

* * *

Poems glorifying the friendship of the Armenian and Azerbaijani peoples were written during the Soviet period, and music was composed for some of them. The song composed by Andrey Babayev for Islam Safarli's poem was popular and was performed by Zeynab Khanlarova. Even Armenian and Azerbaijani singers sang it together:

Əzəldən qardaşdır ellərimiz
Dost olub birləşib əllərimiz
Çörəyi bir olur, ürəyi bir olur
Diləyi bir olur ellərimizin.

Nəqarət:

Kür, Araz, Ararat
Gözəldir bu həyat
Qardaş olur Hayastan, Azərbaycan...

We have been brothers since the beginning
Amicably, our hands have been united
We share the same bread, we share the same heart
Our dreams are the same.

Refrain:

Kur, Aras, Ararat
This life is beautiful
Hayastan and Azerbaijan became brothers...

There was also an Azerbaijani song called “Yerevan” (it was also performed by Zeynab Khanlarova):

Qəlbi açıq, alını açıq Yerevan
Əzəl gündən biz qardaş, Yerevan.
Gülər üzlü, istiqanlı Yerevan
Məclisləri tar-kamanlı Yerevan.

Yerevan! Your heart is open and your mind is sincere
Yerevan! We have been brothers since the beginning
Yerevan! Your face is smiling, and you are pleasing
Yerevan! Your scenes are held by the tar and kamancha.

I have no intention of giving a summary of Azerbaijani literature dedicated to Armenian-Azerbaijani friendship. I am content to recall A. Hagverdiyev’s play, “Çox gözəl,”²² (“Very Beautiful”) written in 1932 on the issue of “citizenship and sincere brotherhood” and Eyyub Abbasov’s (1905-1957) novel named “Zangezür” (1952-1957). The latter, on the one hand, really illuminated the friendship of the common people, their unification with the ideas of socialism (that was the spirit of the time), and, on the other hand, the confrontation, destruction, or expulsion of the Azerbaijanis by the Andronik’ regular army: “Andronik destroyed everything that belonged to us. May God destroy the house of those who caused this. What had we done to Armenians? Why did they take our houses and make us homeless?”²³

²² Hagverdiyev, A., 2005. *Seçilmiş əsərləri. 2 cildə, 1-ci cild.* [Selected Works in Two Volumes, Vol.1]. Baku: Lider.

²³ Hagverdiyev, A., 2005. *Seçilmiş əsərləri. 2 cildə, 1-ci cild.* [Selected Works in Two Volumes, Vol.1]. Baku: Lider.

Tsarist Armenian Newspapers about Azerbaijani Turks in the 19th Century

The work of a group of Azerbaijani intellectuals who carried out extraordinary work for the development of enlightenment and culture was not in vain. The network of schools, literature and newspaper-magazine work, as well as music and theater activities shed light on the path of modernization of Azerbaijani society, strengthening the foundation of culture built on a national basis. The enlightenment and cultural construction started by M.F. Akhundov and continued by Hasan bey Zardabi became widespread during the end of the 19th century and the first 10-15 years of the 20th century. The development of industry and urban life as well as the charitable work of the national bourgeoisie ensured the sustainability of cultural revival. This development was seen and noted by the intellectuals and the mass-media of the neighboring peoples, especially the mass-media of Armenians living side by side with Azerbaijanis, who observed, analyzed and accordingly accepted both the shortcomings and the successes of the Azerbaijani Turks. For more information, I refer to the research of Kovsar Tarverdiyeva, and in particular to her monograph, which covers the period from 1870 to 1920²⁴.

Armenians were very active in publishing newspapers; they had newspapers in Madras, Istanbul, Izmir, Tbilisi, Baku and other places. The liberal “Mshak” (Worker) newspaper was first published in Tiflis in 1872, remaining in circulation until 1920.

“Mshak” reported that the khan’s daughter Natavan brought water to Shusha and thus provided water to all of Shusha’s residents, including Armenians: “Mehdigulu khan’s kind, generous, noble, respectable daughter noticed that the people of the city did not pay attention to this important issue, and allocated a large sum of money from her own funds... deciding to bring drinking water to the city. She has been digging the ground for three years and pumping water through pottery pipes... In October last year, the khan’s noble daughter invited the Azerbaijani, Russian and Armenian people of the city as a sign of great joy, slaughtered sheep, and gave a European type of reception around the water... That water will be brought to the city in a month. The khan’s daughter will divide this water into two parts: one part will be given to the Armenian quarter and the other part to the Muslim quarter. The Armenian people are happy that thanks to the good deed of the khan’s daughter, they will be provided with the water they need for many years.”²⁵

“Mshak” reported on the performance based on N. Vazirov’s plays: “Yağışdan çıxdıq, yağmura düşdük” (“We came out of the rain, we fell into the rain”) and “Ev tərbiyəsinin bir şəkli” (“A picture of home education”) on December 7, 1898, in

²⁴ Tarverdiyeva, K., 1985. *Azərbaycan mədəniyyəti erməni dövrü mətbuatında*. [Azerbaijani culture in Armenian Periodicals]. Baku: Yazıçı.

²⁵ *Mshak*, 1873. Şuşadan məktub. [Letter from Shusha] September 13. № 35. Tiflis. See in, Tarverdiyeva, K. pp. 59-60.

Taghiyev's theater, giving a pleasing evaluation along with critical remarks: "The hall was full. The main spectators were Azerbaijanis.. The women sitting behind the lodges were also noteworthy... Finally, it was gratifying that women entered the society of human beings and gained the right to go to the theater... We welcome this progress from our Azerbaijani neighbors."²⁶

The personal works and enlightening activities of the prominent writer and politician Nariman Narimanov were highly appreciated in the Armenian press. "At first, the Turks were far behind. And now a great movement has begun among them... Narimanov is a 28-year-old young man with admirable tendencies and an enthusiastic spirit" wrote the writer, journalist, and literary critic Vrtanes Papazyan. Talking about the library-reading room created by Narimanov (in 1894 – H.I.), he continued: "His library is located next to the Armenian Church in Baku. 25-30 newspapers in Russian, Armenian, Georgian and Turkish languages are bought here." The author notes that newspapers were purchased in Istanbul, Cairo, Sofia, Tabriz, and books published in Russian and Turkish. He did not hide his surprise at the activity and number of readers: "Reading newspapers gradually became a necessity, even sayyids and mullahs took them home to read." Remarking on the number of readers, he continued: "These are such high numbers that many Armenian libraries probably do not have them. In the end, the newspapers passed from hand to hand, turning into rags".²⁷

Armenian magazines such as "Mshak" and "Daraz" also praised Narimanov's activity: "Turks need a man like Narimanov now... Turkish intellectuals who want to serve both their people and humanity should follow the example of N. Narimanov."²⁸

Narimanov's works "Nadanlıq," ("Ignorance"), "Dilin bələsi," ("Trouble of the Language") and "Bahadır and Sona" were translated into Armenian soon after their initial publication.

Tsarist Armenian Newspapers about Azerbaijani Turks in the 20th century

The Haraj (Forward) newspaper translated into Armenian an article published in *The Hayat* newspaper about the life of Baku, the crucial role of philanthropy in the city's development, following the example of Armenians, and immediately presented it to its readers: "...The Armenian charity society in Baku was established 40 years ago. *At that time, there were very few Armenians in Baku, there were only 10-15 families* (italic is mine – H.I.). When the center of the province (gubernia)

²⁶ *Mshak*, 1898. December 16. № 230. Tiflis. See in, Tarverdiyeva. K. pp. 21-22.

²⁷ Papazyan, V., 1896. *Qafqaz türklərinin ədəbiyyatı haqqında bir neçə söz*. [A Word on the Literature of Caucasian Turks]. *Murch*. Tiflis. № 6; See in, Tarverdiyeva. K. pp. 67-69.

²⁸ *Mshak*., 1901. No. 15. Tiflis. See: Tarverdiyeva. K. p. 72.

moved to Baku (after the inordinate earthquake in Shamakhi in 1859, the center of the province was moved from Shamakhi to Baku – H.I.), dozens of merchants (Armenians – H.I.) came. Their developed persons and university graduates were more than ours. They owned millions. One of them, Dr. Rustanyan, founded a charity. Almost all Armenians were provided this charity with financial assistance. One example is enough to prove the Armenian people's attempt to develop. At that time, there were three Karabakh Armenians in Baku. They were water salesmen. Later, two of them became millionaires. When Karapet, who was selling water, heard the opening of the meeting, he tied his donkey to the door and went inside. Crossing with difficulty through people, he presented himself to the chairman of the meeting and said: I do not have a child; I will give all my income for two or three years for the education of an Armenian child. They are my children... Karapet also died while working as a water salesman, but he did not stop helping his people.”²⁹

* * *

“Mshak” newspaper talks about the incredible successes of Azerbaijani Turks in education in Shusha and invites others to learn from them: “When you enter Turkic schools, nobody can believe their eyes. Aren't these the schools of our Turkic brother and neighbors that we saw two years ago? Here, under the guidance of well-educated Turkic teachers, about 40-60 children dressed in uniforms sit on benches and take Russian and mother-tongue lessons... You are happy to see the education of the young generation and future citizens of fellow Turks.”³⁰

The Baku newspaper *Gordz* (“*Gaidz?*”) wrote that Turks were more advanced in library work: “We are pleased to note that our neighbor Turks are ahead of us in this area, having two libraries and one reading room. In this regard, the Armenians are very indifferent... Now, let the lack of libraries be left aside. No one thinks about it.”³¹

Tiflisi's *Surhandag* (“*Messenger*”) newspaper reports on the surprisingly large and rapid development of Baku and Azerbaijani Turks over the past 20 years. It is impossible to ignore certain points of that article³²: “I could not hesitate to express in writing the serious impressions, feelings and notes that Baku gave me... 20 years ago, all famous doctors, engineers, technicians, lawyers, and architects were Armenians. They led and guided all the affairs of the oil world... Now the main role is played by Jews... Armenians, who boast of their culture cannot compete not only with Jewish intellectuals; it seems they have given their place to Turkic intellectuals too. It is great to see that the Turkic community is awakening and welcoming science and culture with open arms... Today, the Turks are able to

²⁹ *Haraj*. 1906. January 26. № 9. See: Tarverdiyeva, K., pp. 169-170.

³⁰ *Mshak*. 1908. Şuşadan. [From Shusha]. January 15. No. 20. See in, Tarverdiyeva. K. p. 172.

³¹ *Gaidz*. 1908. 20-ci əsrdə. [In the 20th century] December 30, № 91. See in, Tarverdiyeva. K. p. 174.

³² *Atrpet*. 1909. *Surhandag*. December 5. No. 24. See in, Tarverdiyeva. K. pp. 175-176.

appear with their own factories... The Turks built not only a cotton cloth (coarse calico) factory in Baku, but also iron and other factories. They also have factories that produce iron thread, nails from that, and cast iron. They play a leading role in any small retail market. After mastering manufacturing, food, drink, and all kinds of sales, bookstores, bookbinders, paper shops, and even hairdressing shops have gradually passed into the hands of the Turks... They also have established daily and weekly newspapers. One can only envy how widely the postmen distribute them... *Reading is a favorite pastime for sleeping Turks.* The Baku Turks, who 20 years ago were the main customers of taverns, hotels and public houses, are now fully awake. *The desire to be born again is so widespread in their minds that soon the Turks will overtake with rapid strides those who boast of our cultural abilities...*" (italics are mine – H.I.)

Although Azerbaijanis joined the European enlightenment and socio-political life a little later than their Armenian and Georgian neighbors, they became much stronger in the early 20th century.

U. Hajibeyov's Operas and Operettas in Tsarist Armenian Newspapers

In the Armenian newspaper "Surhandagh" ("Messenger") published in Tiflis, in an article entitled "Azerbaijani opera"³³, it was reported that Uzeyir Hajibeyov's opera *Sheikh Sanan* was staged on November 30, 1909, in Baku, and the theater was full of people from different walks of life, including "fiery Azerbaijani youth". It also mentioned that "Azerbaijani intellectuals in Baku had started working tirelessly. Their work *promises a future to the public that will be envied*" (Italic is mine - H.I.).

The author, Atrpet, claims that the work does not meet the requirements of opera, "mixes the eastern melodies with the western ones," but is still attractive and pleasant. He writes with respectful sensitivity that Azerbaijan has developed a lot, perhaps entering a renaissance period: "Daily newspapers, humorous, scientific journals, drama, music, fine arts, literary clubs... all these are not easy; maybe this is the beginning of a renaissance. An oil producer like Mukhtarov spends 75,000 manats to maintain a daily newspaper, and many people like Mukhtarov have opened their wallets to speed up the people's renaissance."³⁴ In general, the author preferred the activity of Azerbaijanis in this field to that of Armenians.

Atrpet's last chord is interesting: "After all this, Baku Turks were so sympathetic to this initial work that Kara Mirzas and Chukhajyans, who could be included in the ranks of European composers with full rights, did not consider to be worthy the

³³ *Surhandag*. 1909. December 6. № 39. See in, Tarverdiyeva. K. pp. 33-34

³⁴ Tarverdiyeva. K., 1985. *Azərbaycan mədəniyyəti erməni dövrü mətbuatında. (1850-1920)*. [Azerbaijani culture in Armenian periodical press (1850-1920)]. Baku: Yazichi. p. 35.

tenth part of it”

Note. Opponents and some colleagues (including Azerbaijanis) who said that Uzeyir Bey did not study at a special European music school criticized him for not knowing European musical techniques. I think they forgot one thing - Uzeyir Bey was an incomparable genius; he took European techniques, as they say, in the sky, and when he applied it to oriental music, he did not spoil oriental music, but gave it a new color.

Note. Christopher Kara Murza (1853-1902) was born in Crimea and spent his creative life in Tiflis. He is known mainly for creating choirs based on Armenian songs.

Note. Tigran Chukhajyan (1837-1898) from Istanbul (in Turkish: Dikran Çuhacıyan) is an important composer in the history of Turkish and Armenian music. He is considered to be the first Easterner to use European musical techniques. His most popular work was the operetta *Leblebici Horhor Ağa* (1875). A film based on it was made in Turkey in 1934. He is the author of such works as *Arifin hilesi* (Arif's trick, operetta, 1874), *Zemire* (opera, 1890) and *Arshak II* (1873), which is considered as the first Armenian opera.

* * *

In 1914, U. Hajibeyov's operettas "Arshin mal alan" ("The Cloth Peddler") and "O olmasin, bu olsun" ("If Not That One, Then This One") were translated into Armenian and performed in Tiflis, Yerevan and Baku. These works became the subject of proper discussion. Although controversial and biased opinions have been written about them (including those written by Azerbaijanis), many people have enjoyed and applauded them. Well-known Armenian actor Aram Vruyr (1863-1924) responded to a negative opinion published in the "Horizon" newspaper: "*Arshin mal alan, O olmasin, bu olsun*, the success of these operas among our people must be considered a truly remarkable event... The people are inclined to an indescribable enthusiasm for all the heart and soul of the music and funny customs of neighboring people... *These works rightly lay the foundation for the future work of Armenian operetta* (emphasis mine - H.I.)... The biggest secret of the entertainment of plays is in their music."³⁵

Note. Uzeyir Bey gives a short and logical answer to those who despise "Arshin mal alan" (1924): "I have to note that among Turk operas and operettas *Arshin mal alan* has gained popularity everywhere, translated to many languages. After being played hundreds of times in Georgia and Armenia, it was also staged in Russia, Turkey, Iran, France, America, Spain, Italy and Egypt. At a time when Azerbaijani theater and music are being shown everywhere, we do not care that the citizen Samit (one of pseudonyms of Tağı Şahbazi, that time's deputy minister of education) demands

³⁵ *Horizon*. 1915. December 20. № 286. See in, Tarverdiyeva, K., pp. 46-48.

that this play should be removed from the stage and banned”.³⁶

In 1915-1916, *Arshin mal alan* was translated into Georgian and Russian as well and staged. Armenian actor Setrak Magalyan from Tbilisi played the role of Asker (main character) in four languages - Azerbaijani, Armenian, Georgian and Russian. The first translation of the work into Armenian belongs to S. Magalyan. Performed by an Armenian troupe, *Arshin mal alan* has been performed many times in various countries - in most major US cities, India, the Middle East and Russia (800 times between 1915 and 1921; there is no mistake, no surplus zero - eight hundred times!)

The Armenian newspaper *Arev (The Sun)* described the 40th performance of *Arshin Mal Alan* in the Armenian language in Baku. It assessed that participation of people in this play more than Shakespeare's as a lack of taste of the Armenian audience and insulted the Armenian actors playing in that play.³⁷ Again, A. Vruyr wrote a reply and showed the reason why the audience preferred “Arshin mal alan”: “There is no need to discover America again ... In this innocent *Arshin Mal Alan*, the public finds music that is close to its heart, that it understands, that reaches it, that is dear to it, and that it listens to with pleasure. Perhaps the work has many shortcomings. *Let our writers be better than him* (emphasis added – H.I.). The public will gladly listen. Our public definitely misses the song and music.”³⁸

Researchers claim that S. Magalyan and other people selling operettas infringed copyrights, and that Uzeyir Hajibeyov's name was not mentioned in many of *Arshin Mal Alan*'s performance posters (for example, in the United States).

(1. <https://en.calameo.com/read/0062077563b7b72b85460>.

2. <https://news.day.az/society/322788.html>

3. <https://irs-az.com/new/pdf/1275828355675099135.pdf>).

Uzeyir Bey also touched upon the issue of plagiarism in music (1924): “Apart from many European musicologists who created their own works in Azerbaijan, there are several oriental musicologists. One of these musicologists is Anton Mailyan, who studied in Europe and was a choirmaster in Baku. He has several short songs. It seems he was not satisfied with them, but he also sang other people's works in the choir and presented them as his own music. One of these songs is “Haydı qızlar!” (“Come on girls!”) from the opera “Shah Ismail” (Muslim Magomayev's opera, 1916-1919. H.I.) that during the concert he displayed in the program as his own music. In addition, writing the notes of the song “Ay yoldaşlar!” (“Hey, Comrades!”) he considers it as his own music...”³⁹

³⁶ Hacıbəyov, Ü., 1985. *Seçilmiş əsərləri*. [Hajibeyov, U., Selected works] Baku. Yazichi. pp. 183, 623.

³⁷ *Arev*. 1916. January 20. No. 27.

³⁸ *Arev*. 1916. February 6. № 27. See: Tarverdiyeva. K. p. 48-51.

³⁹ Hacıbəyov, Ü., 1985. *Seçilmiş əsərləri*. [Hajibeyov, U., Selected works] Baku. Yazichi. p. 184.

Uzeyir Bey, of course, enjoys the popularity of his operas and operettas among Armenians and writes topical satire on the subject. A piece from this column:

“Poor Armenians! Poor Armenians again! Who cursed you? Who prayed for you that in the end you became addicted too?

- Addicted To What?

- To Opera, to operetta!

Poor Armenians! Poor Armenians again! Haven’t you seen how this opera destroyed the house of the Muslim nation? Don’t you see or hear how the Muslims of the Caucasus have deteriorated since the appearance of this opera?”

Uzeyir Bey writes about the popularity of famous operas and operettas such as “Asli and Kerem,” “O olmasin, bu olsun,” “Leyli and Majnun,” and “Arshin mal alan” in Azerbaijan, how they changed the taste and the life of merchants, beys (noble men), qoçus (ruffians) and women. He continues:

“Poor Armenians! Poor Armenians again! But you were smarter than us! Don’t you know that opera is a bad thing; music is harmful! Poor Armenians, why did you put yourself in trouble and translate “Arshin mal alan” and “Mashadi Ibad” into your own language? You are unfortunate ones!”⁴⁰

Artists of Armenian Origin and Azerbaijan in the 18th-19th Centuries

Azerbaijani Turkic was the most widely spoken language in the Caucasus, and it was also a language of poetry and music. Hundreds of Armenian ashugs wrote, read, and sang in Azerbaijani Turkic. Armenians also loved Azerbaijani music, including mugam and folk songs, and the art of ashug, listening to it with admiration, and singing and writing music in these genres themselves. It is well known that Azerbaijani singers sang in Armenian and Georgian meetings and banquets. There are many examples from the 18th and 19th centuries.

Sayat-Nova (1712-1795), an Armenian poet, born in Tiflis wrote poetry in three languages-Armenian, Georgian and Azerbaijani Turkic. Of the 200 or so remaining poems, more than half are in Turkic. In some of his poems, Sayat-Nova even used four languages-Turkic, Persian, Armenian and Georgian. There are also his translations from Azerbaijani Turkic into Armenian-for example, the poem with the repetitive line “Ağlaram” (“I’m crying”). He also translated some of his own poems written in Turkic into Armenian.

There is an interesting legend that shows Sayat-Nova’s skills in Turk ashug and folk literature⁴¹:

⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 434-435.

⁴¹ Налбандян, В.С., 1982. *Певец человека и любви*. [Nalbandyan, V. S., Singer of Human and Love] Leningrad: Sovetsky pisatel. pp. 7, 8, 25.

A foreign ashug asks Sayat-Nova, whom he meets and does not know: Do you know Ashug Sayat Nova? Sayat-Nova answers: *bilmənəm, görmənəm, tanmənəm*- I don't know, I don't see, I don't recognize. The foreign ashug, who does not feel the ambiguity of this answer, says, "I do not believe you because everyone knows and praises him." Sayat-Nova replies: *inanmənəm*- "I don't believe." Finally, the ashug, who understands the ambiguous meaning (word game) of Sayat-Nova's words, is ashamed. Sayat-Nova's first answer could be taken as: "bil, mənəm" ("know, I am"), "gör, mənəm" ("see, I am"), "tanı mənəm" ("recognize I am / me"), and the last word could be taken as "inan, mənəm" ("believe, I am").

Three small pieces from Sayat-Nova^{42, 43}:

Birisi diyər: Sayat Nova haradan?
 Birisi Hind diyər, biri Həmədan.
 Vətənim Tiplizdir, səmti-Gürcüstan
 Anam Havlabarlı, atam Hələblü.

.....
 Yalanı gerçəyə qatmağa gəlmiş
 Soğulcan ilana çatmağa gəlmiş
 Qarğa bülbül kimi ötməyə gəlmiş
 Qəfəsə də enmək istər. Enərimi?
 Enməz, əfəndim, ey!

.....
 Bağda gülsən, dağda lala
 Görən çəkər dərdü bala
 Sayat-Nova diyer valla
 Nazlı yarın dustağıyam.

(Someone asks: where is Sayat Nova from?
 One says he is from India and the other says he is from Hamedan
 My homeland is Tipliz, Gürcüstan (Georgia – H.I.) side
 My mother is from Havlabar, my father is from Halab.

.....
 He has come to mix truth and lie
 The worm has come to become a snake
 The crow wants to compete with nightingale
 It wants to land in the cage, can it?
 It won't efendim (sir)!

⁴² Ziya Information Center, 2021, *Sayat Novanın Azərbaycan dilində yazdığı şeirlərlər*. [Poems written by Sayat Nova in the Azerbaijani language]. Available at: <<http://zim.az/edebi-elaqeler/2305-sayat-novann-azrbaycan-dilind-yazd-eirlrlr.html>>

⁴³ *Sayat Nova*. ed. Araslı, H. 1963. trans. by Jamil, A. Bakı: Azerneshr. p. 19.

You are flower in garden, tulip in mountain
 One who sees will suffer
 Sayat Nova says wallah (by god)
 I am in my beloved's prison.)

* * *

Khachatur Abovyan (1805-1848) wrote about the sweetness, poeticity and melodicity, grammatical features of the Turkic (Azerbaijani) language, about poems and music gatherings such as bayati and ashug music, which were very popular among Armenians. According to him, “half of the new Armenian language consists of Turkic and Persian words”⁴⁴. He said that Armenians created songs and tales in Turkic⁴⁵. K. Abovyan collected Azerbaijani and Kurdish folk poems and songs; he gave at least some of them to F. Bodenstedt, a German student and friend of Mirza Shafi, for publication.

Abovyan used many Azerbaijani words, including proverbs, in his works. In the story, *Turkic girl*, the author says in the language of the heroine, “Although we do not have the same faith, our hearts are the same”⁴⁶. Characters in the works of Abovyan and 19th century Armenian writers and, in part, 20th century writers have more Muslim names than pure Armenian names. Armenian characters in the works of Jafar Jabbarli and other Azerbaijani writers also have Muslim, and in particular, Azerbaijani names. This, of course, was not the writer's imagination or desire, but a reflection of real life.

Note. Most Armenian names were taken from Turkic and Persian names. Nowadays, this tendency has diminished. However, there are blatant traces of this tendency in Armenian surnames.

Note. Azerbaijani names were dominated by Arabic names under the influence of Islam, and Arabic-Persian names as a result of neighborhood and cultural influence with the Persians. Although the importance of names of Turkic origin has greatly increased in our time, many names from the past still exist.

Abovyan praised the free education for Turk and Lezgin students provided by Muslims, widespread schooling, the role of mosques in this work, and the teaching of different languages (probably Arabic, Persian, Turkic – H.I.) in those schools, saying he was not able, and he did not provide free education: “As long as they don't give me money, I don't give books to anyone and I don't teach children. But Lezgins and Turk mollahs do not do this: they teach the children of their people for free, but God helps them to make their living. Does that mean he will starve us? In the palace, at every mosque, even in the villages, there is a school, even a large

⁴⁴ Abovian, K. A., 1858. *Раны Армении*. [Wounds of Armenia]. Tiflis. p. 113.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 80-81.

⁴⁶ Gasimzadeh, H., 1971. *Alexander Shirvanzade*. Baku: Ganjlik. p. 70.

school, where two or three languages are taught. Meanwhile in the courtyards of our churches, even storks do not build nests. Is it going to make people indifferent?"⁴⁷

Karabakh khans, beys and their relations with the Armenian population plays an important role in "Wounds of Armenia" (Verk Hayastani) by Khachatur Abovyan. According to him, Aliqulu khan (Gajar? H.I.) treated Armenians well. "It is said that there was no one better than him among the khans"⁴⁸. Then he writes about Sardar Huseyn khan. "Probably, in Yerevan, they have never seen such a kind, honest, sensitive person to the people's grief, caring for the welfare of the people as this leader"⁴⁹. He condemns Hussein Khan's brother Hasan Khan, saying that he is "a real savage" and a tyrant.

Note. The person who wrote notes to the book in the new era opposes Abovyan and says that Hussein khan "oppressed the Armenians."

It is unfortunate that Abovyan included some of the unbelievable horrors he heard from someone without subjecting them to any criticism: "My poor language? Ask them who was there. They would talk thousand times better than me about how the bloodthirsty Persians ripped open the mother's belly, took the baby out of it, and cut it into pieces - first the legs, then the arms, and put the pieces on a spear or sword and enjoyed his screaming and wriggling."⁵⁰

This disturbs the Azerbaijani scientist Saleh Bey. I apologize to the readers and quote his words: "Hey people! Do you hear me? A child was removed from his mother's womb, his legs and arms cut off, and a piece of his body attached to the tip of a spear or sword. Was this piece of meat "screaming" for a long time? Suppose he could "scream" for a long time. But what does this Khachatur think of people when he claims that this small body without legs and arms was "wriggling"? If he has no legs, no arms, and his body is speared, how can he "wriggle"?"⁵¹

* * *

Mirzajan Madatov (1797-1851) of Armenian origin from Karabakh was a colonel in the Russian army and is known in the literature as an Azerbaijani poet who wrote ashug poems. There were "deyişmə" (competition, quarrelling) and correspondence with Ashig Pari (?1811-?). Another Armenian historian and writer, Mirza Yusif Nersesov or Mirza Yusif Garabaghi (1798-1864), is known for his very interesting "Karabakhname" written in Persian in 1855, entitled "Tarihi-Safi"⁵². Mirza Yusif

⁴⁷ Abovyan, K. A., 1858. *Раны Армении*. [Wounds of Armenia]. Tiflis. p. 106.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 102.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 103.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 173.

⁵¹ Салех бек, 1994. *Армянство*. [Saleh bey., Armeniancy] Baku: Elm. p. 294.

⁵² Nersesov, M. Y., 2006. *Qarabağnamələr. İkinci kitab*. [Karabakhname, 2nd book]. ed. Farzaliyev, A., Baku. Sharg-Garb.

who said he had already decided to write a pure (“saf”) history that was free from praise and false news emphasized that he “saw the truth was falsified” in the books he reviewed. According to Mirza Yusif, since ancient times (Seljuk, Mongol, Turkmen times) large areas, including Karabakh, were ruled by Ganja beylerbeyis and khans. Until Nadir Shah’s time “Gajar Ziyadoglu khans ruled in Ganja and the power of Karabakh was in their hands”⁵³. The author writes about how Shusha was founded by Panah khan, and delicately hints how Panah khan ruled five Armenian melikdoms; “he calmed Khamsa meliks and rebuked those who hesitated”.⁵⁴

In 1856, Mirza Yusif published a book in Teymurkhan-Shura (Buynaksk, Dagestan) entitled *Məcmueyi-Vaqif və müasirani-digər* (Collection by Vagif and other contemporaries), consisting of poems by M. P Vagif and other Azerbaijani poets. The core of the book consists of about 70 poems by Vagif. This was the first edition of Vagif’s poems. Thank you, Mirza Yusif!

According to Mikail Nalbandian (1829-1866), a prominent Armenian poet and writer with a liberal, modernist, and anti-clerical outlook, Turks and Armenians are very similar in lifestyle and character: “Today, it can be said that Turks and Armenians live in the same land. These peoples are surrounded by the same nature. Both nations are East Asians. Their characters and communication styles are similar...”⁵⁵ He did not consider it right to replace Turkic words, which were widely used and entrenched, generally accepted in the Armenian language with artificial Armenian words.

Artists of Armenian Origin and Azerbaijan in the 20th century

Sasha (Alexander) Oganezashvili (1889-1932) from Tiflis had an Armenian father and a Georgian mother. His teacher was Oganez from Shusha. Sasha adopted the Georgianized form of Oganez as his surname. S.Oganezashvili was a master kamancha player, composer, musicologist and conductor. From 1905, he worked with Jabbar Qaryaghdioghlu and Gurban Pirimov as a long-lived trio. He accompanied other Azerbaijani singers, performing in the Caucasus, Central Asia, Russia and Iran, and participated in the recording of Azerbaijani mughams and folk songs on gramophone records in Europe with his kamancha. S. Oganezashvili wrote the opera “Farhad and Shirin”- they say with the help of Jabbar Qaryaghdioghlu; the libretto was written by Mirza Jalal Yusifzadeh based on Nizami’s poem “Khosrov and Shirin.” Jabbar Qaryaghdioghlu played the role of Farhad, and Majid Behbudov played the role of Khosrov in the play staged in Baku in 1911. S.Oganezashvili

⁵³ Ibid., p. 15.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 21.

⁵⁵ Nalbandian, M. L. 1940. *Полное Собрание Сочинений*. [Full composition of writings in 3 volume]. Yerevan. pp 183-184.

said: “I am an internationalist in the field of music. I love Azerbaijani, Georgian and Armenian music equally; they are relatives to each other. They are one tribe”.⁵⁶

Composer Anushavan Ter-Gevondyan (1877-1961) was the rector of the State Conservatory in Baku in 1934-38, and during this time, in addition to his administrative works, he wrote the rhapsody of *Rast* (1935) for the symphony orchestra and the ballet *Od gəlini* (Bride of Fire 1935) based on the corresponding play by Jafar Jabbarli. The ballet was not staged. In 1939, the opera *Səfa* by Armenian composer A. Mailyan, dedicated to the friendship and joint struggle of the Azerbaijani and Armenian peoples, was staged at the Opera and Ballet Theater in Baku. A group of Azerbaijani authors worked on the libretto. In 1942, in Yerevan, U. Hajibeyov’s Koroglu opera was staged (It is said that the role of Koroglu was played very well by Avak Petrosyan, who later received the honorary title - the People’s Artist of the Azerbaijan SSR).

Note. It is said that Sasha Oganezshvili and Anushavan Ter-Gevondyan had a cold attitude towards Uzeyir Hajibeyov. They unjustly criticized Uzeyir Bey, and Ter-Gevondyan, when he was the rector, attempted to suppress Uzeyir Bey.

Armenian writer and theater figure Arshavir Darbni recalls Jafar Jabbarli’s popularity among Armenian readers and Armenian-Azerbaijani theatrical cooperation (1960): “At that time, the staff of the Azerbaijan State Drama Theater and the staff of the Armenian State Drama Theater worked in the same building (in Baku – H.I) as own brothers... Jafar Jabbarli was the playwright of this united theater... I will never forget the day when the play “Sevil” was staged at the Armenian State Drama Theater... Armenians, Azerbaijanis and Russians sat side by side in all rows of the auditorium. They watched the play with the same excitement. I know many Armenian girls named Sevil. This, of course, comes from the work of Jafar Jabbarli. It was very beautiful and exciting for Jafar Jabbarli’s heroes to appear at the Sundukyan Theater in Yerevan... When I saw Azerbaijanis and Armenians sitting side by side in the theater’s auditorium, I remembered that Armenians and Azerbaijanis sat side by side with the same love for these works in Baku”.⁵⁷

* * *

Andrey Babayev (1923-1964), a Nagorno-Karabakh Armenian, graduated from the Azerbaijan State Conservatory and lived in Baku until 1950 before moving to Moscow. He is the author of much-loved, famous Azerbaijani songs such as “Nazəndə sevgilim” (My coquetish darling), “Pıçıldaşın ləpələr” (Speak in a

⁵⁶ Merangulian, A. A. and Merangulian, A. A., 2010. *Музыка Русской Цивилизации на Кавказе и Персии*. [Music of Russian Civilizations in the Caucasus and Persia]. Moscow: Armen Merangulian Opera. Available at: <http://www.armenmerangulianopera.ru/pages/main/vertical_menu/sasha/index.shtml>

⁵⁷ Darbni. A., 1969. *Cəfər Cabbarlı haqqında xatirələr*. [Memories on Jafar Jabbarli]. ed. Abasov. S., Baku. Azerbaijani State Press. pp. 167-169.

whisper, hey waves), “Bakılı qız” (Bakuvian girl), “Kimilər gəldi, kimilər getdi” (Who came, who left), “Bulaq üstə gedən gözəl” (Beautiful girl walking toward the spring), “Özünə qurbanam” (I am a victim of you), “Küsüb getdi” (It’s gone), “Səni sevəcəyəm sən sevməsən də” (I’ll love you even if you don’t love me), also popular in Russian songs performed by Rashid Behbudov - “Любимые глаза” (“Только у любимой... могут быть такие... необыкновенные глаза...”) (Beloved eyes: Only a beloved...can have such... extraordinary eyes...), “Я встретил девушку” (I met a girl), as well as a concert for piano and folk musical instruments orchestra, co-written with Fikrat Amirov.

Well-known Armenian film director Sergei Parajanov (1924-1990) made the film *Ashig Garib* (1988), basing his screenplay on the story written by Lermontov on the Azerbaijani epos *Ashug Garib*. Music to the film was written by Azerbaijani composer Javanshir Guliyev. Parajanov made a film about Sayat-Nova called *The Color of Pomegranates* (1969).

Azerbaijani artists lived, created, and acted in Armenia; Armenians did so in Azerbaijan and were awarded honorary titles. Rashid Behbudov (1915-1989) was a soloist of the Yerevan State Jazz Orchestra for about ten years (1934-44) and at the same time performed at the Armenian State Opera and Ballet Theater. He represented Armenia in various parts of the Soviet Union and Iran. Surayya Gajar, Niyazi and Zeynab Khanlarova from Azerbaijan received the title of People’s Artist of the Armenian SSR. Alexander Shirvanzade, an Armenian writer (who was born in Azerbaijan) received the name People’s Writer of the Azerbaijan SSR. The famous actor Vagram Papazyan (played in the role of Samad Khan in the Azerbaijani film *Maiden Tower*, 1923-1924), composer Aram Khachaturyan and 14 other artists of Armenian origin received the title of People’s Artist of the Azerbaijan SSR.

The creative collaboration of the famous Azerbaijani singer (baritone), Soviet pop star Muslim Magomayev and Armenian composer Arno Babajanyan is well known. Magomayev performed 36 compositions written by Babajanyan. Arno called him *the best performer and even co-author* of his songs. Then their relationship broke down. In response to the question of *who are the closest to you among the singers who sang your songs* in the press, Babajanyan counted everyone from Kobzon to unknown names - except Magomayev; the Karabakh conflict, unfortunately, fueled unexpected feelings and actions...

Magomayev’s answer to the question of *how you view the Armenian-Azerbaijani armed conflict as a person who grew up in multinational Baku and sang Babajanyan’s songs* was as follows: “Azerbaijan is not to blame for this – that is all! There have always been many Armenians in our republic, but we have not been offended by it – we, all of us, were friends. The number of Azerbaijanis and Armenians in our yard was equal. There were four or five Azerbaijanis, five Armenians, and as many Jews in our class, and there was no misunderstanding because of it. Baku was such a good, sincere city that it was considered impolite to talk about such things, and

those who tried to do so were immediately silenced, their mouth was shut.”⁵⁸

* * *

What did Armenian poets and writers think about Azerbaijani Turks? On the one hand, it was emphasized that the Armenian and Azerbaijani Turkic peoples are close in terms of lifestyle and ways of thinking. In an article written in 1909, H. Tumanyan emphasized that every nation has beautiful features, and it is necessary to know them: “Are we well acquainted with the kindness and purity of the Russian man’s heart, the sincerity of the Georgian heart, the chivalry of the Azerbaijani?”⁵⁹. However, there was also a negative view of the neighboring people; over time, as the conflict escalated, this negativity became more apparent. In Soviet times, Armenian literature also glorified the friendship of peoples, but beginning in the 1960s, traces of general anti-Turkish and, step-by-step, anti-Azerbaijani sentiments started to become visible.

Abbas Sahhat included his translations from Georgian and Armenian poets as well in his book of poetic translations, “Məğrib günəşləri” (The Suns of the West) published in 1912. Translations from Azerbaijani Turkic into Armenian, especially from folklore, started earlier. Although there was a certain history of translation from Azerbaijani Turkic into other languages and from other languages into this language, this work became widespread especially during the Soviet era. Literature written in various genres - poetry, prose, drama, children’s literature - was translated from Armenian into Azerbaijani Turkic and vice versa. I remember very well - when I was in the 5th grade at school, I read Vakhtang Ananyan’s (1905-1980) adventure books, “On the banks of the Sevan,” and in the 6th grade I read another adventure book, “Captives of the Tiger Valley” by the same author in my own language. I liked these books and recommended my classmates to read them.

Let Us Listen to Alexander Shirvanzade’s Lesson

Alexander Shirvanzade (1858-1935), an Armenian writer from Shamakhi, in 1880 changed his surname Movsesyan to the Azerbaijani-Iranian version of his name, Shirvanzade, which stated his place of birth (as Jalil Mammadguluzadeh said, *in our Turkic language - Şirvanoğlu İsgəndər*). Shirvanzade’s work describing the tragedy of a young Turkic couple (Azerbaijani): *a boy and girl* who loved each other-Asad and Fatma, but as a result of neighborhood fights, was first published in

⁵⁸ Иманов, В., 2008. *Муслим Магомаев и Арно Бабаджанян: дружба азербайджанца и армянина*. [Imanov, V., Muslim Magomaev and Arno Babajanian: friendship of azerbaijani and armenian] Trend news agency. Available at: <<https://www.trend.az/life/interesting/1355703.html>>

⁵⁹ Qasimzadə, H., 1971. *Aleksandr Şirvanzadə*. [Gasimzadeh, H., Aleksander Shirvanzade]. Baku; Ganjlik. p.39.

Azerbaijani Turkic in the Kashkul newspaper No. 83, 84 (1899) in Tiflis under the title of *a Bloody Novel from Shamakhi's Life*. A few months later, it was published in the Armenian newspaper *Arzagank*. Who translated the work is unknown - the author himself or the one?⁶⁰ One of the author's most popular works, the novel *Chaos*, was first translated into Azerbaijani Turkic (1928-1929), then into Russian (1930) and other languages. He used many Azerbaijani words and proverbs in the novel *Namus* (Honour) and other works.

A. Shirvanzade rightly said at that time that “the unity among different nations is stronger than among the Turks..., this unity should be disseminated to the people by the intellectuals.” He also commented on the problems of the Turks (Azerbaijanis) in the written language. He recalled that the Kashkul newspaper was published in Turkic, that certain sections, especially the mollahs, ridiculed it saying it had to be written in Persian and Arabic. He noted that later this newspaper was published in Persian and Turkic, that most did not understand Persian, and that the newspaper had returned to Turkic again.⁶¹

Hovhannes Tumanyan and A. Shirvanzade opposed the 1905 Armenian-Muslim conflict and called for peace. According to Shirvanzade, “People who try to explain the events in Baku with national hatred and Muslim fanaticism are committing a serious crime against the truth.” In his “Daxili xülasə” (Inner Summary) published in *Luma* magazine that year, he called for a return to the old life of neighborliness and friendship: We forgive our neighbors as Christians, and they should forgive us as well,” and he added: “May there be love for Turks, most of which protect Armenian families.”⁶²

A. Shirvanzade wrote an article about this painful quarrel in the newspaper *Санкт-Петербургские новости* (Saint-Petersburg News, №170) and called for reconciliation. Opinions and articles condemning the Azerbaijani Turks prevailed in the Russian press; Ahmad Bey Aghayev, who was fighting against them, warmly welcomed A. Shirvanzade's article, which was impartial and sought the root of the dispute. He wrote “An open letter to the Armenian writer Shirvanzade”⁶³: “Finally, there has come to light a man who speaks the truth without fear of the public's passion, the slanders and aspersions of depraved chauvinists, and the intrigues of politicians who base their happiness on the misery on others”⁶⁴. In this article, Ahmad Bey quoted from Shirvanzade's article a lot, for example, “The culprit is, above all, the ignorance of our masses... The fault is partly the lack of

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 41.

⁶¹ Ibid., pp. 78-80.

⁶² Ibid., pp. 84-85.

⁶³ Ağayev, Ə., 1905. Erməni yazıçısı Şirvanzadəyə açıq məktub. [Aghayev. A., An open letter to the Armenian writer Shirvanzade]. *Kaspi*. July 28.

⁶⁴ Qasimzadə, H., 1971. *Aleksandr Şirvanzadə*. [Gasimzadeh, H., Aleksander Shirvanzade]. Baku; Ganjlik. p. 88.

solidarity between Muslim and Armenian intellectuals. The culprits are those who cause discord between the two peoples orally and through the press...” “Now all the forces of the Armenian and Muslim intellectuals must be devoted to only one thing—to stop the ongoing mournful event and to restore the former sincere relations between Armenians and Muslims.”⁶⁵

In his letter to the writer Gazaros Aghayan (1906), A. Shirvanzade described the Dashnak nationalism that caused discord among nations: “Do you know the reason for the decline of the Dashnaks? Fraud. This party and its leaders are nationalists to the core, but they go out of their way to portray themselves as socialists, revolutionaries. This is fraud and destroys them”⁶⁶. The great writer and herald of peace expressed the same attitude to the heated conflicts of 1918, writing in the article “Otherwise we will perish” published in the newspaper *Mshak* (1918, № 163): “None of the three main nations of the Caucasus is strong or weak. Only all three are mentally weak. Let all the chauvinists of the three nations know and feel this, and put an end to their nationalist activities... Otherwise, we and our countries will be ruined.”⁶⁷ He considered ridiculous the desire of a small nation to destroy another nation; it’s “like a dwarf in a giant’s battledress”⁶⁸. Shirvanzade’s analogy from the writer’s imagination is also interesting: “Transcaucasia is like a trivet with its three main nations. If you break one of his legs, the pot can’t stand on it”.⁶⁹

A. Shirvanzade’s words on Armenian-Turkic (Azerbaijani) relations and his call for reconciliation, despite the fact that more than a century has passed, have not only become obsolete, but even more relevant!

“Diaries” by Avetik Isaakyan

The great Armenian poet, writer and public figure Avetik Isaakyan (1875-1957) was a Dashnak. Unfortunately, he expressed his views on the Armenian Question, the Karabakh and Javakhk issues, propagating hatred and revenge against the Turks. His *Geneva Diary* (1916-1917) was devoted to the “Armenian Question.” And *The Diaries*⁷⁰ (“Дневники”), published after his death (1977), was written as if not by a humanist writer, but by a violent nationalist who blamed everyone except Armenians for the Armenian Question. According to him, all major European

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 86.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 89.

⁶⁷ *Mshak*. 1918. Yoxsa biz məhv olarıq [Otherwise we will perish] № 163.

⁶⁸ Qasımzadə. H., 1971. *Aleksandr Şirvanzadə*. [Gasimzadeh, H., Alexander Shirvanzade]. p. 88.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 89.

⁷⁰ New time. 2017. *Из записных книжек Аветика Исаакяна*. [From diaries of Avetik Isahakian]. Translated by: Khitarova, S., and Isaakyan, A., Available at: < <http://nv.am/ya-uveren-cho-priroda-zhelala-sdelat-cheloveka-bessmertnym-no-ne-smogla-osushhestvit-eto-i-reshila-prodlit-ego-zhizn-v-potomkah/> >

countries betrayed Armenians, leaving them to the mercy of fate. Russia was the same, allied with Ataturk's Turkey. Isaakyan, who thinks that we should rely on our own strength, also states the essence of this force-weapons, military means... He now blames Germany, Britain, the United States, France, and Russia *for not giving us what we want*.

I quote some surprisingly hateful thoughts and expressions from A. Isaakyan's Diaries (translated from the Russian version). "God bless every Armenian who kills or will kill at least one Turk." "What is the difference between a good Turk and a cruel Turk? A benevolent Turk kills the father in front of his son. A cruel Turk kills the son in front of his father. "Turks are tyrants, savages, and barbarians. They are dishonorable and dishonest, anthropoid cannibals." "A dog does not reconcile with a beggar, and a Turk with an Armenian." "They armed the Tatars (Azerbaijani Turks - H.I.) for the sake of oil." "Everyone is against us." "Europe is a bandit, a criminal, a bloodthirsty predator."

He also says what the Armenians (in fact, the hard-line nationalists who incited the conflict – H.I) did wrong: "As a child, they naively believed that Europe would liberate Armenia and punish the Turks." "The Armenian people, believing in these promises, joined the war; they were defeated and subsequently destroyed."

Some of Isaakyan's comments on the situation of the Armenians at that time, I think, are in line with the current situation as well: "A nation who believes in the promises of its coreligionist, is easily deceived and tormented, humble, starving, and destroyed by epidemics..."

Beautiful and Dangerous History...

Relying on history, or rather calling on historical help and making use of history, plays a big, often decisive role in the emergence of international conflicts and wars. Who oppressed whom? Who is oppressed, who is tyrant? Who violated whose rights? Who is going to oppress whom and who is going to destroy whom? Who wants revenge on whom? Who is civilized, who is wild? Who owns this area? Whose ancestors owned this land? Who came to these places first? The conflicting parties have different, mostly contradictory, answers to these and similar questions. These answers are based on history - the history of relations between the two peoples. Each side has its own view of history. Each side has made its own history.

How does this happen? What is making history? Isn't history a science? Aren't there laws of history? Is there no single, objective history?

It is impossible to imagine our identity and essence without the past. The past is not complete, we know as much as history tells us; history is what we learn and write about the past. History is the restoration of the past in thought. Of course, it is

not possible to fully revive the past. History is made up of “stories” about the past; there is no absolute truth in historiography; there are facts that historians believe or try to convince.

The most powerful factor that feeds the study (science) of history is the search for a collective identity. There is no ethnic, national, religious, ideological or other group identity without history. Who am I, where am I from, what generation, what tribe, what nation am I from? Which blood is running in my veins? What is my religion, language, citizenship, political affiliation? Who are those with me, my bosom friend, constant companion and fellow sufferer? What literature, what music, what cultural environment did I grow up in? Man means communication; there is no such thing as a man alone; man is born in some environment, and lives in one or another. As Aristotle says, man is a political being or a social animal.

* * *

History is written based on various sources and documents. Primary sources include witnesses of the period, i.e., chroniclers, historians, writers, travelers, as well as documents, diaries, letters and other writings prepared by government agencies. Then there are second and third-hand sources - commentaries, books, articles, and generalizations written by historians, philosophers, writers and others. Primary sources may be few and incomplete, and the author’s identity and group identity (nationality, religion, ideological views, dependence) may influence their writing: they choose the one which meets their demand.

If there is subjectivity in history, what are the factors that make it subjective, and what is the reason for bias and falsification? There are several main reasons: a) incompleteness and insufficiency of resources; b) inconsistencies or even contradictions in the information provided by different sources; c) the author’s ability to distort the facts and events in favor of the ruler he serves or the people, country or ideological group to which he belongs or likes or to the detriment of the disliked: that is, the desire to place historical events within purposely, pre-established frameworks and patterns; d) fear of writing the truth or desire to win a prize by writing a lie; e) not knowing well the nature and deep causes of the period and events...

The historian operates more with the thought of the time in which he lives. He does not hesitate to change and “correct” the past in response to the public order or the collective will. As time changes, a new order is generated and a corresponding history is written. The period and environment in which he lived influence the work of the historian, either openly or subconsciously. The historian shapes the past in accordance with the requirements of the present, that is, he interferes with the past.

History is a work of art, created and constructed. Historians play the role of the architect of collective memory. The history of ancient times is being manipulated

more and more, and the scarcity and confusion of the first sources make it possible, and historians and users of history are fighting, by all means, to carry history to the older ones, to achieve the honor of the older nation. The initial fight, which was fought with pen and ink, gradually turned into a battle with swords and rifles-cannons. Representatives of some nations try to prove that they are related to the Sumerians, most of whom are small in population. They even try to prove that the people of the Indo-European language group are linguistically related to the Sumerians, who have an adherent, agglutinative language. Why? To achieve or strengthen the status of the most ancient and civilized nation.

* * *

Feelings such as nationalism and patriotism increase interest in history, but at the same time turn it into an ideological weapon. History is interesting and important, but it can also be dangerous. Collective identity, national, religious, ideological identities give rise to historical myths, and it can increase tensions, hatred, and even war between nations, religions, and countries. The rise of nationalism and extremist religious sentiments, which has prepared and ignited by history, lead to the humiliation of others and enmity towards others. The French poet Paul Valéry (1871-1945) expressed this beautifully in an essay (1931): History is the most dangerous product which the chemistry of the mind has concocted. Its properties are well known. It produces dreams and drunkenness. It fills people with false memories, exaggerates their reactions, exacerbates old grievances, torments them in their repose, and encourages either a delirium of grandeur or a delusion of persecution. It makes whole nations bitter, arrogant, insufferable and vain glorious. History will justify anything”.⁷¹

The historian claims that he researched, measured, and wrote the real thing. The “reality” obtained is not entirely true and can turn into a fictional legend created by historians. This was gorgeously expressed by the great Arab poet Abu al-Ula al-Mu’arri (973-1057) in a series of poems entitled *al-Luzumiyyat* (*Necessities*): “Every nation has its own lies and fabrications, but people believe it to be sacred.”⁷²

The image of the enemy plays a major role in history and politics. The master constructor of this image is a historian. “Foreign enemies pushed us back”- it is the leading idea in history and politics. The history of the people is mainly written as the struggle to resist the attacks of foreigners or to get rid of their slavery, wars with neighbors and invaders from afar. The allure of the image of the enemy and the idea of eternal struggle enchants and popularizes political and military history. History

⁷¹ Valéry, P., 1931. *Regards sur le monde actuel*. [Reflections on the World Today] Paris; Librairie Stock, Delamain et Boutelleau. See in, *History and Politics*. New York: Bollingen, 1962.

⁷² Климович, Л.И., 1986. *Книга о Коране, его происхождении и мифологии*. [Klimovich, L.I., Book About the Koran, Its Origin and Mythology]. Chapter II. Moscow: Political Literature Publishing House.

textbooks are based on “fair” and “unjust” wars.

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On the Caucasus and Azerbaijan

The peoples of the Caucasus have a complex history. Throughout history, the Caucasus has witnessed great military campaigns moving from one side to the other, has been changed into the battlefield of great powers, and has become a distant province of various empires. The peoples of the Caucasus were chronologically divided between Rome and Persia, between Byzantium and Persia, between the Islamic Caliphate, Byzantium and the Khazars, under the influence of the Seljuks and the Mongols, between the Ottomans and the Safavids, between the Ottomans, the Gajars, the Afshars and Russia and established their own systems of government, but in most cases were vassals of the great powers. Neighboring nations traveled, traded, cooperated, and fought with each other. When the great powers weakened, local governance strengthened, and from time to time there was a conflict between the local states; they fought with each other, claimed greatness, and sometimes one became prominent, sometimes the other.

Almost all nations have changed their places - some earlier, sooner, others later and these migrations occurred for various reasons. The people who changed their places missed the previous ones, and although those places were far away and inaccessible, they had memories of those places. These memories, created by poets, writers, linguists and historians, and in the new era, the media joined those who decorated those memories. It is the same people who read these memoirs, rejoice, revive, and have great dreams about them; some politicians try to take inspiration and ideas from them and take action.

The peoples of the Caucasus are few in terms of the number of inhabitants. The largest population of the Caucasus are Turks, and most of them are Azerbaijani Turks. In the north of the Caucasus Mountains live many different ethnic groups, languages belonging to the Caucasus group, as well as Turkic-speaking peoples. Many different peoples settled in the south of the Caucasus Mountains as well, here, in terms of numbers and statehood, three nations dominated: Azerbaijanis, Georgians and Armenians.

* * *

Today's Azerbaijani Turks are the heirs of a nation known in the Middle Ages as the Turkmen, Turks, and Caucasian Tatars during the Russian era. In fact, in ancient and medieval times, Azerbaijan was the name of an area located in the northwest of present-day Iran, with the central city of Tabriz, covering cities and provinces such as Ardabil, Urmia, Maragha, Zanjan, Khoy, and Maku; today still the name of that place is Azerbaijan. In administration, the Arabs usually meant larger territories under geographical names, including *Azerbaijan*, as well as *Arminiyya* terms.

For Caucasian Azerbaijanis and their language, the word Tatar introduced in Russia was artificial and could not live long. Since the people living in Iranian Azerbaijan and in the center and southeast of the Caucasus, occupied by Russia, spoke the same language, the word *Turk* could be used as it was in Iran instead of *Tatar*. Since the word *Turk* in Russia means Turks of Turkey or Turkic peoples in the broadest sense, the names *Azerbaijani* and the *Azerbaijani language* began to be used for Caucasian Turks (in Russia with various distortions, such as Aderbidjan). For example, in the "Introduction to Darband-name", the great orientalist Mirza Kazim Bey (1802-1870) in 1851 says "*all lists of Darband-name (existing manuscripts – H.I.) were written in the Aderbidjan language*"⁷³ In his book *Общая грамматика турецко-татарского языка* (The General Grammar of the Turco-Tatar Language), written in 1939, he noted that the *Azeri* dialect has a North branch, i.e. the Caucasus and the South branch, i.e. Iran. Mirza Kazim Bey, who worked at Kazan University, had to emphasize the difference between Tatar-Turks (Tatar-speakers) and Turks-Azerbaijanis (Azerbaijani-speakers) living in the Caucasus and Iran. The great Turkish thinker Fuat Köprülü writes: "Side-by-side with two major literary dialects of Turkic, that are Chagatay and Ottoman dialects, there is a third literary dialect that has dominated a wide area from Khorasan to Anatolia and from the Caucasus to Baghdad since 14th century and has shown a strong literary development, here we are recording this with the *Azeri* term"⁷⁴. Apparently, along with *Turkmen*, *Turk*, and *Tatar* names, *Azerbaijani* and *Azeri* terms were also included to express the people and their language.

In 1918, when the peoples of the Caucasus declared their state independence as a result of the end of the First World War, the defeat of Russia and the revolution there, the word *Azerbaijan* rose from a geographical name and a language to a political name. The state was named as *Azərbaycan Xalq Cümhuriyyəti* (Azerbaijan Democratic Republic). The term *Azerbaijan* was adopted as a name uniting regions such as Shirvan, Shaki, Guba, Lankaran, Ganja, Karabakh. Why?

⁷³ Казем-Бек. М., 1985. *Избранные произведения*. [Kazem-Bek, M. Selected works]. Baku: Elm. p. 234.

⁷⁴ Köprülü, M.F. 2004. *Edebiyat Araştırmaları 2*. [Koprulu, M.F., Research on literature II]. Ankara: Akchagh.. p. 26.

On the one hand, it was natural for the people living in the Caucasus but speaking the same language as the people of Iranian Azerbaijan, to be called Azerbaijanis, and their language as Azerbaijani or Azerbaijani Turkic; as mentioned above, the term Azerbaijani language was gradually applied. On the other hand, there was the lack of a name that unites the above-mentioned regions and is known and accepted by everyone. In this way, the terms *North Azerbaijan* (Caucasus Azerbaijan) and *South Azerbaijan* (Iran Azerbaijan) were created. Of course, this should have irritated Iran: *what do you mean by naming your country after my region (Azerbaijan)? Do you have nothing in your head, couldn't you find another name?! Do you want to feed separatism in Iran, to divide me?*

These two names, which have mainly geographical meanings, inevitably gained political significance. The geographical name of Azerbaijan was nationalized, especially in the Soviet era, when the name *Turkic language* was replaced by the *Azerbaijani language*, as well as the incorrect, confusing word Azeri was popularised. In his play *Vagif*, S. Vurghun says in Vagif's, main character's language:

Azəri yurdunun oğluyam mən də
Az-az uydururam yeri gələndə.

I am also the son of the Azeri homeland
I invent a little when need be.

However, at that time (in the 18th century), when Vagif lived, neither Vagif nor anyone else used the word *Azeri*.

Note. According to Ahmad Kasravi (1890-1946), an Iranian nationalist, linguist, historian and jurist of Azerbaijani origin, a branch of the ancient Pahlavi language was called Azeri. And in the work “Azeri or zabane-bastane-Azerbaijan,” 1921 (“Azeri or the ancient language of Azerbaijan”) he drew a contradictory and unfounded conclusion: today's Azerbaijanis are not Turks; they are the heirs of those Azeris; they were subject to Turkification in the Middle Ages. A natural question arises here: Why should a large Persian-speaking nation suddenly become Turkic in Iran, where the Persian language and culture ruled, where the Turks also educated and wrote in Persian?! At that time and even now, the probability of the Persianisation of Turks in Iran is much higher than the probability of the Turkification of Persians.

Note. In Soviet Azerbaijan and Turkey, the word *Azeri* spread simply as a short name for Azerbaijani Turks and for their language, and it spread to English and other languages.

S. Vurghun recited the poem “Rəhbərə salam” (Salute to the Leader) at the reception of Azerbaijani representatives at the Kremlin Palace in Moscow in 1936. It is said

that for the word “Turk” sound in the second line of this poem⁷⁵

Bakının sayrışan ulduzlarından
Çadrasız, boyasız türk qızlarından...

From the twinkling stars of Baku
From Turk girls without headscarves, without paint...

Stalin said, “What is a Turk, are you not Azerbaijani?” and S. Vurghun replaced the expression of *Turk girls* in the poem with *el qızları (country girls)*.

Note. This incident was not reflected in any document or written memoir, but was spread orally.

This idea of Soviet ideology was aimed at separating Azerbaijan from the Turkic world, as if to prevent pan-Turkism. According to the Soviet identity policy, each Soviet republic has its own history and culture, unlike neighboring countries—even if these neighbors are very close in terms of language, religion and culture. This meant not to confuse the identity of the people of the Azerbaijani SSR with the identity of the Turks or Iranians; a historian, linguist, philosopher, poet and writer had to defend and propagate this idea. The words of S. Vurghun became the motto of this idea:

Nədən şeirimizin baş qəhrəmanı
Gah Turandan gəlir, gah da İrandan?
Bəs mənim ölkəmin varlığı hanı?

Why does the hero of our poem
Sometimes come from Turan and other times from Iran?
So where is the identity of my country?

The Latin-based alphabet used in Azerbaijan also caused concern in the Soviet government over Turkey’s transition to a similar alphabet, so in 1939 it switched to the Cyrillic-based Azerbaijani alphabet. The collapse of the USSR and the independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan allowed the Azerbaijani language to return one again to the Latin alphabet.

⁷⁵ Vurğun, S. 1960. *Əsərləri. Birinci cild*. [Vurghun, S., Works. Volume 1]. Baku: Academy of Science Press. pp. 227-228, 318.

Azerbaijan, Turks, Language and Statehood

Some sources suggest that the tradition of statehood of Azerbaijanis is weak or absent.⁷⁶ In the Armenian media and the Internet, it is often said that *Azerbaijanis did not have a history, name, state, and that they appeared just a hundred years ago*. Saying this, they mean the emergence of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic in 1918. What matters is not the name, but the people. The ancestors of the people we now call Azerbaijanis are called Huns, Suvars, Khazars, Oghuzs, Turkmen, Turks, Tatars, and even Persians and just Muslims.

Note. Among the heirs of these names are, of course, other Turkic peoples as well. That is, the Huns, Suvars, Khazars, Oghuzs, Seljuks, Turkmen, who settled in the Caucasus, especially in its south-eastern part, many regions of Iran and some other nearby places, are the ancestors of the Azerbaijanis. In Ottoman geography, they became the ancestors of the Turks of Turkey, and in the east and north of the Caspian Sea, the ancestors of other Turkic peoples...

Note. Among the sources about the arrival of the Huns and other ancient Turks in the Caucasus, Armenian works have a special place.

Note. In Iran and Armenia, Azerbaijani Turks are called only *Turks and their language - Turkic Language or Turki*, that is correct, and Azerbaijan is seen as the name of the country.

Over time, a nation's name, the religion in which it takes refuge, in which it worships, the area in which it lives, and the writing system it uses can change. Changes can be small in one and large in another. The Turkic nation, or so-called Turkic nations because of their large and diverse affiliations, have worshiped Shamanism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, and Judaism from time to time. At present, the absolute majority belongs to Islam, but there are also Buddhist and Christian Turks. The Turks used their own invention, the Orkhon-Yenisei alphabet, and later the Arabic, Cyrillic, and Latin alphabets. Today, *the Azerbaijani Turks*, who live in different areas, use these three alphabets. Azerbaijanis in the Republic of Azerbaijan read and write in Latin, in Iran they use Arabic (with Persian modification), and Azerbaijanis in Dagestan (Russia) read and write in the Cyrillic alphabet.

As a result of large influxes, marches and migrations, the Turks spread over a large area, and this vastness led them to live in different, even in states at war with each other. As a result, they have gone through different paths in terms of history and culture. And these differences have given them and the states they created different names.

⁷⁶ Suny, R.G. 1996. *On the Road to Independence: Cultural Cohesion and Ethnic Revival in a Multinational Society*. See, in R.G. Suny. *Transcaucasia, Nationalism, and Social Change. Essays in the History of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia*. Ed. by Ronald Grigor Suny. Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan Press; p. 377.

Note. There are probably 190 states in the world whose sovereignty is beyond doubt. According to their names, these states can be divided into two parts: 1) The name of a state is related to the name of the people (and often the official language of that state) and 2) The name of the state is not or only partially related to the name of the people and language. Examples of the first group: Russia, China, Germany, France, Turkey, Georgia, Armenia, etc. Examples of the second group: USA, United Kingdom, Canada, Iran, Egypt, Israel, Pakistan, Argentina, Brazil, Switzerland, South Africa, etc. Which group does the Republic of Azerbaijan belong to? Azerbaijanis and Azerbaijani words say that Azerbaijan belongs to the first group. If Turks or Azerbaijani Turks are accepted as a nation, and Turki or Azerbaijani Turkic are accepted as a language, Azerbaijan can be seen in the second group.

In general, like with all ancient histories, the most ancient Turkic history is also obscure. It is not well known which people lived, traded, and fought for thousands of years in northern China. It is not known what languages they spoke-Turkic, Mongolian, or others. It is believed that at least some of the Huns (or Hunnus or Syunnus) who built a great empire and fought against China for centuries were Turkic-speaking. There is a small piece of poetry from the Huns, dating to the 4th century, and there is no doubt that it was in a Turkic language.⁷⁷ According to Chinese sources, the Huns are the ancestors of the Turks.⁷⁸

It is believed that at least some of the Huns (Western Huns) who invaded Europe, led by the famous commander Attila, were Turks (It seems natural that there were other peoples in the Hun state and army). The Turkic-speaking peoples who survived the collapse of the Hun state are known. According to Roman, Armenian, Byzantine and Islamic sources, the Huns, as well as the Khazars, Bulgars, Sabirs and other Turks entered the Caucasus. According to the Byzantine historian Menander and the Arab historian Tabari, the Sassanid ruler Khosrov Anushiravan settled 10,000 Suvar Turks in the 6th century in Albania, between the Kura and Araz rivers⁷⁹; If this number is true, it should have had a serious impact on the ethnic landscape... In general, history tells us that the Turks lived in the Far East, in the northeast of present-day China, in present-day Mongolia, and in the southeast of present-day Russia, and from there they moved westward, as if in uninterrupted waves.

* * *

The Turks spread to the south and some of the central areas of Eurasia. The victory of the Arab army over the Chinese army in the Battle of Talas (near the Talas

⁷⁷ Benzing, J.1986. See in, *Зарубежная тюркология. Выпуск I. Древние Тюркские языки и литературы.* [Foreign Turkology. Issue I. Ancient Turkic Languages and Literatures]. Moscow: Nauka. p. 13.

⁷⁸ Okladnikov, A. P. 1968. *История Сибири с древнейших времён до наших дней. В пяти томах. Том первый. Древняя Сибирь.* [History of Siberia from ancient times to the present day in 5 volumes. Old Siberia. Vol.I]. Leningrad: Nauka. p. 269.

⁷⁹ Еремеев, Д.Е., 1971. *Этногенез турок.* [Eremeev, D. E., Ethnogenesis of the Turks]. Moscow: Nauka. p. 55.

River in Central Asia) in 751 gave impetus to the step-by-step Islamization and Turkification of Central Asia. There were Turks on both sides in this war, and the Karluk Turks in the Chinese army did not want to fight the Muslim army (Maybe because of the Turks in the Muslim army?) and this decided the fate of the war. The Turks settled in Central Asia and again turned to the southern and central regions of present-day Russia, as well as to Eastern Europe. Subsequent Turkish movements spread to Iran and the Arab caliphate, and also intensified in the Caucasus, mainly in its eastern and southern parts. The Turks, who suppressed Byzantium, conquered Anatolia and advanced towards the Balkans. As a result, the Turkic peoples, who are geographically, politically and culturally diverse, are located side by side at the same time-Siberian Turks, Central Asian Turks, Azerbaijani Turks, Ottoman Turks and various northern Turks, mainly settled in the territory of present-day Russia, building many large and small states, as well as many powerful empires there. In ancient times, the Turks did not write history books, with some exceptions, and began to engage in this work in the Middle Ages. There is a saying among Turks that combines different feelings, such as regret, reassurance and pride: Turks do not write history books, they create history itself..

Of course, the term *Azerbaijani Turks* used to describe and analyze ancient and medieval events is conditional; The ancestors had different language and state names. Today, when we talk about the history and culture of the direct ancestors of the people called “Azerbaijani Turks,” we use today’s name, for example, we use expressions like “Nasimi, Shah Ismail Khatai, Fuzuli and Vagif are Azerbaijani poets, Safavids and Gajars were Azerbaijani Turks, Azerbaijani khanates were semi-independent states.”

As mentioned above, the first influx of Turks to the Caucasus came from the north. The second major influx was the Seljuks capturing Iran and entering the Caucasus from the south. It is believed that the Seljuks settled in the Caucasus for some time, peacefully or by war, and played a decisive role in the growth of the Turks in the Caucasus. They also went to Asia Minor, Anatolia and conquered most of it. Both Azerbaijani Türks and Turks of Turkey are the successors of the Seljuks. There were states created in the Caucasus by Seljuk beys and atabeys; these are the states founded by the Azerbaijani Turks. Of course, the Muslims gradually dominated the population of these countries. Some Muslims were not Turks, but representatives of ancient peoples called Albanians. Some of them may have been assimilated in the Turkic environment, while others have preserved their language and customs.

The nation called *Azerbaijanis* in Soviet times, and now named again *Azerbaijanis* or *Azerbaijani Turks*, were called Turks or Turkmen in the Middle Ages. According to many linguists, including the German Gerhard Doerfer (1920-2003), in the Middle Ages, Ottoman Turkish and Azerbaijani Turkic differed little. In any case, poems written in Azerbaijani Turkic in the 13th century are known. By the way, the author

of two of them is an Armenian – Blouz Hovhannes Erznkatsi⁸⁰. One is a five-line poem with the line “Tanqrim anası Məriəm” (Mariam, the mother of the God) and the second is a verse about the molla’s daughter’s attitude towards an unbeliever:

Yeri, yeri, gavur oğlu
 Götür bizdən mühəl sözü
 Sən Hovannes keşiş oğlu
 Ben müsürman molla qızı.

Go, go! You are the son of a Christian
 Take the impossible word from us
 You are Hovannes, the son of a priest
 I am a Muslim, the daughter of a molla)

Note. The Arabic word muhal = mehal means very difficult, impossible.

* * *

Qaraqoyunlu (1374-1468) and Aqqoyunlu (1378-1501) Turkmens are considered direct ancestors of Azerbaijani Turks; they established states covering large areas. The famous Uzun Hasan (1423-1478) occupies an important place in the history of Azerbaijan as a prominent statesman and commander. Qaraqoyunlu Jahan Shah (1387-1467) is an Azerbaijani poet who wrote under the nickname *Hagigi* (he wrote in the language we call Azerbaijani Turkic). Sultan Yagub (? - 1490), son of Aqqoyunlu Uzun Hasan, also is the author of poems written in Azerbaijani Turkic. I think it is necessary to recall an incident that took place in the time of Yagub and was related to the protection of the Armenian citizens. In 1486, “In Tabriz, a very angry young Turkmen soldier killed, in the name of jihad, a rich Armenian merchant who did not want to convert to Islam. After investigating the incident and executing the soldier, Yagub’s men handed over his skull to the Armenian people. Armenians started playing with skulls as a ball in their block.”⁸¹

The great Azerbaijani poet Mohammad Fuzuli (1494-1556) was born in Iraq, among the Turkmens, and died there. When I was in high school, we studied the work of a poet named Shah Ismail Khatai (1487-1524), who wrote beautiful poems in Azerbaijani Turkic. He entered history mainly as a statesman who founded the Safavid state. Shah Ismail is the grandson of Uzun Hasan; Ismail’s mother is the daughter of Uzun Hasan. The Safavids succeeded in building a great empire (1501-1736). This state, founded by the Azerbaijani Turks, became a great empire covering Iran, the Caucasus, and the territories around Iran. At that time, Tabriz, Shamakhi,

⁸⁰ Yerevanlı, Ə., 1968. *Azəri-erməni ədəbi əlaqələri. Qədim dövrdən XVIII əsrin sonuna qədər*. [Yerevanlı, A., Azeri-Armenian Literary Relations. From the Old Period till the End of XVIII Century]. Yerevan, pp. 264-265.

⁸¹ Woods, J. E., 1976. *The Aqqoyunlu: Clan, Confederation, Empire: a study in 15th/9th century Turco-Iranian politics*. Minneapolis; Bibliotheca Islamica.

Ganja, and Nakhchivan were the main Azerbaijani cities and administrative centers. The state of Shirvanshahs, whose power spread mainly to the eastern part of the Caucasus, also has a special place in the history and culture of Azerbaijan in the Middle Ages. Nadir Shah Afshar (1688-1747), who came to power after the Safavids, expanded the borders of the state centered in Iran with rapid conquests. After the death of Nadir Shah, a period of power struggles and wars came, and finally, the Azerbaijani Turks - Qajars (1796-1925) seized power again.

Although the written language in these countries was mainly Persian, Turkic was more widely spoken. According to the British Iranian historian John R. Perry, "Spoken Turkish was so common among all classes in Iran as to be the lingua franca... Overland travellers to Iran, from Timurid through Safavid to Qajar times and up to present, have inevitably found themselves in corridors, both geographical and sociological, where through quirks of economic and social history, they hear more Turkish than Persian." According to European travelers, "Persians actively learned Turkish... it is almost shameful in Persia for a man of distinction to be ignorant of Turkish."⁸²

Apparently, in about 1000 years, the Azerbaijani Turks established states surrounding Azerbaijan, Iran, and the nearby lands. It should be noted that in those states, although the palace and army were mainly under the rule of Azerbaijani Turks, and Turkic was widely spread as a spoken language, the dominant written language, with some exceptions (for example, with Shah Ismail), was Persian. In general, the history of Azerbaijan, on the one hand, is an integral part of the history of the Turkic peoples, on the other hand, it is necessary to study the history of Azerbaijan in connection with the history of Iran. The history of Azerbaijan must also be studied in close connection with the history of the Ottomans, the Armenians, the Georgians, the peoples of the North Caucasus, and the Russian people, that is, all the neighboring peoples.

Armenian History and Historiography

Soviet ideology linked the history of the people mainly with the territory in which they now live. The Armenians tried to make their history ancient by including Urartu and the Azerbaijanis - by Manna and Media. Although a prominent Soviet-Russian specialist in the history and linguistics of the ancient East, I.M. Dyakonov (И.М. Дьяконов, 1915-1999) sometimes changed his views and was rightly and unjustly criticized, he was well known as the author of valuable works on the history of the East and the Caucasus. He did not hesitate to criticize the "antiquating" policy of

⁸² Perry, R.J., 1996. *Persian during the Safavid Period: Sketch for an Etat de Langue*. See in, *Safavid Persia*. Ed. Melville. C.P., & University of Cambridge. Centre of Middle Eastern Studies. London; New York: I.B. Tauris. p. 278.

both Armenian and Azerbaijani (and many others!) historians. For example, "...I could not prove to the Azerbaijanis that the Medes are their ancestors, because this is not the case. But I wrote a history of the Media - a large, thick, detailed volume."⁸³

The history of Azerbaijan was written not as the history of the Azerbaijani people, but as the history of the states created in the territory of Azerbaijan or in the territories around Azerbaijan (even now little has changed...). Armenians tried to write the history of the people. The Armenian people were not as numerous as the Turks, Persians, or Arabs, and their diversity was not as extensive, that is, they were a relatively compact nation that could be covered. Armenians concentrated their history in the east of Asia Minor ("Western Armenia"), Cilicia (Mersin, Adana, Osmaniye sides in present-day Turkey), and around the Republic of Armenia ("Eastern Armenia").

Where was the first homeland of Armenians? Balkan? Middle East, Eastern Anatolia? What about the Caucasus? Experts in Armenian Studies, especially Westerners, including specialists of Armenian origin, have put forward and substantiated the theory of migration at the heart of Armenian history. According to the theory of migration, the Indo-European ancestors of the Armenians moved from the Balkans, from west to east, and settled in the ruined land of Urartu in eastern Asia Minor. The newcomers mingled with the locals on the Armenian plateau, around Lake Van, and the Armenian nation was formed there. The city of Ani (remnants: Kars province of Turkey, near the border with the Republic of Armenia) was the capital of the Armenian Bagratuni dynasty. The Armenian alphabet was used by Mesrop Mashtots in these places. Gregory, the first Catholicos (Patriarch) of the Armenian Apostolic Church, was a Parthian from the south. Armenians gradually spread to the east, between the Kura and Araz rivers. Ani was conquered by the Byzantines and later by the Seljuks (in 1045 and 1064, respectively), and some Armenians migrated to Cilicia.

* * *

After the Second World War, the policy of the USSR on the history of Armenia (and, in general, the history of the peoples of the allied republics) changed, and history was shaped differently. The study (science) of history was directed to justify the Armenians as a local, indigenous population of the Caucasus. They began to connect the formation of the Armenian people between the Kura-Araz, roughly on the territory of the Armenian SSR, and sometimes in its immediate vicinity. I.M. Dyakonov, like leading Western experts, said that Armenians came to the Caucasus from the west, calling their indigenes in the Caucasus unfounded, distorted, fabricated history.

⁸³ Дьяконов, И.М., 1995. *Книга воспоминаний*. [Dyakonov, I. M., Book of Memories]. Saint Petersburg; European House. p. 732. Available at <http://unipersona.sccc.msu.ru/site/authors/dyakonov/posl_gl.htm>

It was impossible to deny arrival from the West. Armenian historians did not retreat: Phrygian detachments came from the west united with the local ancestors, the *Hays* living in the west of Lake Van; there were people so-called *Armen* among those who came. Both newcomers became Armenians. Dyakonov pointed out that this was wrong. In this way, Armenian history has become much older. Yerevan was declared as one of the oldest cities in the world-it turned out that it was 30 years older than Rome. Armenians were introduced as natives of the eastern regions of Asia Minor. This allowed them to claim ancient Armenian lands from Turkey. In 1945-1946, the USSR filed territorial claims against Turkey, then demanded land for a military base. No real results were achieved based on territorial claims, but the rise of Armenian nationalism and the “idealization of the historical past” worried Moscow.

In the 1950s and 1960s, it was widely accepted that the Armenian language belonged to the Indo-European group. A natural question arose: if Armenians are autochthonous, how to explain that the Armenian language belongs to the Indo-European language group? The conceptions of linguists diverged, and it became difficult to find ideas and explanations that would satisfy the majority.⁸⁴

The idea of a “Greater Armenia” is associated with the control of large areas by Armenians during the reign of Tigran II; this breadth or greatness diminished after 30-35 years and was later removed from the stage of history. However, in the second half of the 19th century, this idea began to be revived, and the dream of a new Greater Armenia excited the national romantics.

Note. The Georgians were able to conquer most of the Caucasus and Ani and Dvin in the second half of the 12th century and the beginning of the 13th century. It turns out that Georgians need to revive the “Greater Georgia” of the 12th century, and Azerbaijanis need to revive the “Greater Azerbaijan,” consisting of Qaraqoyunlu, Aqqoyunlu or Safavid or Qajar territories. Not only the history but also the contemporary age may nourish the desire of Azerbaijanis for greatness. Why shouldn’t tens of millions of Azerbaijani Turks located in the north-west of Iran, on the border of the Republic of Azerbaijan (and spread all over Iran), Dagestan-Derbent Azerbaijanis, Georgian Azerbaijanis, and Azerbaijanis, living in the Eastern provinces of Turkey not create an excitement of “Greater Azerbaijan?” But, thankfully, neither the Azerbaijani government nor the Azerbaijani intellectuals think so. Individuals may be caught up in this idea, but the government and the people as a whole are not caught up in the claim of “Greatness” that does not benefit anyone but can shake both the Republic of Azerbaijan and friendly neighboring countries.

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⁸⁴ Bowern, C. and Evans, B. 2014. *The Routledge Handbook of Historical Linguistics*. London: Routledge, pp. 161–89.

Soviet-Russian archaeologist and ethnic-politician Victor Shnirelman has written an interesting, debatable book about how the mythical historical memory had plagued the peoples of the South Caucasus.⁸⁵ The author tried to emphasize the role of the Armenian-Azerbaijani, Georgian-Abkhazian, and Georgian-Ossetian conflicts and the historical myths that caused these conflicts to turn into war. Although each party to the conflict accused Shnirelman of turning a blind eye to the other side's actions, making choices as he pleased, and failing to show the middle ground, there is no denying that the book provides a comprehensive analysis of the causes of the conflict. The book does not and cannot show what the middle line is; perhaps it is not the author's business or he has not set such a goal for himself. This useful book, based on a wide range of written materials, may have some short-comings and errors. I will be satisfied with a simple note. The author's opinion that the original of the epos "The Book of Dede Gorgud" was written in Persian⁸⁶ is completely wrong. It seems that the author confused this epos with some other work. The oldest of the two well-known manuscripts of the Book of Dede Gorgud - Dresden (full version)—was written in full medieval Azerbaijani Turkic, the second- the Vatican manuscript (about half of the saga) in Azerbaijani and Eastern Anatolian dialects.

I am content with an excerpt from Shnirelman.

"The incurable wound of Armenian history consists of the fact that during a significant part of the Middle Ages and beyond, until 1918, the Armenians had practically no independent state. For this reason, the ancient statehood was of great importance to them, because, firstly, it was the most important symbol of the eternal unity of the Armenian people, and secondly, it would allow Armenians to consider themselves a nation-state and hope for the restoration of state independence in the future.

Although it gained ever-lasting fame, the ancient state that existed for a short time did not meet this need. For this reason, Armenian authors were interested in restoring a complete chain of Armenian states that was uninterrupted, and lasted for centuries because only this could convince the Armenians that they were the real carriers of a long-lasting statehood.

The Armenians were also concerned about the maximum deepening of the roots of this statehood, as it turned them into not only a nation with statehood, but a nation with a very ancient statehood both in Anatolia and in the Caucasus... It was also important to substantiate the fact that Armenians have lived in these lands since immemorial times. This with iron inevitability forced the Armenian authors to prefer the concept of autochthonous".⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Шнирельман, В.А., 2003. *Войны памяти. Мифы, идентичность и политика в Закавказье*. [Shnirelman, V. A., *Memory wars. Myths, Identity and Politics in Transcaucasia*] Moscow: Akademkniga.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 252.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 99-100.

Disputed Albanian History

Armenians and Azerbaijanis lost a lot of pen, ink, life, and blood to answer the question of who owned Karabakh in ancient times, as well as in the Middle Ages. Caucasian Albanian history has become a battlefield on both sides. Contradictory maps drawn by the two sides played a key weapon role.

According to ancient historians and geographers, Caucasian Albania was located between the Iberians, the ancestors of the Georgians, and the Caspian Sea. Of course in the ancient world, there were not accurate, fixed borders, they were muddy-foggy and changeable; they could grow and shrink. Azerbaijani historians have argued that the territory of present-day Azerbaijan, including Karabakh, belonged to Albania, while Armenian historians argued that the area of Karabakh previously belonged to Armenians. The western part between the Kura and Araz rivers, it seems, passed from hand to hand... The main cities of Albania that played the role of the capital were Gabala and Barda.

In the confrontation between Christianity and fire-worship (Zoroastrianism), Christianity gradually strengthened; Armenians, Georgians and Albanians converted to Christianity, each of which had its patriarch and church. Armenian historians initially presented the ancient history of Karabakh as the Armenianization of the local Albanian people. At the end of the 4th century, the south and east of the Caucasus were subjugated to Iran. It was claimed by Armenian historians that Karabakh was under Armenian rule for more than four centuries, until 387, and then, although subordinated to Iran, it remained under the cultural and religious influence of the Armenians. The Albanian Church seemed gradually to be under the influence of the more developed Armenian Church. Armenian historians have tried to prove that most churches in the Caucasus are Armenian churches, while Georgian and Azerbaijani historians have tried to prove that most churches are Georgian and Albanian churches, respectively.⁸⁸

Arabs, who defeated Iran in the 7th century, entered the Caucasus. Arabs and the Khazar Turks began a decades-long war to dominate the Caucasus. Gradually, most Albanians converted to Islam. The Albanians, who were under the full influence of the Armenian Church, mostly remained Christian and were assimilated into the Armenians. As a result, the Albanian Church weakened but continued. An independent Albanian church was active in Nagorno-Karabakh; The Albanian Church was abolished by Russia in 1836, and its assets were transferred to the Armenian Church. The Albanian tribes that converted to Islam retained their numerous languages, although some assimilation into the growing Turkish population is not excluded. Thus, the Albanians, along with the Turks, are among the ancestors of the modern multinational people of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

⁸⁸ Arveladze, B., 2002. *Armenian or Georgian Churches in Georgia?! Baku: Khazar University Press.*
Russian: Арвеладзе, Б., 1996. «Армянские» или грузинские церкви в Грузии?!. Тбилиси.

According to Victor Shnirelman, "...Starting from the second half of the 1960s, Armenian scholars and writers consistently created their myths that there was no connection between Albanians themselves on the one hand and between Albanians and Armenians or Azerbaijanis on the other hand"⁸⁹. Shnirelman also notes that Georgians also did not like the idea of Georgianized Albanians.⁹⁰

The Azerbaijani Khanates and Russia

Tracing the roots of today's conflict, territorial claims, and other problems to distant history, looking for it in the ancient times, in the events of 1500-2000 years ago, I think, is to fall away from rationality, to fall into mythological thinking. Today, to understand the current situation, it is necessary and possibly enough to look not at the ancient history, which is full of legends, fictions, and adornment, but at a slightly closer, new history and then the most recent history, that is, the direct roots of the events happening.

Russia's rapprochement with the Caucasus marked the beginning of a new era. Russia, a powerful Christian state from the north, was added to the Iranian and Ottoman environment accustomed to by Caucasians. It was natural that Caucasian Christians - Georgians and Armenians - showed more interest in Russia. They were thinking about who to approach soon, and tried to take concrete steps. Azerbaijanis, on the other hand, approached Russia more cautiously since what Russia brought was very different from the traditional Muslim environment.

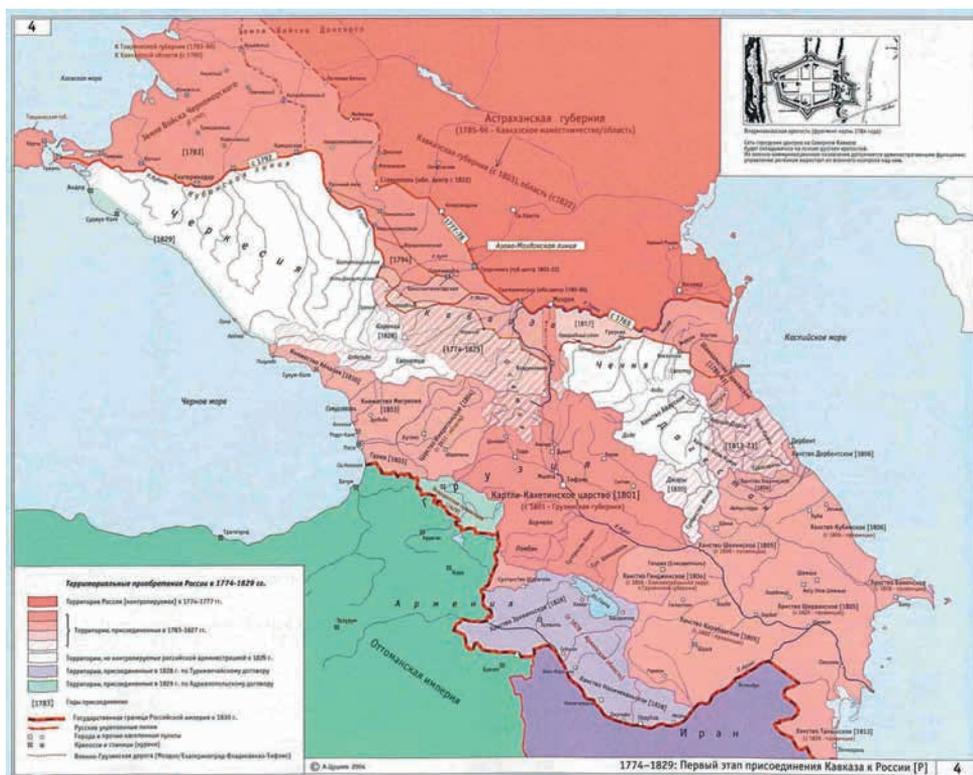
During the last weak period of the Safavids, the Caucasian provinces under their control began to pursue a semi-independent policy, forming alliances or quarreling with each other. Nadir Shah began to re-strengthen the policy of centralization and did not hesitate to use force in this way. After the assassination of Nadir Shah (1747), small local states emerged in the Caucasus. There was a system of local government in the Caucasus, established by the Safavids or by the locals themselves as vassal states in some dependence on the Safavids. This state experience was strengthened in the form of Azerbaijani khanates and Georgian principalities.

Let's pay attention to the map of the Caucasus of the 18th century:⁹¹

⁸⁹ Шнирельман, В.А., 2003. *Войны памяти. Мифы, идентичность и политика в Закавказье*. [Shnirelman, V. A., *Memory wars. Myths, Identity and Politics in Transcaucasia*] Moscow: Akademkniga. p. 228.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 228.

⁹¹ Цуциев, А., 2006. *Атлас этнополитической истории Кавказа, 1774-2004*. [Tsutsiev, A., *Atlas of ethnopolitical History of the Caucasus, 1774-2004*]. Moscow; Europe. p. 10.



1774-1829: First stage of annexation of Caucasus to Russia

As can be seen, the South Caucasus consisted of the following small states dependent to varying degrees on the Persian, Ottoman and Russian Empires: Azerbaijani khanates located in the center, east and south of the Caucasus - the Guba Khanate, Shaki Khanate, Shamakhi (or Shirvan) Khanate, Baku Khanate, Ganja Khanate, Karabakh Khanate, Talish Khanate, Iravan Khanate, Nakhchivan Khanate and Georgian states located in the northwest of the Caucasus - the Kartli-Kakheti Khanate (or dominion, principality) and Imereti Khanate. The Derbent Khanate located along the border, as well as the small self-governing sultanates of Ilisu, Gazakh, and Shamshadil, the Jar-Balakan community; the principalities of Guria, Megrelia, and Abkhazia can be added here. Among the Azerbaijani khanates, the Karabakh, Guba, and Shaki khanates had greater power. Fatali Khan of Guba (1736-1789) tried to unite a part of the Azerbaijani khanates, the Western Caucasus from Derbent to Ardabil. Fatali Khan was in a quarrel with Karabakh's khan Ibrahimkhalil khan (1732-1806). The khanates of Tabriz, Urmia, Maragha, Ardabil, Garadagh, Khoy, and Maku were established in the north of present-day Iran, i.e. in Iranian Azerbaijan.



1871-1881: General provincial principle in administrative division

Armenian historical and propaganda sources use the term Persian khanates instead of Azerbaijani khanates. However, the main population of all these khanates was Azerbaijani Turks, as were their rulers or khans. Of course, other national minorities, including Armenians, lived in these khanates. However, in terms of political power and population, the Azerbaijani Turks prevailed. Some of the khanates were pro-Iranian, others were pro-Ottoman or pro-Russian; these tendencies could change over time. There was also an Armenian national minority in the Iravan, Nakhchivan, Ganja, and Karabakh khanates. There was an Armenian kingdom (Melikdom) within the Karabakh Khanate. The Karabakh meliks (local rulers) were first subordinated to the Bəylərbəyi (“Bey of Beys,” Nobility) affiliated to Safavids and then directly to the Karabakh Khanate. Armenians also lived in Georgian principalities as well. The territory presented by Armenian historians as Eastern Armenia in reality was the Principalities (Bəylərbəyliyi) of the Safavid-Afshar period, and later the Karabakh, Nakhchivan, and Iravan khanates, where Armenians were subordinate minorities.

The great state founded by the Azerbaijani Turks and known as the Safavids and Qajars, which claimed to be an empire and was dominated by the Azerbaijani Turks and Persians in terms of population, was gradually weakening and disintegrating. At that time, small and national Azerbaijani states - khanates - appeared. Eventually, some of these khanates would emerge in the form of a new state united under the name of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic. This and the subsequent state - the Soviet Socialist Republic of Azerbaijan, although Azerbaijani Turks were predominant in number, were multinational states; the same is true for the independent Republic of Azerbaijan.

The Karabakh Khanate and Russia's Armenian Policy

On May 14, 1805, a treaty on the annexation of Karabakh to Russia was signed between the official representative of Russia, General Pavel Tsitsianov ("Павель Цициановъ"), and Karabakh's khan Ibrahim Khan ("Ибрагим хан Шушинский и Карабагский")

Note. Apparently, both in the Middle Ages and in Russia, the territory was called Karabakh, and this was the name given by the Azerbaijani Turks.

On October 12, 1813, Russia and Persia signed the *Treaty of Gulistan* on the joining or annexation of the Azerbaijani khanates - Shaki, Shirvan, Derbent, Guba, Baku, and Talish khanates with Russia. Thus, the people of Azerbaijan were divided between two states - Russia and Persia. The continuation of this process, which benefited Russia at Iran's expense, came on February 10, 1828, with the *Treaty of Turkmenchay* between Russia and Persia. This time the last two Azerbaijani khanates in the South Caucasus - the Iravan and Nakhchivan khanates - were subordinated to Russia. Emperor Nicholas I decided to call these two khanates together «Армянская область» (the Armenian province) - although the absolute majority of the population of these two khanates consisted of Muslims - Turks and Kurds (see the next section). Thus, the foundation was laid for the establishment of the Armenian state in the future.

General Paskevich's report from April 5 - June 10, 1828, stated that after our army captured Azerbaijan (i.e., Iranian Azerbaijan - H.I.), the Armenians expressed a desire to settle in the Russian provinces. Paskevich said it would be good to place them in Iravan, Nakhchivan, and Karabakh provinces. Thus, in fact, it was decided to deport Armenians living in Iranian Azerbaijan (Maragha, Urmia, Khoy, etc.) to the Caucasus and into Azerbaijan (Azerbaijani Khanates). It should be noted that before this migration, in 1823, 20,035 families were known to live in Karabakh, of

which 15,729 were Muslims and 4,366 were Christians.⁹²

* * *

The second volume of the interesting book “Personal Narrative of Travels in Babylonia, Assyria, Media, and Scythia,” published in London, 1827 by the British General George Keppel (1799-1891), who wrote multi-volume works of his travels, is mainly devoted to the fascinating description of his trip from Tabriz to Astrakhan in the summer of 1824. He crossed the Araz River and went to Karabakh before traveling along the following route: Shamakhi-Baku-Dagestan-Kumyk-Astrakhan. He writes: There is “a beautiful Karabakh province” between Araz and Kura with Shusha (Sheesha) as its capital⁹³; Karabakh is a “fruitful province”⁹⁴.

G. Keppel describes his trip to Shusha in interesting ways (of course, I do not intend to give this description in detail)... “On the way to Shusha we rested in a 140-tent Tatar settlement - Peerhumud⁹⁵. We passed the Tatars who came to spend the summer in the mountains with their tents and several neat Armenian villages. There are 2,000 houses in Shusha, three-quarters of the population are Tatars and the rest are Armenians. The head of the Armenians, Aga Bey, took us to his house. This city was built 80 years ago by the Tatar prince”⁹⁶.

Note. Shusha fortress-city was founded by Panahali Khan in 1750 or 1751. Originally it was intended as a fortress, called Gala (Fortress), and later became a city by building and renovation. George Keppel writes Sheesha (şüşə = şışə = glass), not Shusha, which corresponds to the probability that the word Shusha is derived from the expressions, transparent glass or fresh air.

Note. Marietta Shaginyan notes that Armenians came to Shusha later. The Armenian part... “was formed later and seemed to be a European appendage to the Asian city...”⁹⁷

I am content with two more observations by G. Keppel. The Tatar language is a dialect of Turkish, but the Tatars read and write mainly in Persian⁹⁸. There are 20 mosques and one Armenian church in Baku. The population of Baku, with a population of 4,000, consists primarily of Tatars, but also includes a small number

⁹² *Описание Карабахской провинции, составленное в 1823 году по распоряжению главнокомандующего в Грузии Ермолова.* [Description of the Karabakh province, compiled in 1823 by order of Ermolov, the commander-in-chief in Georgia] 1866. Tbilisi.

⁹³ George, T. K. A., 1827. *Personal Narrative of Travels in Babylonia, Assyria, Media, and Scythia.* London. p. 166.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 184.

⁹⁷ Шагинян, М., 1946. *Советское Закавказье.* [Shaginyan, M., Soviet Transcaucasia]. Moscow-Leningrad. State Publishing House of Fiction. p. 252.

⁹⁸ George, T. K. A., 1827. *Personal Narrative of Travels in Babylonia, Assyria, Media, and Scythia.* London. p. 185.

of Armenians.⁹⁹

* * *

A new, larger system of governance had been established for the Caucasus in Russia. The territory of the Iravan and Nakhchivan khanates were renamed the Armenian province (Армянская область), then Iravan province (Ериванская губерния). The Ganja, Karabakh, and Shaki khanates together formed Elisavetpol (Ganja) province; Guba, Baku, Shirvan, Talysh khanates together formed Shamakhi province, and then in 1859, Baku province. Tbilisi, Kutaisi provinces, and Abkhazia district were formed based on the territories that would make up the Republic of Georgia in the future.

Armenian Soviet historian Abgar Ioannisyán (1908-1991) touches on some interesting points in his research on the Karabakh Khanate, the Armenian meliks, and the policy of governing the newly acquired lands of the Russian Empire. Prince G. Potemkin (1739-1791), an influential statesman, intimately close to Catherine II (and her lover, as Catherine herself, called him, “almost an idol”), intended to overthrow Ibrahim khan of Shusha (Shushinski), and turn Karabakh into an independent Armenian province subjugated to Russia: “According to the order of Catherine II, Grigory Potemkin, the second person after the Empress in Russia, instructed his nephew, General P.I. Potemkin in the following context on April 6, 1783: It is necessary to overthrow Ibrahim Khan of Shusha because from now on Armenian independence will be established in Karabakh, which is not subject to anyone but Russia. At this point, make every effort to build this province in the most convenient way for the people. Thus, other strong Armenian provinces will either follow them or come to Karabakh in large numbers.”¹⁰⁰

Prince Potemkin appealed to Catherine II to implement this idea, offering to create a new Christian state in Asia and to fulfill their promise to the Armenian meliks: “On the same day, May 19, 1783, G. Potemkin presented the following report to Catherine II: After the abolition of the khanate, his (Ibrahim khan’s) province, made up of Armenians, should be handed over to the national administration, and thus, it is necessary to restore the Christian state in Asia by the promises made by Her Majesty the Empress to the Armenian meliks through me.”¹⁰¹

The author (A.R.Ioannisyán) goes on to note that he was surprised that Russian officials preferred khans to Armenian kings (meliks) who served Russia: “The Russians, who owned Karabakh through the help of the meliks, kept the cruel enemy of those kings, Ibrahim Khan, as the chief ruler of the province. Ibrahim

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 203.

¹⁰⁰ Иоаннисян, А. Р., 1947. *Россия и армянское освободительное движение XVIII столетия*. [Ioannisyán, A. R., Russia and the Armenian Liberation Movement of the 18th Century]. Yerevan: Publishing house of state university. doc. No. 22. p. 236.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., doc. No. 24. p. 238.

khan betrayed the Russians and was killed. Mehdi Khan, the eldest son of the traitor, was appointed in his place and he was given more rights. However, he betrayed the Russians even more: in 1822, he fled from Karabakh to Iran and returned with the Iranian army to fight the Russians. *It is not clear why the Russian officials of that time preferred these treacherous khans to the Armenian meliks who served Russia faithfully?*” (Italics are mine – H.I.).

Logically, A.R.Ioannisiyan’s surprise and anger are understandable: 1) Armenian meliks were Christians like the Russians (although their churches were different), 2) they helped the Russians more or less (although they did not have great auxiliary forces), 3) among the Russians there were those in the upper circles who wanted to promote them (like Prince Potemkin). But why did the Russians find it necessary to hand over power to the Azerbaijani khans and their successors? In answer to this question, I think the following can be noted. 1) The khan and his successors had the experience of governing and were able to keep both Muslims and Christians under their control and organize their economic life. 2) Christians in the khanates as if in the Muslim sea, were separate, small islands; Christians could be relatively more only in a few small places. 3) The integration of Christians into Russian life seemed natural, but to “pacify” and integrate Muslims, it was necessary to work with their khans, noblemen, and merchants. If Russia displeased the upper-class Muslims and the social aristocracy, Muslims were more likely to disobey Russia and revolt.

Migration and Ethnic Changes

Wars between Russia and the Ottomans in the 18th-19th centuries, and intermittent wars between Russia and Iran in the 19th century, led to large-scale migrations. In these migrations, Russian Muslims mostly turned to the Ottomans, as well as to Iran, and Ottoman and Iranian Armenians - mostly to Russia. Armenians deported from Iran under the Turkmenchay treaty settled mainly in Karabakh, Ganja, Shamakhi, and Iravan regions.¹⁰²

Russia began to pursue a policy of Christianization in the newly conquered territories. In Karabakh and in the territories of Iravan, Nakhchivan, and Ordubad, the so-called Armenian province, the transition from Muslim rule to Christian rule was made by significantly increasing the number of Armenians. This was, it seems, a way to turn Muslim regions, originally considered colonies, into Russian provinces. Along with the Russification that began in Tbilisi and later extended to Baku and elsewhere, German religious sectarians (1817-1818) and later (beginning in the 1830s) Russian non-Orthodox religious communities (Molokans and subbotniks,

¹⁰² Bournoutian. G. A., *The ethnic composition and the socio-economic condition of Eastern Armenia in the first half of the nineteenth century*. See in, *Transcaucasia; Nationalism and Social Change*. 1983. Ed. Suny, R. G., Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. pp 77-79.

as well as Dukhobors and members of Starobryad-Old Believer's church) were settled in the Caucasus; The relocation of Russian non-Orthodox to the distant, troubled Caucasus was also seen as a punitive measure. It should be noted, for the sake of fairness, that the Russian government sought to prevent ethnic and racial discrimination.

As N. Shavrov wrote in the *Caucasian Calendar*¹⁰³, the policy of Russification in the Caucasus was considered more righteous than the British policy in India: "This land is being gradually and naturally colonized by the Russian population, which at present comprises 24 percent of the total population of the Caucasus, while in India, 100,000 British or approximately 0.004 percent of the total population is ruling over 240 million natives."¹⁰⁴ This policy was also employed to help prevent possible separatism.

The migration of Armenians from the Ottoman Empire and Iran to Russia was also connected with Russia's desire and organization of this migration. That was especially concerning Iran, where, unlike in the Ottoman Empire, Armenians lived more peacefully. As the governor of Iranian Azerbaijan, Prince Abbas Mirza said: How could they wish to leave the place where they lived for thousands of years wholeheartedly and voluntarily, to be deprived of their homes and property?!"¹⁰⁵

General Paskevich wrote: "The liberation of Armenian villages from the Persian yoke may be considered complete only when the population of Ararat and Nakhjevan provinces is increased. This may be attained by two means: Firstly, by the occupation the occupation of Tabriz, Khoi, Salmaz, and Maraghe by Russian troops and the resetting of all the Armenians inhabiting to the provinces of Nakhjevan, Erivan and Karabagh, based on their desire. Secondly, to use prudent strong measures, as they based on their desire. Secondly, to use prudent strong measures, as they based on their shortsightedness, can not see the advantages in store for them under the benevolent protection and blessing of Russia".¹⁰⁶ Between 1880 and 1905, the economic ability and nationalism of the Armenians created an anti-Armenian mood in Russia. Some among Russian officials and politicians argued that, *instead of Russifying the Caucasus, Caucasus became Armenized, and there is no room for Russians, also for Georgians.*¹⁰⁷

* * *

"An estimated 57,000 to 200,000 Armenians left the territories governed by Persia

¹⁰³ Shavrov. N. N. 1879. *Кавказский календарь*. [Caucasian Calendar.] Tbilisi: Office of the Caucasian Governor p. 7.

¹⁰⁴ Mostashari, F. 2006. *On the Religious Frontier: Tsarist Russia and Islam in the Caucasus*. London-New York: I.B. Taurus. p. 39.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 41.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 42.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 43.

and the Ottomans and migrated primarily to Erivan and Nagorno-Karabakh. Some 30,000 Armenians settled in Karabakh alone, increasing their share of the population from 8.4% to an estimated 34.8%. Other studies cite a figure of almost 50%. In Erivan the proportion seemed to have increased from 24% to 53.8%. In return 35,000 of the 117,000 Muslims who once lived in Erivan and Karabakh fled Russian rule”.¹⁰⁸

“Armenian researchers themselves agree that at the beginning of the 19th century, Armenians made up only about 20% of the population of the Erevan Khanate and that they outnumbered Muslims only after 1828-1832”¹⁰⁹. In 1828, Armenians made up 15-20% of the population of Nakhchivan (although it was previously said to be larger); this ratio reached 41.2% in 1832, and in 1926 it remained less than 11%. It was further reduced during the Soviet era.¹¹⁰

On March 21, 1828, by the decree of Emperor Nicholas I, the territory of the Irevan and Nakhchivan khanates were renamed the *Armenian Province* (*Армянская область*). The population of the province was divided under the names Christians and Muslims. Muslims were mainly Turks (Azerbaijanis) and Kurds, while Christians were mainly Armenians. Before the Treaty of Turkmenchay, the number of Muslims was at least 117-118 thousand, of which about 25 thousand were Kurds. About 20,000 Turks and Persians and 15,000 Kurds were killed in the Russo-Iranian war or migrated after the war. According to the Cameral description, at least 74-75 thousand Muslims (Turks, Persians) remained after the war. Apparently, before the war, the number of Turks and Persians was at least 93,000. About 10,000 of the Kurds remained, 15,000 died or migrated. Thus, the total number of Muslims before the war was about 118,000.¹¹¹ Again, according to the Cameral description, in 1826 the number of Muslims in the khanates of Erivan and Nakhchivan (including Ordubad) was 117,849, and the number of Armenians was 25,151.¹¹² In fact, Armenians made up about 17.6% of the total population. Thus, an Armenian province was deliberately created where the majority was Muslims. After the war and the Armenian emigration, the situation changed significantly, and the number of Armenians and Muslims was almost equal. In 1832, the number of Muslims was 82,073 and the number of Armenians was 82,377; 35,560 Armenians came

¹⁰⁸ Shopen, I. I., 1852. Исторический памятник состояния Армянской области в эпоху ее присоединения к Российской империи. Previous Камеральное описание (1829-1832). [Historical monument of the state of the Armenian region in the era of its joining to the Russian Empire]. St. Petersburg: Printing house of the Imperial Academy of Sciences. Previous: Cameral description (1829-1832) - Summary of the population of Russia.

¹⁰⁹ Шнирельман, В.А., 2003. *Войны памяти. Мифы, идентичность и политика в Закавказье*. [Shnirelman, V. A., Memory wars. Myths, Identity and Politics in Transcaucasia] Moscow: Akademkniga. p. 237.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 242-243.

¹¹¹ Bournoutian. G. A. 1993. *The ethnic composition and the socio-economic condition of Eastern Armenia in the first half of the nineteenth century*. California: Mazda Publishers. pp.69-72.

¹¹² Ibid., p. 78.

from Iran, 21,666 Armenians from Turkey, and the number of local Armenians was 25,151, as mentioned above.¹¹³

Friedrich Bodenstedt's book *The Caucasian Peoples and Their Freedom Struggle against Russia*¹¹⁴ (Die Völker des Kaukasus und ihre Freiheitskämpfe gegen die Russen, 1848) contains a section entitled "Caucasian Tatars of Turk race". It is said there that Derbent has a population of 28,000, the vast majority of whom are Shiite Tatars. It is also noted that the population of Karabakh is 60 thousand, of which 2/3 are Tatars and 1/3 are Armenians. The population of Elizavetpol (province) is 55 thousand, of which 9 thousand are Armenians.

* * *

As a result of the Russo-Turkish wars of 1855-1856 and 1877-1878, the absolute and relative number of Armenians increased as a result of the arrival of new Armenians in Russia and the emigration of many Muslims from Russia. The well-known author M. Shaginyan, writing about the history, the culture of the Caucasian peoples, and the problems and building work of the new Soviet era, recalls that most of the Armenians in Armenia were not indigenous: "Almost only Armenians and a small percentage of other nationalities live in Armenia. However, there is a peculiarity here: the vast majority of Armenians living in Armenia are not from here - they came to this country from all over the world and colonized it. The country of the ancestors - this is rather theoretical. Very few settlements remember their centuries-old existence and have ancestral graves. The main peasant masses were transported and resettled here in all periods of Armenian history."¹¹⁵

In 1897, the Russian Empire conducted a census. The number of Azerbaijani Turks in Baku province was 485,146, and the number of Armenians was 52,233. Baku itself was the most mixed city from a national point of view. In 1897, 40,148 Azerbaijani Turks, 37,399 Russians, and 19,060 Armenians lived in this city. In 1913, the situation changed significantly; the number of Russians came first (76,288), the growth of Azerbaijanis was low (45,962), and the number of Armenians increased significantly (41,680). It does not show the number of people from Iran working in Baku, and with them, the Azerbaijanis were still less than the Russians.

There were 534,086 Muslims and 292,188 Christians in Elizavetpol (Ganja) province. The corresponding numbers were 71,206 and 63,622 in Zangazur uyezd of Elizavetpol province, and 62,868 and 73,953 in Shusha uyezd (the only uyezd in

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 79.

¹¹⁴ Bodenstedt, F., 1849. *Die Völker des Kaukasus und ihre Freiheitskämpfe gegen die Russen*. [The Caucasian Peoples and Their Freedom Struggle against Russia]. Frankfurt: Frankfurt am Main: Lizius. pp.122-147.

¹¹⁵ Shaginyan, M., 1946. *Советское Закавказье*. [Soviet Transcaucasia]. Moscow-Leningrad. State Publishing House of Fiction. pp. 17-18.

the province where Armenians predominated). The population of Erivan province was as follows: 313,176 were Muslims and 441,000 were Christians. In Erivan, the center of the province, the number of Azerbaijani Turks was 77,491, and the number of Armenians was 58,148. In 4 of the 7 districts in that province, the Azerbaijani Turks outnumbered the Armenians.¹¹⁶

Erivan was a predominantly Muslim city, even after the arrival of Armenians from Iran and Turkey, and in 1866, 23,626 of the city's 27,626 inhabitants, or more than 85%, were Muslims. In 1883 the population had decreased, but the ratio had not changed; 15992 out of 18766 inhabitants were Muslims.¹¹⁷

The population of Tbilisi, the cultural and administrative center of the Caucasus, was as follows: at the beginning of the 19th century (1803), 74.3% of the population were Armenians and 21.5% were Georgians. At the end of the century, the Russians had radically changed the numbers, but the Armenians were still numerous (and economically strong): Armenians - 38%, Georgians - 26.3%, and Russia- 24.7%.¹¹⁸

The Armenian Question

The Armenians living on the Armenian plateau of Eastern Anatolia were first subjugated by Byzantium and then by the Seljuk Turks. Some of them migrated to Cilicia on the northeastern shores of the Mediterranean. The Armenians of Cilicia appeared in the late 11th century, during the First Crusade. They helped crusading Christians fight Muslims. The Armenian autonomous government that existed here for almost three centuries, did not go unaccommodated with the Muslims (Seljuk sultanate, Ayyubids, and Mamluks); they tried to take refuge under the protection of the Mongols.

The "Armenian Question" began in the second half of the 19th century (as part of the "Eastern Question"), further intensifying towards the end of the century and in the first quarter of the 20th century.

The Turks called the Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire "Milleti-Sadika" ("Loyal Nation"). Armenians were among those who lived relatively well in the Ottoman Empire. In the Russo-Turkish War of 1828-1829 and the Crimean War of 1853-1856, some Ottoman Armenians sided with the Russians. This treachery

¹¹⁶ *The First General Census of the Population of the Russian Empire*. 1897. January 28. St. Petersburg.

¹¹⁷ Korkodyan, Z. 1932. *The Population of Soviet Armenia in 1831-1931*. Yerevan.

¹¹⁸ Suny, R. G. 1996. *Transcaucasia; Nationalism and Social Change. Essays in the History of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia*. ed. Ronald Grigor Suny., Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. p. 113.

severely damaged the respect Turks had for their Armenian citizens.¹¹⁹

The Armenians of Cilicia lived better than the surrounding Muslims. Their goal was to gain political freedom and autonomy. In 1862, in Van and Zeytun (near Marash, Cilicia), Armenians staged an armed uprising proclaiming that they did not want to pay taxes. A secret Armenian society was established in Erzurum, anti-Turkish sentiments were aroused, and they started singing songs about killing Turks. Then the Armenians took up arms in Batman and Sason, where they rebelled and shed blood. In 1878, the Armenian patriarch, Bishop Nerses (1770-1857), held a secret meeting with the leadership of the Russian army in the Balkans, where he appealed to the British government, stressing the impossibility of “coexistence” of Armenians and Muslims. He said the only solution was to create an “autonomous Christian organization.” It was also demanded that the Kurds and Circassians living in the claimed territories be withdrawn and that the main positions be given to the Armenians. He called on the Armenians to help the Russians and was the main organizer of the resettlement of Armenians who lived in the Iranian Azerbaijan.

The Ottoman Armenians became the fifth column to serve the Russians, but very quickly they moved from the 5th column to engaging in an open war against the state, thus becoming an ally of foreign forces. Caucasian Armenians actively participated in the Russian-Turkish war of 1877-1878 with the province of Erivan serving as an arms collection center for Ottoman Armenians. Instead, the Russians promised to create a Greater Armenia in the eastern part of the Ottoman lands but failed to do so. Although the Treaty of San Stefano (March 3, 1878) between Russia and the Ottomans raised the issue of granting autonomy to the Armenians, the next major Treaty of Berlin (July 13, 1878) focused on reducing Russian occupation, mainly on the annexation of part of the Balkans and Romania from the Ottomans, and did not touch on the issue of granting autonomy to the Armenians; only article 61 states that the Turks must carry out reforms concerning the Armenians. The British Foreign Secretary Lord Salisbury wrote to the British Ambassador in Constantinople, A.H. Layard, in August 1878 regarding the fact that it was virtually impossible to grant autonomy to Armenians in Eastern Anatolia: “The Mohametan races... there constitute an enormous majority of the population... The Christians...are not only a small minority, but... are so scattered and intermixed with Mahometans that any separate machinery of Government, designed for them alone, would be attended with the gravest practical difficulties... Armenians are scattered among Muslims; it is impossible to build a separate state machine”.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ Minassian, A. T., 1996. *Nationalism and Socialism in the Armenian Revolutionary Movement (1887-1912)*. See in, Suny, R. G. *Transcaucasia, Nationalism, and Social Change. Essays in the History of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia*. ed. Ronald Grigor Suny. Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan Press; p. 146.

¹²⁰ Gunter, M. M., 2011. *Armenian History and the Question of Genocide*. New York; Palgrave Macmillan. p. 7.

Note. The Treaty of Berlin was signed between Russia, Prussia, Austria-Hungary, France, Great Britain, Italy, and the Ottoman Empire.

The exaggeration of the Armenian issue angered the Turks. The Turks saw how the Armenian volunteer groups (“fedains”) were formed; it was impossible not to notice that. In reality, the situation of Armenians would have been better if Russians and Europeans had not intervened. If Armenians had not cooperated with Russians, but had instead tried to resolve the issue internally as a “loyal nation,” they possibly could have achieved something. According to K.S. Papazian (1887-?), an author of some works on the Dashnaks, Armenian politics, and trade: “Many Armenians believe, that the fate of two millions of their co-nationals in Turkey might not have proved so disastrous, if more prudence had been used by the Dashnag leaders during the war”.¹²¹

* * *

Armenian ideologues began to be organized politically as well as militarily. In 1881, a secret Armenian society in Erzurum announced a program to prepare for an uprising against the Ottoman state. The Church, the largest and most influential organization of Armenians, was no longer able to address all, especially radical issues, nor was it able to intervene and obtain results. The experience of Europe and Russia showed the importance of political party activity. The first Armenian party, Armenakan, was founded in 1885 in Van; it put forward a program for the utilization of violence for self-defense and armaments (in 1921 it became a new party allied with some political forces). In 1887, in Geneva, the *Hnchak* or *Hunchak* (Bell) party, most of whose founders were Russian Armenians or Armenians educated in Russia, and in 1890 in Tbilisi, the nationalist *Dashnaktsutyun party* (Armenian Federative Revolution Party or Armenian Revolutionary Federation) were established. The parties decided to use the path of terror “to liberate Christians from the oppression of Muslims.” They sent propagandists (incendiaries) to Turkey and prepared a revolt. The Turkish government watching all this, seeing the involvement of Russia and Russian Armenians in these cases, tried to weaken preparations for the uprising with mass arrests.

The armed struggle prepared by Hnchak began. There were riots in the name of tax evasion in Sason in 1894, in Zeytun and Trapezund in 1895, and then in Sivas, Erzurum, Van, Bayazid, Diyarbakir and other places in the following years. These uprisings usually began with attacks on police, army units, and Muslim villages, killing people. For example, as a result of an attack on the garrison in Zeytun, about 600 soldiers were killed in a single day (October 10, 1895). The army had to suppress these uprisings, and in battles, of course, it prevailed, killing the rebels.

¹²¹ Papazian, K.S., 1934. *Patriotism Perverted: A Discussion of the Deeds and the Misdeeds of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, the So-Called Dashnagtzoutune*. Boston: Baikar Press. p. 39.

Another aggravating factor was the fact that Armenians and Kurds, who shared the same territory in many parts of Eastern Anatolia, did not get along with one another.

Armenian ideologues chose the path of armed struggle, rebellion, and terror. The Dashnak party, with the slogan “Kill Turkish, Kurdish and Armenian traitors everywhere, in all circumstances,” created special groups engaged in terrorism. The parties advocating for Turkey to make significant reforms in its Armenian regions granting autonomy to Armenians, had chosen to intimidate, rebel, and at the same time call on foreign forces for help.

Hnchak attacked an Ottoman Bank building in Istanbul (August 26, 1896). In September of that year, Hnchak incited Armenians to protest in Istanbul. According to Philip Currie, a British Ambassador who was openly sympathetic to Armenians: “There is good reason to suppose that the object of the ‘Hindhag’ [Hunchaks] was to cause disorder and bloodshed with a view to inducing the Powers of Europe to intervene on behalf of the Armenians”.¹²² Sultan Abdulhamit II became angry and a punitive operation was carried out. As a result of the uprisings of 1894-96, a large number of Armenian rebels were killed (sources give very different figures, some saying 200 thousand). The great powers did not intervene, or rather did not move from words to deeds, greatly disappointing the Armenians. In 1905, the Dashnaks failed to assassinate the sultan.

* * *

During the First World War, the idea of a Greater Armenia was revived. Armenian parties and socio-political leaders strengthened the idea of autonomy in Turkey and said *why Armenians should not have their state?*; this road had to benefit from war, terror, and the help of major foreign powers. A large number of Armenians joined the Russian army attacking Anatolia (there are numbers about 250,000 which certainly exaggerated).

Seeing that the Armenians openly sided with the Russians, the Turkish government was forced (1915, spring) to resort to the usual method used in the great wars - the deportation of suspected local minorities living in and around the war zone, in this case, Armenians to places far from the battlefield (Syria and Mesopotamia). Some Armenians moved, and it is said that about 350,000 Armenians migrated to the Caucasus in 1914-16. The Ottoman government, which devoted all its efforts to heavy fighting on the fronts, was unable to organize the resettlement well, and moreover, the Kurds did not get along well with the Armenians and attacked Armenians migrating along the way. A large number of Armenians were killed, and some died of thirst, hunger, and disease. One of the reasons for these massacres was the weakness of the Ottoman government at that time.

¹²² McCarthy, J., 2010. *The Turk in America. The Creation of an Enduring Prejudice*. Salt Lake City; The University of Utah Press. p. 108.

Turkey does not accept the great Armenian massacre of 1915, the Armenian tragedy, as genocide, because the government had no intention to kill Armenians. According to F.P. Hyland: “So far apart are the Turkish and Armenian views on the events of 1915 that it is not likely they can be resolved in modern times”.¹²³ There are those among Western experts who say there was massacres, but the documents do not show that the central government is responsible.¹²⁴ “The momentous task of relocating several hundred thousand people in a short span of time and over a highly primitive system of transportation was simply beyond the ability of the Ottoman bureaucracy... Under conditions of Ottoman misrule, it was possible for the country to suffer an incredibly high death toll without a premeditated plan of annihilation.”¹²⁵

Professor Bernard Lewis has said it many times: “There is no serious proof of a plan of the Ottoman government aimed at the extermination of the Armenian nation.” “The Forum of the Armenian Associations of France pounced on the opportunity and took the eminent scholar to court for expressing his scholarly opinions based on a lifetime of studies”¹²⁶. Many politicians, statesmen, and scientists have supported Turkey’s idea that scholars, not parliaments, should deal with this issue. Zbigniew Brzezinski scoffed at the US House of Representatives’ decision on the Armenian Genocide: “I never realized that the House of Representatives was some sort of an academy of learning that passes judgment on historical events.”¹²⁷

Jirair Libaridian, a prominent expert on the Armenian issue, the Armenian diaspora, and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, stressed the need for an investigation into the 1915 Armenian genocide: “There has been no comprehensive and systematic effort commensurate with and worthy of the significance of that event to properly document and explain it, valiant efforts by some individual scholars and groups notwithstanding.”¹²⁸ “Documentation and research on the subject are essential, just as are understanding the event and placing it in the context of Armenian, Turkish and world history.”¹²⁹ Recognizing the 1915 genocide by Turkey seems to be at the heart of Armenian policy. According to Libaridian, this can be interpreted also as a kind of Armenian dependence on Turkey: “Once more Armenian minds and thoughts have become hostage to Turkish policy, this time of denial and to the vagaries of international recognition. Armenians are engaged in a protracted battle,

¹²³ Hyland, F. P. 1991. *Armenian Terrorism: The Past, The Present, the Prospects*. Boulder; Westview Press. p. 19.

¹²⁴ Lewy, G., 2005. *The Armenian Massacres in Ottoman Turkey: A Disputed Genocide*. Salt Lake City; University of Utah Press. p. 135.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 253.

¹²⁶ Gunter, M. M., 2011. *Armenian History and the Question of Genocide*. New York; Palgrave Macmillan. p. 78.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

¹²⁸ Libaridian, G.J., 1999. *The Challenge of Statehood. Armenian Political Thinking Since Independence*. Watertown: Blue Crane Books. p. 110.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

the key to which is held by “enemy””.¹³⁰

* * *

A great tragedy took place, but this tragedy did not happen only to the Armenians; millions of Turks and other Muslims were massacred. In the Western world, the deaths of Armenians and Christians, in general, are widely discussed. Muslims are blamed from head to toe; there is no special talk about the great attacks on Muslims and the great massacres of Muslims, and no investigations are conducted. American historian Justin McCarthy is one of the few researchers who is an exception to this indifference and one-sidedness. He has studied the number of Muslims killed and exiled over the course of more than a century (1821-1922). Taking the lowest possible numbers and not counting the unknown figures, he determined that more than 5 million Muslims had died and about 5 and a half million Muslims had been forced to displace, migrate.¹³¹

The claim that the Turks committed the Armenian genocide affects the honor of the Turks; they say we did not do it. In an interview with Charles Aznavour (1924-2018), a prominent French singer of Armenian origin, he said: “The word (genocide) itself worries and saddens me as well. Some of what I mean to say here can be used against me by Armenians, but I don’t think it’s important. If the Turks are sincere when they say that the word genocide is an obstacle to them in any matter, then let’s find another word. Let the border between Armenia and Turkey be opened and the Turkish government consider starting a dialogue with us.” “I always remained a person committed to memories. But I never became a ruthless enemy of Turkish society”.¹³² Aznavour recommends thinking about the future, not the past: “Disagreements will be of no use but to delay the process of recognition and negotiation again and for a long time. This delay will also prevent the opening of the borders, elimination of the embargo, and the opportunity for Armenians to conduct trade with their neighbors. I know I disturb you by talking this way... but this is not important at all: my only thought is Armenia’s future, the prosperity of its citizens and the young Turkish generation to escape the burden which the government’s sneakiness makes them carry”.¹³³

¹³⁰ Ibid., p. 113.

¹³¹ McCarthy, J., 1995. *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1821-1922*. Princeton: The Darwin Press. Chapter 8, Table - 30.

¹³² Aznavour, C., 2003. *Le Temps des Avants*. See in, Eryilmaz, D., 2011. *Charles Aznavour’s Book Entitled D’une Porte L’autre*. [From One Door to the Next: Historical Facts and Turkish-Armenian Relations. Review of Armenian Studies] No. 24; p. 185.

¹³³ Aznavour, C., 2011. *D’Une Porte l’Autre*. [From One Door to the Next] Ed. *Don Quichotte*. p. 114. See in, Review of Armenian Studies. No. 24 p. 192.

The Armenian-Muslim Conflict of 1905-1906

On February 2, 1905, an Azerbaijani named Agharza died in Baku as a result of a Dashnak fire. On February 6, an Azerbaijani prisoner was shot dead by Armenian soldiers. A rich Azerbaijani was also killed that day. Blood had been shed. The armament of the Armenians led to the armament of the Muslims. Wherever Armenians and Muslims lived side by side in the Caucasus, trust between the two communities eroded and reciprocal attacks were carried out. Armenians and Azerbaijanis each thought that the tsarist government and individual officials were helping the other side, and rumors were circulating.

On February 20, 1906, peace talks began in Tiflis between representatives of the Armenian and Azerbaijani communities and government officials. Detailed information is given in M.S. Ordubadi's (1872-1950) essays entitled "Years of Blood" (*Qanlı sənədlər*) about that and, in general, the massacres called the "Armenian-Muslim fights" that took place in 1905-1906.

Note. This work was not included in any of M.S. Ordubadi's books in the Soviet era.

The Tiflis talks¹³⁴, written by M.S. Ordubadi almost in the form of a stenographic transcript, say a lot in terms of understanding the essence of the Armenian-Muslim war. Azerbaijanis responded to the Armenian participants protesting against the migration of Azerbaijanis from the lowlands to summer pastures and from summer pastures to the lowlands, saying that these migrations were vital for the people living at the expense of livestock. As a result, it was decided that "the issue of migration can never be violated" - at least for the time being. The most heated debate took place at a meeting on 28 February; Azerbaijanis demanded an end to the terror perpetrated by Armenians. The Azerbaijanis saying, "We are not engaged in terrorism, you know" revealed that government officials sided with the Armenians out of fear of terror.

Ahmad Bey Aghayev, the most active participant in the discussion, expressed interesting and sarcastic views on this issue. "If terror continues, which threatens a man or a servant to serve his nation fairly, or to work for the sake of his own fairness and calls for dishonesty and injustice, there can be no freedom, liberty, justice or equality in our region"... "We say that if you indeed want peace, you must take terrorism along with other initiatives. In response, we are told that you are talking about Dashnaksutyun. We never thought of Dashnaksutyun. We say that terror should be done away with. However, Armenians think of Dashnaksutyun. It seems that Dashnaksutyun has something to do with this terror"... "In his eloquent and expressive speech, Mr. Khatisov made it clear that this Dashnaksutyun serves the views and beliefs of Russia's great men, generals, and even the Caucasus Viceroy, and has been organized for fifteen years and has an army, treasury, and soldiers. When we, the Muslim lawyers, heard this, we clenched our fingers to our teeth

¹³⁴ Ordubadi, M. S., 1911. *Qanlı sənədlər*. [Years of Blood]. Baku: Sada. pp. 84-94.

in astonishment and thought: Now that this is the case, now that an armed party has been in existence for fifteen years, and the government officials know this, not only do they not find a solution, but perhaps they hold the same view as them. It is useless for us to demand the removal of such a party from either the government or the Armenians. Let's just find our own solution. We also need to have perfect and armed parties. We should also have Dashnaksutyuns." Finally, a resolution was adopted by a majority: "The government should take a serious initiative to eliminate terrorism and dismantle the armed parties."

Note. The words about the Dashnaksutyun party at the Tiflis meeting that "it has an army, a treasury and a soldier" reflected the truth. The words of Gerard J. Libaridian show that this party is a terrorist state within the state: "Taking advantage of the general anarchy in the Caucasus, the party became a sort of «national state» with its army, police, courts, arsenals, and war chest"¹³⁵

Firuz Kazimzadeh stressed that Dashnaksutyun played a key organizing role in the mass extermination of Azerbaijanis by forming special gangs. He noted the lack of an organization that could mobilize Azerbaijanis: "Dashnaksutyun as a party bears a major portion of responsibility, for it was often the leading force in perpetrating the massacres. The Dashnaks organized bands similar to those which operated in Turkey and recruited mostly from the Armenian refugees from that country. Such bands would attack the Muslims and often exterminate the populations of entire villages. The Azerbaijanis, on the other hand, did not have any organization comparable to the Dashnaksutyun. They fought without coordination or plan"¹³⁶

In August 1906, *the Difai (Defense)* party was established in Shusha on the initiative of Ahmad Bey. The party envisioned the salvation of Muslims through the use of two means - enlightenment and power. The party's program document pointed out the Dashnaksutyun and stated that "we will never allow the Armenians to build their welfare on the ruins and ashes of our nation"¹³⁷. In fact, the party blamed the Russian government. According to Ahmad Bey, the main reason for the conflict between Caucasian Turks and Armenians was the establishment of Russian rule in the Caucasus: "Turks and Armenians should not forget that before the appearance of the Russians in the Caucasus, they lived in friendly and good neighborly conditions for centuries, and in the history of their relations there was nothing like the current events".¹³⁸ The people killed by Difai were mostly Russian officials.

¹³⁵ Libaridian, G. J., *Revolution and Liberation in the 1892 and 1907. Programs of the Dashnaksutyun*. 1996, See in R.G. Suny. *Transcaucasia, Nationalism, and Social Change. Essays in the History of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia*. Ed. Ronald Grigor Suny. Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan Press; p. 177.

¹³⁶ Kazemzadeh, F. 1981. *The Struggle for Transcaucasia 1917-1921*. New York: Hyperion Press. p. 19

¹³⁷ Balaev, A., 2018. *Patriarch of Turkism Ahmed Bey Aghayev*. Baku: TEAS Press, pp. 191-193.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 195.

By the autumn of 1906, the Caucasus had become a hotbed of conflict between Armenians and Azerbaijanis. Peace was declared on September 14.

During the Soviet era, the Armenian-Muslim massacres of 1905-1906 were said to have been “organized by the tsarist government to divert the working people from the class struggle.”

Independence, Massacres, and Territorial Wars: 1917-1921

The victory of the Musavat party in the elections to the Baku Council on October 22, 1917, frightened the Bolsheviks and Dashnaks, as well as the Mensheviks and Esers, Russians and Armenians. On December 18, 1917, the head of the Russian Soviet government, V.I. Lenin, appointed Stepan Shaumyan (1878-1918) as the Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Commissioner for the Caucasus (Чрезвычайный комиссар по делам Кавказа). Armenians dominated in the Bolshevik army and leadership. The Bolshevik army, led by Shaumyan and consisting mainly of Armenians, joined forces with the well-armed Dashnaks. Together, they committed a terrible massacre in Baku from March 31 to April 1, targeting its Azerbaijani citizenry solely on the basis of their ethnic background.

In a report to the Council of People’s Commissars on April 18, 1918, S. Shaumyan admitted that he had committed an act of ethnic cleansing deliberately: “We had 6,000 militants, and 3,000 to 4,000 Dashnaktsutyun were at our disposal. This gave the war a nationalist edge, but it was unavoidable. We went there conscious of this.” Shaumyan, who considered Baku and its environs to be part of Soviet Russia, said Musavat members wanted to declare Baku the “capital of the Azerbaijani khanate.” One of the Dashnak leaders, Kachaznuni, a former prime minister of the Republic of Armenia, who once lived and worked in Baku, also said that the Dashnaks and Bolsheviks were allies in Baku: “In Baku, the Armenian Revolutionary Dashnaktsutyun Party had close ties with the local Bolsheviks and even helped them, fearing Tatar domination”¹³⁹

Dashnak forces carried out massacres throughout the Caucasus both in Baku and the provinces. The destruction became so intense in some places that even old expressions started being readapted in order to describe the new events. For instance, the expression *Şamaxı batan kimi* (“It’s as if Shamakhi is sinking”) is a phrase that previously was used exclusively in connection with an earthquake that destroyed much of the city of Shamakhi (where many Armenians lived too). However, after the city was largely destroyed by Dashnaks, it started being used in reference to these massacres too. In 1918, the population of Shamakhi was 15,000, but by 1921, only 1,700 people lived there. There were massacres also in

¹³⁹ Kachaznuni, H., 1927. *Дашнакцутюн больше нечего делать!* [Dashnaktsutyun has nothing to do anymore!] Tbilisi; Zakniga. p. 20.

Guba, Karabakh, Zangazur, Nukha, Ganja, Khachmaz, Lankaran, and Salyan. The Muslim population, which was attacked by Armenians in Zangazur, fled to the east, to places controlled by Azerbaijan.

As a result of the First World War, the Russian Empire collapsed, and the Bolsheviks seized power. In the outlying regions, the struggle for independence intensified, and the leaders of neighboring nations tried to form governments and control these territories. The Ottomans were on the losing side of the war and, consequently, they lost large swathes of territory; great powers and small nations began to divide those lands. The Armenian government of Dashnaksutyun in the Caucasus declared the cities of Kars and Iravan as Armenian territory. The war with Georgia and Azerbaijan for territorial claims began, ending soon after with Georgia and lasting for a long time with Azerbaijan ... Armenians engendered panic in Eastern Anatolia, the Caucasus, and even in northwestern Iran ... “The Dashnaq government waged three wars in two years and a half. The war on Georgia, in Dec. 1918, lasted only three weeks but caused untold calamity to Armenia. The war with Azerbaijan over Karabagh ended disastrously for the Armenians. Finally came the war with Turkey in the fall of 1920, which almost put an end to the republic and threatened the Armenian remnant with extermination”.¹⁴⁰

Note. On September 24, 1920, the Armenian army attacked “Western Armenia,” i.e, the eastern part of Turkey. The Turkish army, which counterattacked, not only captured Sarikamish, Ardahan, and Kars, but also entered the territory of the Republic of Armenia and captured Gyumri. On November 8, the terms of the peace were agreed upon. The Turkish army also entered Nakhchivan.

Interestingly, after the Sovietization of Armenia, the Dashnaks, who lived as immigrants, decided to take advantage of the Kurdish (whom they did not get along well with) uprising in the territories they claimed. It seemed to them that if the Kurds succeeded, they would justify the Armenian demand for land in Turkey...¹⁴¹

* * *

The revolution in Russia led to the withdrawal of the Russian army from Turkey. The Turks began to regain the lands they had lost, but this time they came upon the Armenians, not the Russians. Armenians had no chance to win this mismatched war. In January 1918, the Turkish army began to advance towards the Caucasus.

A regular army of Turks and a relatively small number of Azerbaijanis, united under the name of the *Turkish Islamic Army*, advanced from Ganja to Baku. Baku was liberated from Bolshevik and Dashnak forces (September 15, 1918), and the

¹⁴⁰ Papazian, K.S., 1934. *Patriotism Perverted: A Discussion of the Deeds and the Misdeeds of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, the So-Called Dashnagtzoutune*. Boston: Baikar Press. pp. 42-44.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p. 52.

government of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (ADR) moved from Ganja to Baku, the country's capital. Certain groups began to avenge the March 31 - April 1 massacre committed by the Armenians. A writer nicknamed Mohammad Asad Bey, who had witnessed both of the massacres in Baku in 1918, portrayed a unique picture of those horrors: "It should be noted that the Azerbaijanis first killed the enemy, and only then applied the above mentioned things (I will not describe the "above mentioned things" by both sides – H.I.), while the Armenians, on the contrary, killed living people with terrible torture, and only then would release their bodies. This is the difference in the character of the two nations".¹⁴²

Note. Essad Bey also wrote the famous novel "Ali and Nino" under the pseudonym Kurban Said. The real name of this author is Lev Nussimbaum (1905-1942). *Oil and Blood in the East* is the author's first book, it was published in Germany (*Oel und Blut im Orient*, 1929). Even now some doubt that Kurban Said is Lev Nussimbaum.

On July 15, 1918, in Ganja, the government of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic decided to establish an Extraordinary Commission of Inquiry (ECI) "For the investigation of violence against Muslims and their property throughout the Caucasus since the beginning of the European War." (Чрезвычайная Следственная Комиссия «Для расследования насилий, произведенных над мусульманами и их имуществом в пределах всего Закавказья со времени начала Европейской войны»). The commission was composed of lawyers and public activists of Russian, German, Polish, Lithuanian, and Azerbaijani origin. The 3,600-page materials collected by the commission were systematized into 36 volumes. The exact number of the victims of the massacre which began on March 31 is unknown. The ECI reported that there were 11,000 deaths in Baku, clarifying later that there were around 12,000 deaths, but that there were no fixed figures for the regions and the countryside. In Shamakhi district, the estimated figure is around 10,000, and in Guba district, 2580 to 3280. There is little reliable information about other regions. The exact number of deaths in the 1918 Armenian massacre in Baku is also unknown, and the Armenian National Council has insisted that there were 8,988 deaths and more than 3,000 reported missing; experts consider this figure to be exaggerated. The figure 2028 was indicated in a telegram sent by the Armenian Council to the Armenian diplomatic mission in Tiflis on September 22 in the wake of the events. The Azerbaijani government entered Baku three days after the Armenian massacre and expressed deep regret and sorrow over the massacre. Strict measures were taken to ensure security, and gibbets were erected in various parts of Baku to punish those involved in the massacres and the lootings; more than 100

¹⁴² Asad, M. 2005. *Oil and Blood in the East*. Baku: Nurlan. p. 247.

criminals hanged¹⁴³.

* * *

Soviet ideology essentially killed the collective memory of such events. History was written in contradictory and lopsided ways, with the guilt of the March 31-April 1, 1918, massacre placed exclusively on the Musavat party. *The Baku commune* was heroized. Our great poet remembered M. Rasulzade *as the leader of the nation in inverted commas* and called S. Shaumyan, who organized the massacre of Azerbaijanis in Baku in 1918, “the Eagle of the Caucasus”¹⁴⁴ (Qafqazın qartalı). The people did not know the history of the past as it really was, or even something similar to reality, but they read Samed Vurghun and the history books said the same things. Historian of late-modern Azerbaijan, Eldar Ismayilov (1950-2014), named his book, dedicated to Shaumyan, “Stepan Shaumyan - Doomed to be Forgotten. Uncorrected Portrait of the “Legendary Communar”. The respectable author reminds us that today we have the opportunity to look at the world not with one-sided ideologies and parochial outlooks, but with a broad vision, without illusions; he seems to clarify the title of the book in its introduction: “The idols in the minds have been overthrown. In the city where we live, there is no statue of Shaumyan, there is no street, no district, and no factories named after him. However, whether we like it or not, Shaumyan will remain a part of our past.”¹⁴⁵

Although I have always been connected with the mathematics, physics, and history of science in terms of education and research, I have also been more or less versed in political history, including the history of the USSR, of which I accepted some aspects, but was skeptical of others. I remember how I read with interest the book “The Baku Commune”¹⁴⁶ by the Armenian American historian Ronald Gregor Suny, which described the events in a way that differed profoundly from Soviet historiography, describing the events with greater accuracy. The careful and comprehensive study of the events of 1917-1918, the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, the first steps of the Soviet government in Azerbaijan, and in general, the

¹⁴³ 1. Рустамова-Тогиди, С., 2009. *Март 1918 г. Баку. Азербайджанские погромы в документах*. [Rustamova-Togidi, S., March 1918, Baku. Azerbaijani pogroms in documents] Baku; 2. Рустамова-Тогиди, С., 2013. *Шемаха. Март-июль 1918 г. Азербайджанские погромы в документах. Том I. Город Шемаха*. [Rustamova-Togidi, S., Shamakhi. March-July 1918. Azerbaijani pogroms in documents. Volume I. Shamakhi city] Baku; *Том II. Селения Шемахинского уезда*. [Togidi-Rustamova, S., Volume II. Settlements of Shamakhi district] Baku, 888 pages. 3. Рустамова-Тогиди, С., 2010. *Куба. Апрель-май 1918 г. Мусульманские погромы в документах*. [Rustamova-Togidi, S., Guba. April-May 1918, Muslim pogroms in documents] Baku, 2010.

¹⁴⁴ Vurghun, S. 1936. “26-lar”. [26s].

¹⁴⁵ Ismayilov, E., 2012. *Степан Шаумян – обреченный на забвение - портрет «легендарного коммунара» без ретуши* [Stepan Shaumyan - Doomed to be Forgotten. Uncorrected Portrait of the «Legendary Communar»]. Baku; Sharg-Garb.

¹⁴⁶ Suny, R. G., 1972 *The Baku Commune. 1917-1918*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

history of Azerbaijan, free from Soviet ideology, began only during the collapse of the USSR.

* * *

Ordinary Armenians and ordinary Azerbaijanis did not always live in mutual hostility and hatred. Their care, efforts and thoughts were focused on how to support their family. “Azerbaijan” newspaper writes in its column on Karabakh that “Armenians started up the fighting again” and, at the same, that the Aghdam market was full of Armenians; “Armenians bought and sold coal, greens, carpets, rugs, shawls, wood, and other such things, and in return, they bought barley, wheat, millet and other foodstuffs from the Muslims.”¹⁴⁷ “At one point, I came across an interview between a Muslim shopkeeper and an Armenian customer:

Shopkeeper: My dear neighbor, you have bought at least one million manats worth of wheat and barley from the market today, but you do not want to come to terms with and accept the Azerbaijani government! If you had this government and bread, would you treat those who do not want to recognize your government in the same way?

Armenian: My dear, it is not fair to hide the truth, if you, Muslims, don’t have bread, no Armenian can have any bread to live on. Again, may God be pleased with you that you are so fair. *May God curse the villains! How can we fight Azerbaijan? Our bread, our livelihood is from them. Anyone who does not want to, let him go to Iravan* (Italic is mine – H.I.). But it is just a few people who gather up and write orders after order to us everyday, conjuring up a thousand tricks. They all just keep telling us to come along and give them money, but not one of them comes along and gives us any bread. Ceaseless Order after ceaseless order! The person issuing the order just says that it is the committee decision!

Indeed, the Karabakh Armenians thought that they would starve to death if they were separated from Aran (Lowland) Karabakh.”

In his report to Lenin (May 22, 1919), Anastas Mikoyan noted the vital importance of ties with Baku for the people of Karabakh: “The unification of Karabagh to Armenia would mean, for the population of Karabagh, deprivations of their source of life in Baku and being tied to Erevan, with which they have never had any kind of connection.”¹⁴⁸

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¹⁴⁷ Sadig, M., 1919. *Azerbaijan newspaper*. No.210. June 2.

¹⁴⁸ Altstadt, A.L., 1992. *The Azerbaijani Turks. Power and Identity under Russian Rule*. Hoover Institution Press: Stanford University. p. 102.

The Azerbaijani national government put up no resistance against the Soviet army; On April 28, 1920, the army entered Baku without firing a single shot. There were questions of conflict and strife between the Azerbaijani and Armenian leaders: Who should be in charge of Nakhchivan, Karabakh, and Zangazur? Sovietization took this conflict to a new level. Soviet Russia considered the existence of an Armenian Soviet strip separating Turkey and Azerbaijan to be vital; it was thought that this strip would be either Nakhchivan or Zangazur¹⁴⁹. Nakhchivan became dependent on Azerbaijan while most of Zangazur was ceded to Armenia. The Moscow Treaty between Russia and Turkey (March 16, 1921) defined the borders between the two countries. Batumi was ceded to Georgia, and it was agreed that Nakhchivan would be an autonomous republic within Azerbaijan and this protection (protectorate) would not be ceded to any third state. The Treaty of Kars (October 13, 1921) was signed between Turkey and the three South Caucasus republics with the participation of Russia in the implementation of the Moscow Treaty. The treaty declared the annulment of all earlier treaties relating to the territories of the participating States, except the Treaty of Moscow of March 16, 1921. The current Turkish-Georgian and Turkish-Armenian borders have been agreed upon in the Kars agreement.

Note. The Treaty of Sèvres (August 10, 1920), which indicated an occupation of Turkey, plotted to divide it, and promised the state to the Armenians, was signed between Sultan Turkey, which could not control the country and Britain, France, and Italy, representing victorious Allied powers. The Turkish Grand National Assembly, chaired by Atatürk and operating in Ankara, did not recognize the agreement. Soon Turkey would defeat these allies in the Turkish War of Independence and the Republic of Turkey would be established.

The territory of Nagorno-Karabakh was finally retained under the remit of Azerbaijan in terms of economy; its lowland summer pastures, and the idea of granting broad autonomy were both emphasized. Shusha was recognized as the center-capital (July 5, 1921). Azerbaijani leaders did not want autonomy for Nakhchivan and Nagorno-Karabakh. Soon Khankendi was renamed Stepanakert and was declared the capital of the province instead of Shusha. Official province (*vilayət* / *область*) status was declared in November 1924. Thus, two types of Armenian states emerged in the Caucasus—the allied republic (Armenia) and the autonomous region (Nagorno-Karabakh) affiliated to Azerbaijan. The issue of granting autonomy to many Azerbaijanis living in Georgia along the border with Azerbaijan, Armenians living in the Georgian region Javakheti, or to a small number of Georgians in Azerbaijan, as well as to Azerbaijanis in Armenia, was not raised. Georgia and Azerbaijan were “gifted” autonomous bodies that would go on to prove a disaster for them in the future.

¹⁴⁹ Hasanli, J., 2012. *Azerbaijan's foreign policy during the Soviet period. 1920-1939*. Baku: Adiloghlu. pp. 292-295.

A Great Lesson from the Dashnak Leader

Hovhannes Kajaznuni, or Katchaznuni (1868-1938), the first Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia proclaimed in 1918 and one of the leaders of the Dashnak Party, delivered a speech-report at the General Assembly of the Dashnak Party in Bucharest in 1923. This report was published under the name “The Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnagtzoutiun) Has Nothing to Do Anymore.” The Russian translation of this small but informative book was published in 1927 in Tbilisi (“Дашнакцутюн больше нечего делать”). It was a valuable work devoted to the analysis of issues in which the author was directly involved or of which he was well aware, such as the various intricate activities of the Dashnak party in Turkey and the Caucasus, the path to independence of Armenia, and the decisive mistakes of the Dashnaks. The author’s thoughts on the situation and the future of Armenia and Transcaucasia resonate even today very much; it is, thus, useful to pay attention to the lessons he offers.

Note. Kachaznuni’s real name was Hovanes Hovanesyan. He adopted Kachaznuni (or Katchaznuni) as a surname – the Armenian meaning of Igitkhanyan (his grandfather’s surname). H. Kachaznuni, a talented architect, worked as an engineer-architect in Baku in 1893-1895; he then returned to Baku, working on and implementing many architectural projects in 1899-1906. He was the architect of the Armenian Apostolic Church built in Baku in 1907-1910. The Budagovsky Cathedral, named after the wealthy man (Budagov) who financed the work, was one of the victims of the policy of demolition of religious temples in the USSR (1930). The building of the Azerbaijan State Conservatory was erected on the demolition site of the temple.

Important issues such as a critical view towards the past, Armenia’s relations with its neighbors, and the right choice of the path to the future are analyzed in depth in Kachaznuni’s report in 1923 and in the relevant book; it is impossible to ignore this classic work, almost every sentence of it being of remarkable insight. I intend to cite excerpts from this work and share them with the reader without the need for lengthy commentary; the author’s text itself is rich in comments and necessary emphasis.

Note. When I used italics, I saw that I wanted to italicize almost the entire text, leading me to give up on the idea of italics altogether.

* * *

Kachaznuni points out that Armenia’s entry into the war with Turkey was a big mistake, which he considers to be the outcome of Armenian psychology that had been formed over the course of many years.

“At the beginning of the Fall of 1914, when Turkey had not yet entered the war but had already been making preparations, Armenian revolutionary bands began to be formed in Transcaucasia with great enthusiasm and, especially, much uproar.

Contrary to the decision taken during their general meeting at Erzurum only a few weeks before, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation had actively participated in the formation of the bands and their future military action against Turkey”¹⁵⁰. “In the Fall of 1914, Armenian volunteer bands organized themselves and engaged in fighting against the Turks because they could not refrain... from teaming up and fighting. This was (in) [sic.] an inevitable outcome of a psychological mindset on which the Armenian people had nourished themselves for almost a quarter of the century, an entire generation: that mentality should have found its expression, and it did”.¹⁵¹

The mismatch between dreams and opportunities, illusions about Armenian supremacy, the focused dominance of Armenian interests in everything, including the war, the search only for external blame, and in general, the violation of psychological balance, could not promise to lead to favorable outcomes.

“Without any reason, we were addicted to victory, and we were convinced that for our loyalty, efforts and assistance, the tsarist government would give us the autonomy of Armenia, consisting of the liberated provinces of Turkey and Transcaucasian Armenia. Our brains were foggy. We forced our wishes on others. We attached great importance to the meaningless words of irresponsible people; under the influence of self-inflicted hypnosis, we no longer understood reality and fell into dreams”.¹⁵² “We overestimated the abilities of the Armenian people, its political and military significance, as well as our assistance to the Russians. By overestimating our very modest worth and merits, we naturally exaggerated our hopes and expectations.”¹⁵³

“With inconsistency, characteristic of politically immature and unbalanced people, we were drawn from one extreme to another”.¹⁵⁴ “We often naively thought that the whole war was about the Armenian question. When the Russians attacked, we were sure that they were going to save the Armenians, and when they retreated, we said they were retreating to give the Turks a chance to slaughter us”¹⁵⁵. “Complaining bitterly about our ill-natured fate and looking for external causes for our misfortune is one of the characteristic features of our national psychological mindset, which does not bypass also the Dashnaktsutyun party. One might think we found a spiritual consolation in the conviction that the Russians behaved villainously towards us”¹⁵⁶ (later it would be the turn of the French, Americans, British, Georgians, Bolsheviks,

¹⁵⁰ Kachaznuni, H., 1927. *Дашнакцутюн больше нечего делать!* [Dashnaktsutyun has nothing to do anymore!] Tbilisi; Zakkniga. p. 10.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁵² Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁵³ Ibid., p. 12.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 14.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 15.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 15.

and the whole world – to be blamed in such a way”)

Kachaznuni pays special attention to the war with Turkey which began in the autumn of 1920, talking about the political, military and psychological mistakes that led to this war.

“We did not know what kind of power Turkey had and we were quite confident in our strength. That was the main mistake”... “When military operations began on the border, Turks offered to meet and start negotiations, which we turned down. It was a great crime”¹⁵⁷. “The Treaty of Sevres misled everyone”¹⁵⁸. “In order to increase the number of troops, the government was constantly recruiting new people, mobilizing the elderly and the tired, those with family and economic concerns, hastily arming them and sending them to the front. These people were ready deserters and strengthened the demoralization of the soldiers”¹⁵⁹.

* * *

Kachaznuni emphasized that the dream of Great Armenia is far from any measure of reality, that the Turkish Armenian has disappeared. He touches on the issue of negotiations with the Turks and says that only new people can do this.

“In the spring of 1919 in Paris... our demands were presented... A large state was required, Greater Armenia from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean, from the Karabakh mountains to the Arabian deserts”¹⁶⁰. “Armenian Paris made this demand”¹⁶¹. “There is no more Turkish Armenia...”¹⁶². “If some time there will be a need to reach an agreement with the Turks, other people with a different mentality, a different psychology, and especially a different past (or no past) should appear on the stage”¹⁶³. “...New conditions will make for new demands”¹⁶⁴.

The author remembers that they could not come to terms with the idea of peaceful coexistence between Azerbaijan and Armenia, then puts forward an idea which strikes the Dashnaks as being strange: the Bolsheviks should be thanked for the security and development that the Dashnaks could not resolve for the Armenians.

“We have not been able to find a more or less acceptable *modus vivendi* with Azerbaijan. We have not been able to establish order in the Muslim regions by administrative measures. We have to take up arms, send troops, destroy and

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 37.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 38.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 39.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 43.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., p. 44.

¹⁶² Ibid., p. 60.

¹⁶³ Ibid., p. 64.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 65.

arrange massacres, but even in this we have failed, which, of course, damages the authorities' reputation."¹⁶⁵

Note. *Modus vivendi*, which means "lifestyle" in Latin, is usually associated with reaching an agreement that ensures the coexistence of the parties to the conflict, albeit temporarily.

"We must be grateful to the Bolsheviks. By overthrowing us, I'll say, they could not have saved us, but in any case, they have made our legacy and our life's work more reliable."¹⁶⁶ The author states that there are two countries with power of influence in the Caucasus, and calls on Armenia to connect with Russia as one of them. "Today there are two real powers and we have to reckon with - Russia and Turkey... we have no other choice, of course, to turn not to Turkey, but to Russia".¹⁶⁷

Kachaznuni states that Dashnaksutyun did not benefit the Armenians and was neither forward-looking nor useful. "In many cases, I do not distinguish the party from the masses; they both share that same psychology, that same short-sightedness, and those same political limitations".¹⁶⁸ "It is here that I shall state the very grave word, which I know will upset you, but which must be said at last and said simply, without concealment or attenuation: *The Armenian Revolutionary Federation has nothing to do any more.* "Armenia and the Armenian people are not raw materials for Dashnaksutyun."¹⁶⁹

* * *

Kachaznuni received a letter of dissatisfaction from a friend after the speech and report, and in a response letter expressed his criticism of the protests and the posed questions, emphasizing that he loved the Armenians-this infamous nation with all its shortcomings. "I love my Armenian homeland and the Armenian people-this poor, harsh country and this ignorant, filthy, concealed, selfish, and greedy people. I love them not because of their merits, but because of all their faults and wounds".¹⁷⁰

The author also commented on his friend's question as to *why we started this work and made sacrifices*. The reason could be found in the instigators who wrote songs and novels against the Turks, calling on the people to fight, and in establishment of Dashnaksutyun which called the Armenians to armed struggle and terror, masterminding the campaign. "We should have thought about this in 1914, when we formed a group of volunteers, and before that, when we laid the foundation of Dashnaksutyun, and even earlier - when we were inspired by Raffi's stories and

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 33.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 63.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 55.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 45.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 60.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 68.

Gamar Katip's *Free Songs*¹⁷¹.

Note. Raffi is the pseudonym of Hakop Melik-Hakopyan (1835-1888), a staunch nationalist Armenian writer born near Salmas, Iran. *Samvel* is considered to be the most popular work of this writer, known mainly for his historical novels. There is a work of the *Khamsa Melikdom* (Dynasty) dedicated to the continuation of the historical existence of the Karabakh meliks (1882). The Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78 inflamed Armenian nationalism; poets, writers, and journalists emerged, such as Raffi and Gamar Katipa, who instilled hatred for the enemy and called for a struggle by all means.

Gamar Katipa is a pseudonym used by Rafael Patkanyan (1830-1892), an Armenian poet from Nakhchivan-on-Don in a series of poems. R. Patkanyan wrote poems calling on the Armenians living in the Ottoman state to reach for freedom, to fight, to crush the Kurds and Circassians along with the Turks. A book of poems called *Free Songs* (Свободные песни / Вольные песни) (1878/79) was widely distributed and the poem "Tears of Araz" (Слезы Аракса) gained popularity. The poet blamed Europe for the bloodshed of Armenians¹⁷²:

...Слава Богу, армянская кровь пролилась!
Кровожадной Европы надежда сбылась...

...Thank God, Armenian blood was shed!
Bloodthirsty Europe's hope has come true...

Note. I translated this and the below-given poems word-for word from the Russian version.

The poet rebukes Europe, strongly protesting against Europe¹⁷³ that the continent is indebted to the Armenians but it is yet to pay its debt. Once upon a time, we (Armenians) fought against Islam and protected you, gave you bread and did not let you starve, while you...

Помнишь ли, Европа, тот удар ужасный;
Что Ислам готовил для твоих детей?
Но тебя армяне жалкой и несчастной
Не хотели видеть с горестью твоей,

И боролись храбро за тебя открыто
Целых два столетья, проливая кровь,
Но тобой, Европа, это всё забыто...
Чем же отплатила ты за их любовь?
.....

¹⁷¹ Ibid., p. 73.

¹⁷² Patkanyan, R. G., *Armenian Blood*. Trans: Veselovsky, Y.A., 1907.

¹⁷³ Patkanyan, R. G., *Protest against Europe*. Trans: Shkulyov, F.S., 1904.

Так же ты не помнишь, как по воле неба
 Голодал народ твой средь пустых полей;
 Если бы армяне не дали им хлеба,
 Чтобы дал им порох, груды тел, костей!

Do you remember, Europe, that terrible blow;
 What is Islam preparing for your children?
 But the Armenians, they did not want
 To see you with your sorrow, pitiful and unhappy.

And fought bravely for you openly
 For two whole centuries, shedding blood,
 But by you, Europe, this is all forgotten ...
 How did you repay their love?

.....
 You also don't remember how by the will of heaven
 Thy people have starved in the midst of empty fields;
 If the Armenians did not give them bread,
 They instead gave them gunpowder, piles of bodies, bones!

Note. R. Patkanyan's opinion that Armenians played a decisive role in protecting Europe from Islam and saving Europe from starvation, as Bernard Shaw once said, is a bit exaggerated.

* * *

In response to the wondering question of his friend - *you promised a big and powerful Armenia, where is it?* He says that a *Turkish Armenia* does not exist, or the so-called "two" *Armenias*, and that a serious statesman should give up on the idea of a *United Greater Armenia*, which has already become a collection of "meaningless words."

"...You still pose requirements and demands with dissatisfaction. You ask *where is the "promised" Armenia?* What does this demand really mean today, in January 1923, for destroyed Turkish Armenia, and for a victorious Turkey? What or where are "two" *Armenias* that should be united? At least, try to be a little serious, because this is the first duty of a statesman. A "second" *Armenia* no longer exists. This is a horrible word, but is it possible to change the content without using the word? Who will take the Armenian provinces from the Turks, where there are no more Armenians? Who should expel the Turkish armies and Kurdish "tribes" from there?¹⁷⁴ "The reality is that a *United Armenia* is nothing but a meaningless empty word".¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁴ Op. cit. 75.

¹⁷⁵ Op. cit. 76.

Note. It is interesting to recall here the attitude of a well-known activist of the Bolsheviks, considered a force against the Dashnaks, towards the same proposition. In next report of Anastas Mikoyan to Lenin (December 1919), he commented on the idea of creating a “Greater Armenia” on the territory of Turkey, on the basis of its seven provinces: “They are not ashamed of the absence of Armenians in this area and the presence of only Muslims there.” Mikoyan clarifies the mechanism by which these fool bearers of an idea try to implement their intention: they want to clean up this “Armenia” of “criminal elements” and, thus, of “Muslims”.¹⁷⁶

Note. Anastas Mikoyan (1895-1978), an influential Soviet party figure and statesman, fought on the Turkish front in Andronik’s gang in his youth, participated in the March 1918 events in Baku as a gang leader, and joined Hamazasp’s gang, which committed terrible massacres in Guba and elsewhere.

In any case, Kachaznuni says that Armenia without Russia is very weak, that this weak country’s firm, larger-than-life aspirations are meaningless, and that the land claim from Turkey is an empty baseless claim, in fact, he says, Turkey should be avoided; even, as he is looking a century later, he speaks of the possibility that Turkey will want to unite with Azerbaijan through Armenia.

“I have no doubt that Armenia, which has withdrawn from Russia, will not inspire any fear in Turkey. However, I ask one question: why should the Turks make territorial concessions to this Armenia, which is not dangerous for them? Which state has shown such generosity to its weak neighbor, and when? What right do we have to expect from the Turks?... Is it not more likely that when Turkey will no longer see a Russian army aligned against itself, it will want to unite with its like-minded and fellow – believer, Azerbaijan through Armenia, and, in other words, strive for new conquests, not concessions?¹⁷⁷ “To demand absolutism is truly crazy. Armenia is not England or even Switzerland; it cannot be in the future available to our foresight; its independence must certainly be conditioned by certain restrictions”.¹⁷⁸

* * *

Kachaznuni spoke about the aspirations of the three South Caucasus states and the dangers that await them, expressing regret that they could not resolve the dispute among themselves without any mediator. He notes that Georgia does not have a serious security problem, that Azerbaijan will not give up on Karabakh and Nakhchivan, that Armenia’s main task is to give up baseless dreams and start caring

¹⁷⁶ Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History, f. 5, op. 1, d. 1222, fol. 8v. See in, Гасанлы, Д., 2011. *Русская революция и Азербайджан. Трудный путь к независимости 1917-1920.* [Hasanli, J., Russian Revolution and Azerbaijan. The Difficult Path to Independence 1917-1920] Moscow; Flinta. p. 413.

¹⁷⁷ Op. cit. 77.

¹⁷⁸ Op. cit. 81.

about protect its existence, and that the Red Army has saved Armenia.

“Georgia wants to ensure a superior position and a firm hold in the Caucasus. On the other hand, for economic and strategic reasons, Azerbaijan cannot abandon Karabakh, and for national interests, Sharur - Nakhchivan can not be ignored. Armenia, which is the most humble (because it is the weakest), must in any case ensure and attend to one thing—the existence of its state.” “While it is painful and embarrassing, it is a fact that we have not yet grown up to resolve our internal disputes; there is still a need for some external power and external influence to ensure national peace in Transcaucasia.”¹⁷⁹ “...There was no threat to the physical existence of the Georgian people from nowhere. Therefore, the Georgians were stronger than the others”.¹⁸⁰ “Georgia can form a mediocre state by refusing Zagatala for the benefit of Azerbaijan and Ajaria for that of Turkey, but complementing at the expense of Armenia. Georgia can live on and develop by guarding its borders on mountains and seas, concentrating on its national integrity, without threatening Turkey, therefore, also without serious threats to itself. But Armenia? Can we say the same thing about Armenia, which has been pushed between Azerbaijan and Turkey, disturbing both sides and prone to being easily wiped off the face of the Earth? Do you know that since the Red Army left Transcaucasia and we remained alone (alone, because I do not see any other force to replace Russia on our horizon) against the Turkish-Azerbaijani-Georgian bloc, *will Armenia’s existence be questioned?*”¹⁸¹

Note. There were many people who shared Kachaznuni’s thoughts. Ten years later, K.S. Papazian wrote a pamphlet in which he very sharply criticized the Dashnaks; in the final part of the pamphlet, he remarked that the misfortune that befell Armenia was the Dashnak party’s doing: “Thus we behold the picture of the A. R. Federation as an enemy of the nucleus of Armenian political life... Its hands are raised against everybody, its plottings and crimes have rocked the conscience of all decent Armenians, and have disgraced our people before the civilized world”.¹⁸²

Note. As it seems, Kachaznuni was not mistaken in his predictions about the close and distant prospects of Azerbaijan and Armenia and the role Russia and Turkey would play in the region. However, at the same time, he could not fully see the threats awaiting the territorial integrity of Georgia...

¹⁷⁹ Op. cit. 79-80.

¹⁸⁰ Op. cit. 17.

¹⁸¹ Op. cit. 81.

¹⁸² Papazian, K.S., 1934. *Patriotism Perverted: A Discussion of the Deeds and the Misdeeds of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, the So-Called Dashnagtzoutune*. Boston: Baikar Press. p. 67.

The Extension of the Armenian Question – Terror

One of the most tragic aspects of the Armenian Question is what historians and politicians call the *Armenian Terror*.

The first stage of Armenian terrorism was directed against Armenians themselves. Well-off Armenians were required to pay money to help with what was referred to as the “people’s work.” In reality, they were forced to finance the creation of armed groups, and, likely, the “pocket expenses” of the organizers and terrorists. Those who did not comply risked facing retribution. Many were executed. In some cases, attempts were made to control the income of wealthy Armenians. The Armenakan, Dashnak, and Hnchak parties were based on a symbiosis of nationalist and terrorist ideas.

Among the people executed were those who had a good relationship with the enemy (Ottoman officials, etc.) or who took official positions from the enemy (for example, Bedros Kapamajiyian, elected mayor of Van, 1912). In the summer of 1902, in Shusha, such organized groups threatened and demanded the millionaire Isahaq Jamharian to donate 30,000 rubles. He informed the police and a representative of the Dashnaks was arrested. A few months later, Jamharyan was killed with a dagger in front of an Armenian church in Moscow at noon; M. Varandian, one of the leaders of the Dashnaks, tells this story in his book on the history of Dashnaktsutyun and adds that “this traitor got his share because of his guilt”¹⁸³. K. S. Papazian presents an incomplete list of Armenians who fell victim to Armenian terrorism.¹⁸⁴ Among the victims were wealthy people, journalists, opponents of the party line, pastors and Catholicos from all over the world. According to Gerard L. Libaridian’s information, within just three years (1904-1906), the Dashnak and Hnchak parties killed 105 people, most of whom were Armenians.¹⁸⁵

But the first stage of the Armenian terror, the murder of the “Armenian traitors,” did not end fast. Threats to those who opposed terrorism or sought to strengthen Armenian-Turkish relations often resulted in murder. Moreover, the Armenian terror began targetting the main “enemy,” the Turks and members of other peoples: non-Armenians. Varandian emphasizes such developments, speaking about the second stage of the Armenian terror: “The terror of the Dashnagtzoutune, although directed mainly against cowardly Armenians at first, gradually was turned against the enemy itself, and we see its hundreds of victims, Turkish, Kurdish, Russian,

¹⁸³ Ibid., p. 16.

¹⁸⁴ Papazian, K.S., 1934. *Patriotism Perverted: A Discussion of the Deeds and the Misdeeds of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, the So-Called Dashnagtzoutune*. Boston: Baikar Press. Appendix I, Appendix II, pp. 68-73.

¹⁸⁵ Gauin, M., 2011. *After All, Who Remembers The Armenian Victims Of The Armenian Terrorism? Decisionrespecting*. <<https://armeniansa1915.blogspot.com/2011/06/3290-after-all-who-remembers-armenian.html>>

great or small tyrants... etc.”¹⁸⁶ Those who sharply criticized Dashnaks, condemned anti-Turkish Armenian terrorism, or did not recognize the Armenian genocide, risked becoming a targeted of Armenian terrorism regardless of their nationality or ethnicity.

At the 9th General Congress of Dashnaksutyun in Yerevan (October,1919), a decision was reached to assassinate Ottoman and Azerbaijani officials responsible for the massacre of Armenians. The motivation for this decision was the enforcement of what they regarded as “justice.” Altogether there were serious protests mounting against the decision; the spirit of vengeance gained a victory. About 200 people were placed on a “blacklist.” The organization of the executions was called "Operation Nemesis" (Nemesis is the goddess of revenge in Greek mythology). 78 executions were carried out between 1920-1922 in Tbilisi, Berlin, Istanbul and Rome. Fatali Khan Khoyski, Former Prime Minister of Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan (ADR) , Hasan bey Aghayev, Deputy Chairman of the ADR parliament, Behbud khan Javanshir, the Former Minister of Internal Affairs of the ADR, Talat Pasha, the Former Minister of Internal Affairs of Ottoman and four other Ottoman military and political figures, were among those killed by Dashnaks. The Berlin court acquitted the murder of Talat Pasha.

* * *

The third stage of Armenian terror is connected with the emergence of new Armenian terrorist organizations and their activities in the 1970s. A right-wing terrorist organization known as JCAG (Justice Commandos of the Armenian genocide) and a left-wing terrorist group known as ASALA (Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia) proved in action that they were the strongest and most ruthless Armenian terrorist organizations. The JCAG was established in 1972 at the 20th Congress of the Dashnak party in Vienna as the party’s military wing, and in 1985, it was renamed ‘the Armenian Revolutionary Army’ (ARA). ASALA was established in 1975 in Beirut, a city famous as a hotbed for terrorism. “The Turkish regime and the Armenians who do not cooperate with us” were declared enemies. ASALA’s stated goal was to liberate Western Armenia from Turkey and unite it with Soviet Armenia through the use of violence. New groups, including rivals, also emerged within ASALA, including the *New Armenian Resistance for the Independence of Armenia (NAR)*, the *Greek-Armenian-Bulgarian Front* and other terrorist organizations...

Armenian terrorists pursued and killed Turkish diplomats and their family members in different parts of the world between 1973 and 1986. ASALA even included NATO on its list of enemies and cooperated with the Kurdish terrorist organization known as the PKK (Party Karkeren Kurdistan; that is the Kurdistan

¹⁸⁶ Op. cit., 18.

Workers' Party). ASALA's cooperation with Palestinian fighters was even closer - such fighters even went as far as to provide ASALA with accommodation, training, food, office space, printed materials, weapons, and explosive items¹⁸⁷. ASALA, valuing its independence, was extremely averse to debt. Consequently, it helped the Palestinians as well, providing them with the houses of Armenian terrorists' in France that could be used as weapons depots.¹⁸⁸

Armenian terrorists were not satisfied with merely targeting and killing Turks. Embassies and consulates, the Turkish Airlines headquarters, bank offices, Turkish tourism and shopping centers, as well as offices of foreign companies that collaborated with Turks were all exposed to armed attacks and explosions too. Hundreds were killed and injured. Armenian terrorism was very strong from an organizational view-point, ready for operation at the time of their choosing.

F. P Hyland's example exhibited this: on the day after Monte Melkonyan was arrested in Paris (November 11, 1981), the Air France headquarters and the French Cultural Center were both bombed in Beirut. Soon after Monte's release, he was arrested yet again (November 14, 1981). Within a week of his return to prison, 6 French-affiliated companies were targeted and bombed in Paris, as well as in Beirut and Tehran.¹⁸⁹

The list of the people killed and the crimes committed is in fact known. F.P Hyland provides information about the extensive list of victims of Armenian terrorism starting from 1921, including the location of the crime, the identity of the killer, and the type of weapon used.¹⁹⁰

* * *

“ASALA received support from Armenians, non-Armenians, groups, and states. The support was sometimes given freely, sometimes grudgingly, sometimes fearfully. The support was both financial and “in kind”- weapons, explosives, training facilities”¹⁹¹. “States such as Libya, Syria, and Iran also contributed, directly or indirectly, funds and/or supplies, to ASALA”.¹⁹² Armenian terrorists found supporters from countries with a preexisting distaste for Turkey, such as France and Greece. Still, these governments monitored, prosecuted, and arrested them for terrorist acts. The terrorist leaders and propagandists insisted that they were not terrorists, instead maintaining that they sought only to pursue revenge and fight for their freedom. Oftentimes, these efforts to win over the sympathies proved

¹⁸⁷ Hyland, F. P., 1991. *Armenian Terrorism: The Past, The Present, the Prospects*. Boulder; Westview Press. p. 33.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 43-44.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 95-225.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 33.

successful. According to Dashnak reports, the Armenian communities of different countries successfully collected money to support this terrorist movement¹⁹³, sometimes, of course, using force. It is said that their main source of funding derived from drug (heroin, hashish) trafficking, comprising about 90% of their revenue.¹⁹⁴ However, according to F.P. Hyland, the money coming from this source was not that significant.¹⁹⁵

He who lives by the sword, dies by the sword. Consequently, these terrorists often met violent ends; many were arrested, killed in combat, or executed by their colleagues as a result of suspected treason. The Dashnaks killed the leaders of SCAG and its successor, ARA. M. Melkonyan and one of ASALA's founders and leaders, an Iraqi Armenian named Hagop Hagopian (1951-1988), became rivals and enemies, murdering supporters from each other's sides. H. Hakobyan himself was eventually killed in Athens on a later date.

Monte Melkonyan (1957-1993), an Armenian American, joined ASALA in 1980 and soon climbed his way to the top to become one of the organization's most prominent figures. Melkonyan was arrested for acts of terrorism in France and was imprisoned from 1985 to 1989. Even his mother responded to his arrest with relief stating, *now I could sleep comfortably*: "as funny as it sounds, at least I knew where he was." Melkonyan, when he was in prison, described his life motto in the following words: "Right now we have a greater need for guns than pens".¹⁹⁶ In the autumn of 1990, he arrived in Armenia and started fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh in 1991, claiming that the war against Azerbaijan was "as crucial for the long-term security of the entire Armenian nation".¹⁹⁷ He toiled for the success of the Armenian side in the First Karabakh War, but he also found his death there as well in the battle of Aghdam (June 12, 1993).

Nagorno-Karabakh During the Soviet Era

When the political and social situation in the international arena or domestically starts to change significantly, hidden conflicts and contradictions begin to emerge. From such changes arose the hope that what had previously been out of the question was now in fact a legitimate possibility.

After its victory in World War II, The Soviet Union sought to expand its sphere

¹⁹³ Gunter, M.M., 2011. *Armenian History and the Question of Genocide*. Palgrave Macmillan. p. 69.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 69-70.

¹⁹⁵ Hyland, F. P., 1991. *Armenian Terrorism: The Past, The Present, the Prospects*. Boulder; Westview Press. p. 33.

¹⁹⁶ Armenian Genocide Resource Center. 3668; *Would The Armenian Terrorist Monté Melkonian Be A Hero?* 2.8.18.

¹⁹⁷ Op. cit. 68

of influence on the international arena, even gaining a piece of land from Japan in the Far East. Eastern Europe began to accept Socialism at the USSR's request and communist ideology proved victorious in China.

Turkey remained neutral in World War II, but developed close ties with Britain. In February 1945, Turkey crossed over to the winning side and declared war on Germany and Japan—albeit symbolically. The USSR decided to ask Turkey for land - the goal was to consolidate this territory, unifying it with Armenia and small parts of Georgia. When the USSR came to the understanding that this unification was not achievable, it expressed its desire to establish Soviet military bases in Kars, Ardahan, and the Bosphorus. The United States defended Turkey, and the Truman Doctrine, which aimed to limit the expansion of the USSR and communism, came into force. Turkey joined the NATO bloc in 1952.

In November 1945, G.A. Arutinov, the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (CCCP) of Armenia, sent a letter to Stalin requesting the annexation of Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia (the letter is said to have been given to Stalin personally). Additionally, the letter called for the restoration of Shusha as the capital of Nagorno-Karabakh in the event of the issue's positive and successful resolution. In order to obtain the opinion of Azerbaijan on the issue, a letter was sent to M.J. Baghirov, the First Secretary of the CCP of Azerbaijan; M.J. Baghirov's reply was addressed to Malenkov, who it seems was entrusted with this task.¹⁹⁸

Baghirov in his response letter emphasized the natural connection of Nagorno-Karabakh with Azerbaijan over Armenia. Thus, the letter contrasted deeply with Arutinov's, which argued in favor of Karabakh's ties to Armenia in terms of agriculture, culture, and staff policy. Prior to this correspondence, at one meeting, Baghirov recalled that the situation and condition of Armenians in Azerbaijan is very good: "I boldly declare that I do not think Armenians will live better anywhere else than here... We do not have a people's commissariat or any other large republican enterprise of such importance without an Armenian serving as its deputy..."¹⁹⁹

Baghirov used a subtle diplomatic play, probably keeping in mind that there was perhaps some inclination at the very top to resolve the issue in Armenia's favor. He said: "Nevertheless, we have no objection to the annexation of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region to the Armenian SSR," at the same showing how dangerous the issue was.

¹⁹⁸ *Central Committee of the CPSU (b) to Comrade Malenkov*. December 10, 1945. See: "the name of Baghirov. Signed by Baghirov. Compiled by Gurban, T., 2016. Baku: Publishing House "OL". 189.

¹⁹⁹ *Из стенограммы совещания у тов. М.Д. Багирова «О положении в Азербайджанском педагогическом Институте*. [From the Shorthand Record of the Meeting with Comrade M.D. Baghirov. On the Situation in the Azerbaijan Pedagogical Institute.] April 2, 1945. See in, *In the name of Baghirov*. Signed by Baghirov. Compiled by Gurban, T., 2016. Baku. Publishing Pouse "OL" p. 189.

Baghirov stated his disagreement with the transfer of the Shusha region to Armenia. He argued that most of the people living there were Azerbaijanis, that Shusha was the cradle of Azerbaijan's rich musical culture, and the homeland of great political and cultural figures. Baghirov followed these arguments with an attack: if Nagorno-Karabakh were to be included in Armenia, then the Azizbayov, Vedi and Karabakhlar regions of the Armenian SSR must be ceded to Azerbaijan on account of the same logic. After all, they were both adjacent to Azerbaijan and were home to a predominantly Azerbaijani population. Please, also note that our Georgian comrades wanted Balakan, Zagatala and Gakh District, whose territories were comprised of 79,000 Azerbaijanis and only 9,000 Georgian Ingiloys. At the same time, the population of the Borchali region of the Georgian SSR, adjacent to Azerbaijan, consisted mainly of Azerbaijanis, which should be included in the Azerbaijan SSR. Finally, the Derbent and Gasimkend districts of the Dagestan SSR, adjacent to Azerbaijan and populated mainly by Azerbaijanis, by that same logic should be ceded to Azerbaijan; they were part of Azerbaijan, part of the Baku province.

There was nothing left to discuss besides Baghirov's right and masterful answer.

They invented suppositions that Azerbaijanis griped about Nagorno-Karabakh and wanted to take it from the Armenians, finding "vivid" examples to prove their point. For example, only 23 Azerbaijanis lived in Stepanakert, and it was only after 1936 that their numbers had begun to increase... Is that not strange? Probably, some Azerbaijanis found work in Stepanakert or there were some family affairs in the city; let 3-5% of the population be Azerbaijani there, what is the harm in that? On the other hand, in 1859, there were few Armenian families in Baku, and in 1918 there were far more of them, so wealthy and powerful as to have the strength and numbers to commit the March massacre. What would your answer to that be?

The strength of the Armenians in Moscow and the presence of some anti-Turkish sentiment in the USSR leadership solved definite issues in favor of the Armenians. "In 1945-1948, Azerbaijani toponyms were broadly replaced by Armenian ones in Nagorno-Karabakh (despite the fact that it was part of the Republic of Azerbaijan – H.I.)"²⁰⁰. In 1946-47, the green light was given to politics: *we have little place* in connection with the beginning of the migration from the diaspora to Armenia, *so let's move the Azerbaijani Turks from Armenia to Azerbaijan, where there is a lot of land*. On December 23, 1947, the USSR Council of Ministers decided to move 100,000 Azerbaijani citizens of Armenia to the Kur-Araz lowlands in Azerbaijan. There were displayed two primary reasons for the relocation: the lack of manpower in Azerbaijan's cotton-growing sector and the resettlement of Armenians, coming from foreign countries, in Armenia. The first part of the cause is both unnatural and unreasonable. Occasionally, there was an opinion that Azerbaijanis living in

²⁰⁰ Шнирельман, В.А., 2003. *Войны памяти. Мифы, идентичность и политика в Закавказье*. [Shnirelman, V. A., *Memory wars. Myths, Identity and Politics in Transcaucasia*] Moscow: Akademiya. p. 47.

Armenia could not be relied on in the case of a war with Turkey. Thus, the plan was to move 10,000 people in 1948, 40,000 in 1949, and 50,000 in 1950 (apparently voluntarily). Relocation began, but the cessation of diaspora migration and the complicated situation delayed relocation from Armenia to Azerbaijan; a portion of Armenians who moved from abroad to Armenia regretted it, while the Soviet government noticed doubtful moments in the arrival of foreign Armenians. It is known that 53,000 people were transferred from Armenia to Azerbaijan between 1948 and 1953. Some of them returned after Stalin's death. From 1946 to 1975, about 150,000 Armenians resettled in the USSR, most of whom found homes in Armenia in particular. 90,000 of them came between 1946 and 1948.²⁰¹

Calls for the unification of Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia were repeated in 1963, 1965, 1967, 1968, 1977, and finally in the tragic period of 1987-1988.

During the Soviet era, there were many who did not agree with the traditional Soviet ideology and there was a significant dissident movement. The dissident movement in the "mischievous" allied Soviet republics - the Baltic republics, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Ukraine - was mainly related to the protection of national language and culture. In Armenia, on the contrary, dissent was based primarily on territorial claims against the "eternal enemy" of Turkey as well as its "brother republics" - Azerbaijan and Georgia.

The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict and the First Karabakh War

Conflicts, especially national ones, are usually fuelled by the provocative writings and speeches of social groups and thinkers, such as historians, linguists, writers, poets, journalists, politicians, intellectuals, and enlightened people in general. A shadow is cast onto their light, gradually becoming darker, with blind beliefs hardening in their grimness.

Zori Balayan stands out among those Armenians who inflamed the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict in the new period. In his book "Hearth," published in Yerevan in 1981 and in Moscow in 1984 ("Очаг"), he tries to substantiate the idea that *Turkey and Azerbaijani Turks are enemies of Russia and Armenia*, and that Nagorno-Karabakh and Nakhchivan are historically Armenian lands. On the bank of the river Araz, "we talked in Armenian with the Armenian river," he says. According to Thomas de Wall, who calls Zori Balayan a "chauvinistic intellectual

²⁰¹ Anderson, A. B., and Silver, D. B., *Population Redistribution and the Ethnic Balance in Transcaucasia*. 1996. See, in Suny, R. G., *Transcaucasia, Nationalism, and Social Change. Essays in the History of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia*. Edited by Ronald Grigor Suny Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan Press, p. 488.

warrior,” “the harmful book *Hearth* might never have been allowed to spread”.²⁰² By saying that Azerbaijan is a historical Armenian land, Z. Balayan stressed that this land should be liberated and conquered. His later statement to the Russians that “both Armenia and Karabakh are Russian territory” was met with protests in both Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. Balayan has uttered many statements expressing his pathological hatred for Azerbaijan; for example: “We can understand the terms Georgia, Russia, Armenia – but not Azerbaijan. By using such a term, we confirm the existence of such a country”.²⁰³

During the Soviet era, Armenians and Azerbaijani Turks lived side by side in friendly co-existence throughout the Soviet Union; the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region (NKAR) was no exception. I heard from Karabakh Azerbaijanis: “We lived in friendship with Armenians, with ordinary people. Azerbaijanis preferred to look more international. In Shusha, the second secretary always was appointed from the Armenians. In other places, both the first secretary (raykom secretary) and the second were usually Armenians. An Azerbaijani was appointed the head of a department or to a more junior position; moreover, those whose wives or mothers were Armenians were overtly preferred for the appointments.”

Note. In Soviet times, the secretary of a district party (communist party) committee was in short called a “raykom secretary” (“raykom katibi” in Azerbaijani).

Mikhail Gorbachev, who came to power in 1985, began to put forward a reform program with the intention of improving socialism, strengthening democracy and renovating society. Gradually, the policy of *perestroika* (restructuring) and *glasnost* (openness) emerged. The idea of improving relations with the West was strengthened, but no serious reforms were made regarding the economy. In China, however, with centralized control kept in place under the Communist Party, a program of market economics was successfully launched and implemented. Gorbachev and his entourage could not find a way to unite the planned economy with openness and democracy. Openness and the weakening of the economy led to chaos. In 1989, the Berlin Wall was brought down, leading to the unification of Germany in 1990, and classical socialism had collapsed. While China grew stronger, the USSR set out on a path towards collapse.

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The Political Platform of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation ratified by the 23rd World Congress stated that the territory of Armenia consisted of the Republic of Armenia, Nakhchivan, Nagorno-Karabakh and Javakheti. Additionally, it noted that the main enemy was Turkey. Another strange statement may be accompanied

²⁰² Waal, T. 2003. *Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan through Peace and War*. New York University Press; pp. 142-143

²⁰³ Waal, T. 2010. *The Caucasus. An Introduction*. Oxford:Oxford University Press; p. 107.

with the exclamation “oh, dear!”: the existence of the Turkish Empire is against the interests of Armenia.²⁰⁴ The dream of Greater Armenia once again turned into the national ideology of the country with territorial claims constituting the main goal of Armenian policy. This political platform was indeed the declaration of a new war for the sake of “Greater Armenia.” Nagorno-Karabakh soon became the first and main target of this war.

In the autumn of 1987, Armenian appeals to Moscow about the status of Nagorno-Karabakh in the form of letters, signatures and meetings began. Socio-economic reasons were put forward. Sometimes Nakhchivan was also demanded, but they mainly focused on Nagorno-Karabakh. In an interview with the Paris newspaper *L’Humanite* (November 1987), Abel Aganbekyan, Gorbachev’s economic adviser, said that it was economically acceptable to cede Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia. In October 1987, in Yerevan, demonstrations under the slogans “Miatsum” (unification), “Give Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia,” “*Let Karabagh (Artsakh) be united with the motherland*” commenced. Of course, the main reason was rooted in territorial claims; one of the separatist leaders, Robert Kocharyan, who later became President of the Republic of Armenia, also said that the conflict was based not on economic principles, but on a desire to acquire the territory.

Eventually, unable to bear the intolerable conditions of life in Armenia as an ethnic minority, Armenia’s ethnic Azerbaijanis began leaving their homeland and settling in Azerbaijan. In 1987-1989, Azerbaijanis fled from Armenia under difficult and dangerous circumstances. 215 or 216 of them were killed by Armenians (the Armenian side claimed that the number of those killed was 25). In response, Azerbaijan was hit by a huge wave of protests and demonstrations. Karabakh Armenians, as citizens of Azerbaijan, were accused of treason against Azerbaijan while Armenia was accused of aggression. The Azerbaijani government was enraged and deeply hurt. Speaking of the friendship of the peoples, it wanted the Armenians to come to their senses and for its Azerbaijani citizens to calm down. On February 22, 1988, two Azerbaijanis, young men from Aghdam, were killed near Askeran; blood had been shed. Feelings began to boil up.

On February 27-28, a massacre with the participation of criminal elements (including an ethnic Armenian) took place in Sumgayit, where the first group of angry refugees from Armenia had settled; 26 Armenians and 6 Azerbaijanis were killed. The events spiraling out of their natural course and the growing sense of revenge led to the exchange and movement of people between the two countries. The nationalist approach to such issues gained strength. Armenian nationalism far exceeded and was significantly more active than Azerbaijani nationalism. The myth of Greater Armenia and the Armenian genocide nourished Armenian nationalism and spread it around the world. In fact, the response and protest to Armenian

²⁰⁴ Op. cit. 63-64.

nationalism with territorial claims played a role in strengthening the Azerbaijani national movement.

* * *

On February 20, 1988, Armenian members of the People's Deputies of the NKAR appealed to the Supreme Soviets of Azerbaijan, Armenia and the USSR with a request to annex Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia, to which Azerbaijan protested. The Supreme Soviet of the USSR also rejected this request (March 23, 1988). As the number of requests and demands increased, the situation became more difficult, worsening further. Armenia and the Armenian part of Nagorno-Karabakh chose the path of further radicalization, and unilateral decisions such as *leaving Azerbaijan* and *annexing Karabakh to Armenia* began to emerge. The Supreme Soviet of the USSR did not consider it possible to change the borders (July 18, 1988).

Note. According to Article 78 of the USSR Constitution (1977), "The territory of a Union republic may not be changed without its consent."

M. Gorbachev commented on the issue. According to him, if we do what Nagorno-Karabakh's Armenians want, what should we do with the Azerbaijanis and Armenians in Georgia, the Armenians in Azerbaijan, the Tajiks in Uzbekistan, and the Uzbeks in Tajikistan? Is it possible to change the constitution for a part of the population, to issue a special state status for them without thinking about other people in similar situations? Gorbachev stated that changes in ethnic composition in certain places was not a basis for territorial claims: how many Azerbaijanis lived in Yerevan at the beginning of the century? 43%! Now there are no Azerbaijanis left, what should we do?

The rate of population growth of Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh was slower than that of Azerbaijani Turks. The separatists regarded it as a source of great danger. According to the 1979 census, 123,000 Armenians and 37,000 Turks lived in Nagorno-Karabakh compared to 40-50 years prior. The change was in favor of Azerbaijanis. Nevertheless, it should be noted that although the natural growth of Azerbaijanis was faster than that of Armenians (and Georgians), Armenians possessed the ability to migrate much faster and more easily to more economically convenient places than Azerbaijanis were. Furthermore, as mentioned above, in the first quarter of the 19th century, the Azerbaijani Turks had an absolute advantage in numbers in the Karabakh Khanate.

Neither Azerbaijanis nor Armenians liked Gorbachev; on the contrary, they condemned him for his indecision, for his inability to silence the separatists, for sending troops to Azerbaijan to commit a massacre, and accordingly, for not ceding Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia. Moscow showed its weakness: it gave such advice as "let us see what happens," "don't interfere too much," "conduct propaganda." It is even said that the indecisive behavior towards the Nagorno-Karabakh problem

played a catalytic role in the collapse of the USSR.

On January 13-14, 1990, a looting and massacre of Armenians took place in Baku. The government had lost control. On January 20, the Soviet Army entered Baku. It was officially reported that the reason for the involvement was to secure the population, but, in fact, the main reason was to squash the strengthening of the Popular Front of Azerbaijan, which was developing into a threat to the Soviet system. This day, known as Black January, witnessed the murders of 131 innocent people and the endangerment of many others. It became a day of national tragedy and at the same time a driving force of national awakening. A mass burning of Communist Party cards and abandonment of the party took place (though, later, there were those who said *we regretted it and wanted their cards returned*). In 1991, the allied republics adopted a declaration of independence and constitutional acts; by December, the USSR ceased to exist.

Between September 1991 to January 1992 Armenia's ambitions regarding Karabakh began to take on a new form: the Armenian community of Nagorno-Karabakh Province and Shaumyan (Goranboy) district of Azerbaijan declared an independent state under the name of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic (Artsakh). Armenian separatists began to emphasize the right of self-determination of people, and adopted the policy of declaring an independent state, instead of annexing Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia. Armenian ideologues, realizing that the idea of annexing Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia would not be accepted in the international community, put forward the idea of ensuring security. They insisted that this security could only be achieved through the transformation of Nagorno-Karabakh into an independent state.

Azerbaijan (and any state facing separatism - there are enough examples) could not agree to this. State borders and territorial integrity are basic concepts of politics and law. The world has primarily been built on such principles. Ethnic identity, citizenship, and the rights of ethnic and religious minorities are important internal issues. In one sense, preserving and developing one's culture, religion and language mean autonomy within the state. The claim that *the territories that are in historical memory must be ours* is ungrounded from the point of view of statehood and law.

* * *

The conflict led to armed clashes and escalated into war. The Armenian diaspora intensified its propaganda in the West, helping Armenia build a better-trained military, and recruit people, such as Monte Melkonyan, with fighting and terrorist experience. Seemingly, they were able to procure more Soviet weapons. There were also people and groups with fighting experience on the Azerbaijani side, but there was no regular army in the true sense of the word. Instead, the army consisted of separate, weakly connected or unconnected fighting groups. Incompetence of the ruling elite, the political crisis, and power struggles also weakened the front in

Karabakh. Due to a conflict between a commander, successful in the battle, and a government official, the commander could withdraw his group from the battlefield and head to Baku with the aim of overthrowing the government.

On February 26, 1992, although the Armenian forces that surrounded the city of Khojaly declared that they had provided a corridor for the civilian population of the city to leave, they did not follow it and opened fire on the civilians. The most horrific massacre of the Karabakh war took place: 613 people, including 63 children, 106 women and 70 old men, were killed. There were many injured and many went missing. The Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan shamelessly confessed that the Khojaly massacre was committed deliberately: “Before Khojaly, the Azerbaijanis thought that they were joking with us, they thought that the Armenians were people who could not raise their hand against the civilian population. We needed to put a stop to all that. And that’s what happened”²⁰⁵.

The March 31, 1918, massacre in Baku, the Black January (January 20, 1990) and the Khojaly massacre (February 26, 1992) were included in the calendar as the three national days of mourning in Azerbaijan. The situation in Azerbaijan did not cause any significant repercussions in the world. On the contrary, the United States decided to punish Azerbaijan. The US Congress passed the Freedom Support Act to provide financial and technical aid to former Soviet republics that became independent. As a result of the efforts of the Armenian lobby, Section 907, which prohibited Azerbaijan from receiving any US aid, was added to the law, by invoking Azerbaijan’s hostile attitude and blockade against Armenia as reasons for the decision.

Shusha was not seriously defended, and the Armenian army entered Shusha on May 9, 1992. In the same month, the Azerbaijani district between Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, Lachin, was occupied, and the Armenia-Nagorno-Karabakh corridor was formed. In the summer of 1992, Azerbaijan launched a successful offensive and counter-offensive, but suffered a defeat in the fall. Armenian forces captured some places by fighting, but others without encountering any resistance. In 1993, the UN Security Council adopted four resolutions calling for the withdrawal of Armenian forces from occupied Azerbaijani regions and the restoration of Azerbaijan’s territorial integrity. No country openly condemned Armenia except Turkey; no sanctions were imposed. In late 1993 and during the first months of 1994, heavy fighting broke out, both sides losing a lot of manpower. Azerbaijan did not have the power to win its lands back. Azerbaijan suffered a heavy defeat as a result of war which lasted several years where the Armenian side gradually demonstrated better military policy. As a result, Azerbaijan was severely defeated, with Nagorno-Karabakh and the 7 surrounding regions occupied by the Armenian

²⁰⁵ Waal, T. 2003. *Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan through Peace and War*. New York University Press; pp. 172-173.

army. Negotiations began and a ceasefire agreement was reached through the mediation of Russia (May 9-10, 1994).

The Minsk Group, established for the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, took its final form in 1997, in an attempt to expand its activity under the co-chairmanship of Russia, the United States and France.

Armenians and Azerbaijanis After the First Karabakh War

As a result of the First Karabakh War, Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia seemed to be united. The road between Azerbaijan and Nakhchivan was closed. Both countries faced numerous problems. Nagorno-Karabakh brought both joy and trouble to Armenia. The development of Armenia was overshadowed by the status problem of the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh. The occupation of Karabakh and the surrounding Azerbaijani regions did not contribute to the development of Armenia; instead, it hindered it. Nagorno-Karabakh became dependent on Armenia and Armenia on Nagorno-Karabakh. Turkey closed its border with Armenia. Armenia lost the opportunity of being a transit country for the transportation of Azerbaijan's oil and gas resources to the West. Georgia took advantage of this opportunity.

The idea of creating Greater Armenia from sea to sea, i.e. uniting all the lands where Armenians once lived in history under Armenian rule gradually became the ideal of Armenian ideologues and the majority of the Armenian people who subscribed to this propaganda. The capture of Nagorno-Karabakh, together with 7 Azerbaijani regions, which were much larger than Nagorno-Karabakh and were not places where Armenians lived, created an illusion that the idea of Greater Armenia could be realized. In line with the 'one morsel under the teeth could open the full man's appetite' expression, Armenian politicians began the process of appropriating these occupied lands as their own, calling them *liberated lands or a security zone*. Towns and villages were renamed and Armenianized. They tried to sell to the world this great piece of land, which also included Nagorno-Karabakh, under one name: *The Nagorno-Karabakh Republic*. The Armenian public thought that a great and successful step was taken in the establishment of Greater Armenia, with an enlarged Nagorno-Karabakh Republic emerging, which continued its existence and stood alongside the Republic of Armenia, despite the fact that it had not been recognized by any state. Then they started to replace the Azerbaijani name "Karabakh" with the word "Artsakh..."

Note. The term "Handmade Nagorno-Karabakh Republic" ("Oyuncaq Dağlıq Qarabağ Respublikası") was being used in Azerbaijan. Moreover, as a reaction to the Armenian aggression against Azerbaijan, a new term was coined; the Republic of Armenia started to be called *Western Azerbaijan*.

After winning the First Karabakh war, Armenians, on the one hand, got rid of the feeling of failure that plagued them throughout history, and on the other hand, gained the image of an occupier. The next step on the road to Greater Armenia was to tear Javakheti (in Armenian: Javakh) province away from Georgia. It was not a secret that the seizure of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic of Azerbaijan and, finally, Western Armenia - i.e. the eastern provinces of Turkey (Van, Bitlis, Diyarbakir, Harput, Sivas, Erzurum, Trabzon, Kars, Ardahan) - land they considered to be the territory of historical Armenia constituted the following steps of this plan. The fact that there were very few or almost no Armenians in these provinces of Turkey did not prevent these claims. Thus, the “Armenian Struggle” (“Hay Tad”) put forward territorial claims against three of the four neighbours of the Republic of Armenia. In the long run, indeed, Cilicia of Turkey and a part of the Iranian Azerbaijan were also considered to be annexed to Greater Armenia.

During the meeting with the participants of the 5th Pan-Armenian Olympiad on Armenian language, literature and Armenian studies (July 23, 2011), the questions addressed to the President of Armenia, Serzh Sargsyan, included *what the borders of future Armenia will be and whether Ararat and Western Armenia will be returned*. Sargsyan’s response: “It depends entirely on your generation. My generation, I think, fulfilled the duty entrusted to it, when in the early 90s it was necessary to defend a part of our homeland-Artsakh - from the enemy, which we managed to do.”²⁰⁶

The placement of a very distant moment of history (the period of Tigran II) at the core of the national idea, living and fighting with the dream of “Greater Armenia” that will probably never be realized, has brought enough calamities to the Armenian people (and to their neighbours)! Are these tragedies not enough?!

* * *

Azerbaijan, who lost the First Karabakh War in a shameful and humiliating way, began to strengthen its economy by using its own oil and gas resources. Although the first attempt in this direction was made during the rule of the Popular Front, of President Abulfaz Elchibey, it was Heydar Aliyev, the President of Azerbaijan, a famous representative of the Soviet school of political management and diplomacy, who developed and implemented the oil and gas strategy. First of all, he tried to eliminate mutual doubts and mistrust in relations with neighbours, especially with Russia and Iran, and attempted to strengthen cooperation with Turkey and Georgia. There is no doubt that Ilham Aliyev, the President’s son and expert on international relations, played an important role in the top-secret oil and gas talks. Russia was surprised and somewhat concerned about the unexpected signing of the

²⁰⁶ Hasanli, J., 2011. *Территориальные претензии Армении к Азербайджану и Грузии. Депортация азербайджанцев из Армении*. [Armenia’s territorial claims to Azerbaijan and Georgia. Deportation of Azerbaijanis from Armenia]. Regnum Information Agency. Available at : < <https://regnum.ru/news/polit/1433956.html> >

Contract of the Century on oil without a protracted preparatory phase. However, the interest of the United States and other powers in the production and transportation of Azerbaijani oil neutralized Russia's dissatisfaction. Azerbaijan has become a country of strategic interest for the United States and Europe. Furthermore, at that time, Russia itself faced several political, ethnic and economic difficulties. And, in any case, the Russian company, "Lukoil," also participated in this *Contract of the Century*.

The Contract of the Century paved the way for many subsequent oil, gas, and pipeline agreements for export. During Ilham Aliyev's presidency, Azerbaijan implemented large-scale projects of exporting oil and gas to the West and Turkey via export-specific pipelines, breathing life to major transport projects as well.

Azerbaijan, who had an average GDP growth rate of approximately 10% in 1998-2004, made fantastic progress in subsequent years: 26.4% in 2005, 34.5% in 2006 and 25% in 2007. Azerbaijan transformed from a recipient of humanitarian aid into a donor country with its aid policy on natural disasters, cultural projects and Covid-19 covering big and small countries in the West and East. Additionally, gaining economic power, Azerbaijan did not forget to increase its military power.

Ter-Petrosyan's Thoughts on *War or Peace*

The first President of Armenia, Levon Ter-Petrosyan, deliberated on the settlement of the Karabakh conflict and the establishment of Armenia's relations with Azerbaijan and Turkey. The subsequent presidents of Armenia mainly wanted to maintain the status quo. The Armenian diaspora did not analyze the real situation, and with its maximalist views, hindered the possibility for a compromise. Amongst both Armenia and its diaspora, the majority hoped that the status quo would last forever. It is even possible to say that they were sure of this. The two presidents after Ter-Petrosyan created the impression that negotiations were underway, but Pashinyan ruined them.

Ter-Petrosyan, the leader of the movement for the realization of the nationalist slogan "Let Karabakh be united with Armenia," played a decisive role in inciting the Karabakh conflict. Ter-Petrosyan, who was elected President of the Republic of Armenia in the autumn of 1991, enjoyed an absolute victory in the First Karabakh War when a ceasefire agreement was signed in 1994. He was a hero in the eyes of Armenians; in the eyes of Azerbaijanis, however, he was an Armenian ideologue who had spilled blood abundantly and rendered the Armenian and Azerbaijani people enemies. On the other hand, Ter-Petrosyan is an intelligent man, scholar, and a doctor in philological studies. His involvement in this bloody, foolish and hopeless issue with patriotic aspirations is incomprehensible from the humanistic point of view and triggers bitter regret and anger. Nevertheless, Professor Ter-Petrosyan presented himself as a president looking towards the future. He disbanded

the terrorist Dashnaktsutyun party, regarding it as a threat to the state. After being re-elected president in 1996, Ter-Petrosyan finally understood that the conflict with Azerbaijan could not continue in this way; perhaps he had come to this idea earlier in a step-by-step fashion.

At a press conference on September 26, 1997, and then in the article “War or Peace? Time to Think”²⁰⁷, Ter-Petrosyan expressed the need for mutual concessions to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. In the following, I intend to provide a summary of his key views.

The international community, including Russia, does not want to recognize the independence of Nagorno-Karabakh. We fail to get on, not only with Azerbaijan, but with the world as a whole. When we spit in the face of the whole world, how will it respond to us? Is it possible to maintain this status quo for a long time or forever? No.

Ter-Petrosyan shows two reasons here: the world community will not allow this; and Armenia’s economic potential will not grant an opportunity for it. But he forgets another important reason: Azerbaijan will not allow the status quo to be maintained for a long time; Azerbaijan signed an agreement with a group of international oil companies on the joint development of rich oil fields in the Azerbaijani part of the Caspian Sea and the distribution of extracted oil in the form of shares (September 20, 1994); Azerbaijan’s economy will grow rapidly, and Azerbaijan will grow stronger. It will have the opportunity to radically strengthen its military.

Ter-Petrosyan, analysing the situation, came to the right conclusion. Armenia’s refusal to make concessions and its yearning to get the maximum advantages out of the deal, not just possible ones, is the shortest path to the complete collapse of Karabakh and the deterioration of the situation in Armenia. The alternative of compromise is war. Compromise is only a means to delay or stave off the worst. Unfortunately, we won the battle, but not the war. War is won only when the opponent capitulates. The identification of war and battle has repeatedly brought calamities to many. You may not follow wrong ideas; the most dangerous thing is to think that *we have already done everything, and will therefore succeed in the future, with victory being ours*. But this is how Armenia will grow weak.

According to Petrosyan, in general, myths are circulating throughout society. One of these, for example, is that it is good for Armenia to take a tough stance against Turkey; Armenia should demand recognition of the genocide; the treaty of Kars should be cancelled out; Armenian lands should be returned; the diaspora in America is strong and will always help Armenia.

²⁰⁷ *Independent Newspaper and Republic of Armenia*. 1997. Война или мир? Время призадуматься. [War or Peace? Time to think] november 5, No. 209.

And, finally, the prophecy of the first President of the Republic of Armenia predicts: “What we reject today, we will have to ask for in the future, but we will not receive, as it happened more than once in our history.” 23 years have passed since then, and Ter-Petrosyan’s prediction has been fully confirmed.

It is true that, in his article, Ter-Petrosyan did not openly express his opinion on the status of Nagorno-Karabakh. However, it is clear from the spirit of the article and its statements that he considered the phased solution and Nagorno-Karabakh’s preservation as a territory of Azerbaijan with the status of high autonomy to be the tenable and the right way forward. He realized that the package solution, the return of lands in lieu of the acquisition of independence status for Nagorno-Karabakh, was impossible.

However, instead of clinging to Ter-Petrosyan, the Armenian political elite, especially the next two Armenian presidents, Robert Kocharyan and Serzh Sargsyan, who both represented the Karabakh clan and were, in fact, Azerbaijani citizens, as well as their political and military allies, forced Ter-Petrosyan to resign (February 3, 1998). The first opportunity for a peaceful solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was missed.

* * *

In his article, Ter-Petrosyan mentions six people who know the situation in Armenia and its foreign policy in depth; one of them is Gerard J. Libaridian. Libaridian is a historian and professor of politics who studied in America. He lived in Armenia in 1991-1997, where he served as an adviser and colleague of President Ter-Petrosyan.

Libaridian’s book *The Challenge of Statehood. Armenian Political Thinking Since Independence* can be regarded as a more detailed discussion of the issues raised in Ter-Petrosyan’s article (or is there a possibility that Ter-Petrosyan’s article emerged as a result of consultations and discussions with Libaridian!?). This book has also been translated into Turkish²⁰⁸; the author gifted a copy of this book to the author of these lines with pleasing words. Here are some excerpts from the valuable work of Libaridian, which are in line with Ter-Petrosyan’s views.

"After 1991, the Dashnak party (the Armenian Revolutionary Federation) “poisoned the atmosphere in the Diaspora and confused many. Thus, ideology became faith, and a blind faith needs hatred to sustain itself, to overcome any doubts that facts may inconveniently rise”.²⁰⁹ “To spend all Armenian energies on embarrassing Turkey

²⁰⁸ Libaridian, G. J. 2001. *Ermenilerin Devletleşme Sınavı. Bağımsızlıktan Bugüne Ermeni Siyasi Düşünüşü*. [The Challenge of Statehood. Armenian Political Thinking Since Independence. Istanbul; İletişim.

²⁰⁹ Libaridian, G. J. 1999. *The Challenge of Statehood. Armenian Political Thinking Since Independence*. Watertown, MA: Blue Crane Books. p. 141.

or Azerbaijan is a waste of time”.²¹⁰ “The prospect of living in eternal enmity with two of one’s four neighbors is not and should not be an option, regardless of the ideology that such a situation would serve”.²¹¹ “Occupied territories, which once were guarantees of security, turn into the most serious source of insecurity”.²¹²

According to Libaridian: “There have been few victories in the history of Armenian people during the last one thousand years, not sufficient to make a generalization; that the victories have been in battles, not in wars; and the confusion between a battle and a war has been costly; and that after any kind of victory, when there have been negotiations, the diplomat has lost not because he asked for too little, but just possibly because he had asked for too much, more than he could swallow”.²¹³

Key West, Harvard and... Me

On April 3-7, 2001, in Key West, Florida, with the mediation of co-chairs Russia, the United States and France of the OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) Minsk Group, the next round of talks was held between the President of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev and the President of Armenia Robert Kocharian for the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Ambassador Carey Cavanaugh, an experienced diplomat and special negotiator on conflicts in the Newly Independent States, was appointed by the United States as a co-chair.

Following the Key West talks, the Caspian Studies Program, affiliated with Harvard University’s John F. Kennedy School of Government, decided to organize a panel discussion on the topic “Negotiations on Nagorno-Karabakh: Where do we go from here?” The organizers decided that the panel should consist of four people: Ambassador Carey Cavanaugh, who was a key mediator in the Key West talks, an Azerbaijani and an Armenian intellectual, who had to be independent individuals, not affiliated with the government or the opposition, and finally the panel’s moderator Dr. Brenda Shaffer, Research Director at the Caspian Studies Program. My acquaintance with Dr. Shaffer was thanks to the subject of her research. While working on her PhD program at Tel Aviv University, she consulted me on literature, culture, and national identity in Azerbaijan, the Caucasus, and Iran. She published this study as a book.²¹⁴

Carey Cavanaugh and Brenda Shaffer called me and said that there will be a panel discussion, inviting me as an Azerbaijani representative. Moreover, they notified

²¹⁰ Ibid., p. 157.

²¹¹ Ibid., p. 162.

²¹² Ibid., p. 162.

²¹³ Ibid., p. 154.

²¹⁴ Shaffer, B., 2002. *Borders and Brethren: Iran and the Challenge of Azerbaijani Identity*. Cambridge; MIT Press.

me that they had invited Ronald Suny, Professor at the Department of Political Science, University of Chicago, as a representative of the Armenians. In addition, I was asked to give a lecture at Harvard on the problems of education in countries in transition, based on the example of Azerbaijan.

* * *

As soon as I arrived in Massachusetts, first in the city of Boston, and then in Cambridge, where famous universities like Harvard and MIT are located, I asked whom I could talk to, in order to find answers to such questions as “What happened at the Key West talks?”, “What was decided?”, “If there is an agreement, what is it?” or at least to better understand these issues. I was told that Professor Gerard J. Libaridian lives there and is even aware of my arrival. It was probably impossible to find a person in America who knew more about the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict than Libaridian. Libaridian invited me as a guest, and as soon as he got acquainted with me, he said that he likes the word “Pasha” and wants to call me Hamlet Pasha. Born in Beirut, Libaridian received his higher education and spent his academic life in the United States. From 1991 to 1997, he was an adviser and chief adviser to the President of Armenia, Ter-Petrosyan, and for a brief period of time, the Deputy Foreign Minister of Armenia. He then returned to the USA and continued to work as a professor of history and politics at the University of Michigan.

I talked with Libaridian about the issues that interested both of us. Since the Key West talks had been closed to the public, not very few could put their hands on their hearts and say what the talks and agreements were about. But, in any case, the information somehow leaks. Moreover, since every conversation was based on the previous ones, it was possible to think about the course of the talks.

Libaridian said with a smile that *you are giving Karabakh to the Armenians*. Armenia is absolutely not satisfied with the change of territory, i.e. the transfer of Nagorno-Karabakh and Lachin district or its parts that would play the role of a corridor for Armenia instead of the transfer of the Mehri region of Armenia to Azerbaijan. The discussion revolves around the independence of Nagorno-Karabakh with the Lachin Corridor, i.e. it's not being handed over to Armenia, but being ruled, including in foreign policy, by the Karabakh Armenians. In this case, Nagorno-Karabakh would not officially be an independent state, but determine its own destiny, and its connection with Azerbaijan would not be in content, but in form, and as though the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan would be preserved. Moreover, a transport corridor would be established between Greater Azerbaijan and Nakhchivan. It is known that, excluding some subtleties, the talks were being held in this framework.

I was upset. I did not want to believe it. This could not be possible... I want peace, but also justice and fairness...

When I was asked what cultural or recreational programs I wanted, I expressed my intention to visit the campus of Harvard University. The news came soon: they said they would invite a person who knows the Harvard campus, its architecture and history well, and that he would take me for a walk. A while later, this person was introduced to me: Fuad Akhundov! The moment of my surprise was replaced by joy. Similarly, with a surprise and a smile, Fuad said: "Welcome, Hamlet muellim." Fuad was studying for a Master's degree at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government; he said he also took some courses in architectural history at MIT.

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On April 23, 2001, at Harvard, the Karabakh panel was launched. There were many listeners, including Azerbaijanis living and working or studying in the United States, who represented both the Republic of Azerbaijan and Iranian Azerbaijan; there were more Armenians. Brenda Shaffer opened the discussion, expressed her belief that the Key West talks were a turning point in the settlement of the Karabakh conflict, and posed some questions in the spirit of the topic: What is the role of history and identity in resolving the conflict? What obstacles can arise on the way to peace? Is there a probability to maintain the status quo? How should public opinion be prepared?

Carey Cavanaugh reminded us that 35,000 people had died in the Karabakh conflict, that there were 800,000 refugees in Azerbaijan, that a large body of the Armenian population had left the country, that peace is not perfect but is necessary for progress. He noted that the three proposals prepared by the Minsk Group were not accepted by both presidents, but that the two presidents met 16 times in the last two years, and that there was great progress in the talks. Cavanaugh expressed his confidence that a peace agreement would be signed.

As a mediator, Shaffer presented the panelists in detail. She introduced me at length and ended her speech as follows (to indicate, probably for this special case, that I fit into the panel): "He is a man who is respected by both the government and the opposition, and is a real central cultural figure in Azerbaijan." I was in low spirits. Our meeting with Libaridian and the speeches of B.Shaffer and Carey Cavanaugh made me fear that Karabakh could be lost. I said to myself, *no, it can't be possible*. It's not a good thing for someone on the panel to be so upset, so distraught; I had to get a grip on myself...

I talked about what an optimal proposal for peace would be like. Azerbaijanis believe peace is good, but they also say that peace must be fair. I consider it necessary to establish for peace a horizontal line between Baku and Yerevan, not between Baku and Nagorno-Karabakh. For the connection between Baku and Nagorno-Karabakh, it is necessary to have a vertical line, a certain subordination; even in the most democratic countries, there is the division of power between the center and the region, without which there would be no state. Due to a certain reason, militant

thinking has begun to increase among Azerbaijanis. Probably people are tired of uncertainty. Patriotic feelings call for war. Without a national consensus among the main forces of society – the government, the opposition, the parliament and the intelligentsia – there will be no peace. The territorial integrity of Azerbaijan is the idea or the force that, in Azerbaijan, unites the government, the opposition, and the people; perhaps it is the only force in the current situation.

I continued. The so-called *Common house or Common state* can be between Azerbaijan and Armenia, not between Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh. The symmetry of the conflict also requires it. It would be right to think about the idea of a common house, to work for the transparency of borders between the two countries, the development of trading relations, scientific and cultural ties. Russia's role in resolving the conflict is crucial. But is Russia sincere in the current situation? I do not know. I cannot join in the optimism prevailing in this discussion (though I am quite an optimist by nature).

I cannot share with you the belief, which I observe here, that a peace agreement will be signed soon; forgive me. For the present, I consider the status-quo to be more likely to be maintained. In my opinion, for all the parties of the conflict, the important thing is not to emphasize the collective identity, but to find or compose answers to the questions of what is the right verdict, which decision seems fairer; national identity does not help solve the problem, it can even hinder it. Let me give you an example. In the 19th century, Tiflis (Tbilisi) was mostly Armenian, secondly Russian and only then a Georgian city. In Baku, there were fewer Azerbaijani Turks than the sum of Russians, Armenians and other ethnicities. Yerevan was a city of Azerbaijanis, rather than of Armenians. So, what does history give us to solve the problem? History confuses us. There is an identity here, not a solution to the problem...

According to Ronald Suny, if a collective identity has been built, it can be rebuilt in a different way. Nationalists continue to foment ancient hatred, while intellectuals and liberals have a constructive view. It is possible to implement the idea of shared sovereignty in the Caucasus. In the negotiations between Ter-Petrosyan and Heydar Aliyev (1997), the idea was that: Karabakh is ruled independently by the majority (Armenians), but formally remains connected to Azerbaijan (very formally, for example, the Azerbaijani flag is hung up). However, in the current negotiations, in my view, Karabakh is connected to Armenia via the Lachin corridor and it is planned to open a road between Greater Azerbaijan and Nakhchivan. Armenians will accept it. As for Azerbaijanis, I agree with Professor Isaxanli, if I am wrong, let him correct me, it will be difficult for them to accept such an agreement; they have more fighting spirit.

Then the discussion began. Various questions were asked. One of them came from a person whose name was Sossi Tatikyan: it was said here that the presidents of the two countries are close to a compromise and a peaceful solution to the conflict.

However, in President Aliyev's opening speech in Florida, there was no new style distinct from his speech made ten years ago; he repeated what he said before: refugees, occupation... How is that possible?

My answer was short and concrete: What has changed in the past ten years to change President Aliyev's statement? We are in the same situation: conflict, occupation, refugees. Nothing has changed.

After the panel, Fuad Akhundov approached me and said, "Hamlet muellim, I was very anxious about how you would answer this provocative question ... You gave a very good answer, thank you."

In response to Professor Suny's idea that "Armenia has won the war," Ramin Isayev, a master's student at Harvard, expressed an idea that he had learned in a class on international relations: "...unless a peace agreement is signed, one cannot say that one side has won the war; Armenia has won the battle, but the war is not over yet." Professor Suny did not consider it necessary to react to this note from Ramin; seemingly, the belief that peace would be achieved created the confidence that the war was over.

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I returned to Baku. Rauf Huseynov, the interpreter of the President of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev, called me and said that he wants to meet, which we did. After greetings, Rauf explained the reason for our meeting: "Hamlet muellim, there are different opinions here about the panel at Harvard. Some say that *your speech did not fully represent the interests of Azerbaijan*, others say that *no, it was good*. Mr. President asked me to meet with you and clarify the issue."

I was surprised and turned this around in my head for a moment. It seemed that somebody had supplied false information. On the other hand, if those at the Harvard panel, especially Ambassador Carey Cavanaugh, a special negotiator from the United States, expressed his confidence that the peace agreement has been drafted and it will be signed, on behalf of Azerbaijan, by the President of Azerbaijan, my openly expression of my doubt as to whether or not the agreement would be signed could be interpreted as if I had spoken against the President of Azerbaijan. But I did not believe that a great and experienced statesman like Heydar Aliyev would sign such an agreement. Of course, various options were discussed at the meeting with the President of Armenia and the mediators; one could say *let's discuss this option*, and then it could be added easily that *no, I cannot accept these articles*; this is the nature of such talks.

I told Rauf how the panel went down and what the main dimensions of my speech were. Moreover, I said that the Harvard panel would be published soon and sent to me and that I could present it to him as soon as I received it. In reality, I got a booklet about the panel, which, unfortunately, was not a word-for-word description, but a

summary. Nevertheless, it could more or less reflect the panel discussion. I suppose that the conversation with Rauf and the booklet dispelled the doubts.

I am extremely happy that what I said in my speech at the panel came true; no agreement was signed then, the status quo continued, and, eventually, it was eliminated by the *first-war-then-peace* principle.

A Visit of Azerbaijanis to Yerevan

In the spring of 2001, news spread that the Soros Foundation, known as the Open Society Institute, wanted to open an independent fund in Nagorno-Karabakh. No one objects to humanitarian aid to the people of Nagorno-Karabakh, but it was not politically and legally correct to establish a fund in that internationally recognized territory of Azerbaijan at a time when negotiations were underway for a peaceful solution to the conflict. We set in motion and signed a petition about this issue addressed to George Soros. In addition, we stated the possibility of a special program for Nagorno-Karabakh at the Soros Foundation of Azerbaijan; residents of Nagorno-Karabakh could appeal to the office of the Soros Foundation in Baku.

The decision of the central board of the Soros Foundation was as follows: the representatives of Azerbaijan and Armenia, as interested parties, as well as of Georgia and the United States, should meet to discuss the opportunities of whether to open the Soros Foundation program for Nagorno-Karabakh in Azerbaijan, in Nagorno-Karabakh, in Armenia, or maybe not at all, and, also, to discuss regional strategy in general. This meeting should be held in Yerevan in June... Seemingly, this approach reflected the implicit intention to the effect that Azerbaijanis should not be able to participate in the discussion and thus resolve the issue in the way Armenia wants.

What is to be done then? We consulted with the professor Vilayat Guliyev, the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Vilayat muellim said that going to Yerevan was a possibility. On the basis of an agreement between the two foreign affairs ministries, our visit to Yerevan was sorted out in a positive way. Nevertheless, because the meeting was going to be held in Yerevan, it was doubtful whether our opposing ideas, if we voiced them there, would be useful.

The Azerbaijani delegation included Rauf Talishinski, editor of a Russian-language newspaper “Echo” (Эхо), historian Farda Asadov, and me among others. We went to Tbilisi, and from there we flew to Yerevan on an old and dilapidated plane of Armenian Airlines. We safely arrived in Yerevan, joking that it would be better to be killed in Yerevan than to have a plane crash. I had seen and traveled a lot in the northern part of Armenia, but had never been to Yerevan. There was a security guard in the corridor of the hotel where we were staying; they were there to protect us, the Azerbaijanis, to ensure our safety.

On the first day of making acquaintances, I saw Ms. Fiona Hill among the Americans. I knew her; we had met when I was a Board Member of Eurasia Foundation in Tbilisi, and Fiona was then the Director of Strategic Planning in Eurasia Foundation in Washington, USA. She was born in Britain to a poor family, facing difficulties from her childhood and earning a PhD in Russian history at Harvard University. Thanks to her talent and hard work, she had driven herself to academic success and excellence, as well as in management and politics.

Note. Ms. Fiona also worked in important capacities to do with intelligence and national security for three US Presidents - George W. Bush, Barack Obama and Donald Trump.

I talked with Ms. Fiona separately about the issue of the fund in Nagorno-Karabakh, noting to her that the incitement of separatism by the Soros Foundation would only exacerbate the situation. As a result of our sincere dialogue, she soon understood the subtlety of the issue, and it was on the basis of her report that a recommendation was made not to open an office and program of the Soros Foundation in Nagorno-Karabakh.

We were taken care of adequately in Yerevan. We visited Sergei Parajanov's house-museum. They toured us around Yerevan and its environs. There was also talk of the phenomenon of the Armenian primacy - the first Christian state, one of the first nations who created theatre in the world; Yerevan is one of the oldest cities in the world; Ani was once one of the biggest cities in the world; Armenian apricot is the best in the world; Armenia is the oldest wine country (as Georgians would be mad to hear!) and so on. While drinking water from a spring in Yerevan's suburb, one of the Americans said: "We are probably drinking water from the oldest spring in the world," and everyone, including Armenians, laughed.

"Poor Balayan"

Zori Balayan played an inevitable role in the provocation of the Karabakh conflict and the worsening of the Armenian-Turkish. He nurtured a constant wish for the achievement of at least a part of his radical and extremist dreams through the help of Putin, for which there are plausible reasons. Familiarity with a letter sent by Balayan to Putin in 2013 reveals many things.²¹⁵

In this letter, which is extremely racist and hateful, Balayan reveals all his grievances, not hesitating to make completely outlandish crazy suggestions such as the removal

²¹⁵ Balayan, Z., 2013. *Письмо Владимиру Путину Нет проблемы Карабаха - есть проблема России*. [Letter to Vladimir Putin "There is no problem of Karabakh - there is a problem of Russia"] Moscow, October 14, 22:36. Available at: <<https://regnum.ru/news/polit/1719610.html>>

of millions of people and their replacement by Armenians.

Balayan wished to give Nakhichevan to Armenians. If Nakhichevan had been given to Balayan, what would he have done to the people living there, to the Azerbaijanis he despised? Would he kick Azerbaijanis out and bring Armenians in? He claimed that the Republic of Azerbaijan was, historically, Armenian land. With this way of thinking, what was to be done? He would probably annex Azerbaijan to Armenia; he would see no other way. Or perhaps he would just kick more than 10 million Azerbaijanis out and substitute them with Armenians worldwide? Balayan asserted that the Republic of Azerbaijan was established by Turkey in Moscow and Kars. Probably he was not aware of the fact that the Treaty of Moscow was signed between Russia and Turkey and the Treaty of Kars between Turkey and the three South Caucasian republics with the direct participation and signing of Russia. If he knew, he should have said that Azerbaijan (as well as Armenia) was created by all those who united and signed it.

“Created under the revolutionary roar of Stalin and Atatürk, the Turkic Republic of Azerbaijan, Turkic to a point, I repeat, for the most part was located on the territory of historical Armenia, which became part of Russia after the Gulistan and Turkmenchay treaties.”

It turns out that most of the Azerbaijani khanates (Baku, Shaki, Quba, Shirvan, Talish, etc.) were situated in historical Armenia. I had not known this...

“The Caspian Sea belonged to Russia even before the war. Now there are 5 flags fluttering on the Caspian Sea. And in order to justify, more precisely, to legitimize its right to a flag in the Caspian Sea, Azerbaijan begins to intensively invent and then make its history more ancient.”

I would like to apologize to the readers in advance and have a conversation with Balayan, this person with severe pain in his chest, in a light genre, with a joke. It appears that Azerbaijan's aim in the creation of a fictitious, ancient history was to raise a flag in the Caspian Sea, and if it was not very old, it could not raise a flag. Granted, Balayan, supposedly knows that Armenia has a very ancient history and claims that Azerbaijan is located on historical Armenian soil - why does he not ask Putin to allow the Armenian flag to flutter in the Caspian Sea?

“What is to be done with the question: How did Azerbaijan appear? The issue is not about the people and nations living in these lands at that time, rather it is about the artificially created “new” nation. As there wasn't such a nation and such a country either before or after the Gulistan treaty.”

Balayan's pain is great. Probably, this artificial “new” nation of Azerbaijanis and the Azerbaijani state had just fallen from the moon or dropped from the clouds. The majority of Azerbaijanis are ethnic Turks; is it so important what name is used to refer to them in order to differentiate them from other Turks? What would be the

case if Azerbaijan were called Shirvan, Aran, Turkoba or Caspian!?! (The problem related to the name of the people and the state was discussed above ...)

“...Get the sixteen-volume encyclopedia of Yuzhakov (1904) and look at the term *Azerbaijan - a province in the north of Persia*. It is said about the population: *In the north there are Turks and Kurds...* that the Turks, who were called Azerbaijanis after a while, led only a nomadic way of life.”

Without realizing it, Balayan says that Turks and Kurds live in the north, that is, in the Caucasus (though shortly before he called it the territory of historical Armenia)... He also knew that they were later called Azerbaijanis. It's just that they all lived a nomadic life, a nomadic, wild life... But, Balayan, between you and me, it is a good thing to go to pastures in summer, and to return to winter camp in winter... On the other hand, it seems that Balayan overlooked certain things. He was not aware of the work of the lady Marietta Shaginyan, this more educated and knowledgeable author's book “Soviet Transcaucasia” where she wrote about the nomadic life of Armenians²¹⁶: “Both Armenian and Kurdish villages are leaving for the nomadic wanderings”²¹⁷. “The Kurds and Armenians remain on the summer pasture until the middle of September”²¹⁸. “Muslims (Azerbaijanis, Kurds) and Armenian highlanders still kept the instinct of a nomadic tribe in their blood.”²¹⁹. This book by M. Shaginyan, which is still read with interest, was written on the basis of her travels and observations in Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia.

I return to Balayan again. “... The vast historical Armenian territory (all of the Karabakh Khanate with the Gulistan region, the Nakhichevan khanate, the Elizavetopolsk province and other regions) had been transferred from Persia to Russia exactly two hundred years ago, after the nine-years war and Treaty of Gulistan. Naturally, this territory was inhabited by other peoples and tribes as well, including Turks. Lenin called them Caucasian Tatars. Then, in order to distinguish Caucasian Muslims from Crimean ones, a new combination of words - *Azerbaijani Tatars* appeared. It is necessary to also consider the time when all this happened.”

Although Balayan repeatedly refers to history, he makes a tiny mistake here: the Nakhichevan Khanate (also Erivan Khanate) united with Russia not as a result of the Gulistan Treaty (1813), but after the signing of the Treaty of Turkmenchay (1828). Yes, there were terms like Caucasian Tatars and Azerbaijani Tatars. Everyone was free to call them as he or she wished. What, then, would be the verdict here?

“...A tragic situation has happened in Georgia (both after the collapse of the USSR

²¹⁶ Shaginyan, M.S., 1946. *Советское Закавказье*. [Soviet Transcaucasus.] Yerevan; Armenian State Publishing House.

²¹⁷ Ibid., p. 53.

²¹⁸ Ibid., p. 54.

²¹⁹ Ibid., p. 246.

and after the events of 2008). In 1959, there were 145 thousand Azerbaijanis living in Georgia. In 1989 (the last population census in the USSR) - 300 thousand. Now - more than half a million... ”

Oh, dear! Balayan cares about Georgia: Azerbaijanis live in Georgia and their increased number becomes a tragedy for Georgia... When it comes to official statistics, around 250 thousand ethnic Azerbaijanis live there, but certainly not half a million.

“...Russia has strengthened its borders, having such a stronghold as Armenia. And Iran, in essence, got rid of the territory that was stuffed with age-old enemies.”

So, it appears that Russia’s borders have been strengthened by a stronghold like Armenia. Iran, on the other hand, got rid of the Caucasus and especially Azerbaijan - this enemy it had lived with for centuries, giving it to the Russians. Hey, Balayan, if this is true, then why did Iran keep a bigger portion of Azerbaijan, that is, Iranian Azerbaijan to itself? Why didn’t it get rid of it when the opportunity arose? Why didn’t it hand it over to Russia?

“...Aliyev Elder (this happened under Yeltsin in 1998, when you were the director of the Federal Security Service) adopted a caricatured law on... the genocide of Azerbaijanis. And he even came up with a *special day - March 31... It is written in black on white, very clearly, in the document: The northern part of Azerbaijan was conquered (? - Z.B.) by Russia, its southern part (? - Z.B.) turned out under the Iranian state. This is no longer a trivial lie. This is a typical Turkish policy*”.

I thought for a moment, what does Balayan mean to say to Putin here? Aha! He questioned the occupation of the northern part by Russia; that is, Mr. Putin, you are called an occupier... And the South remained in Iran, that is, it was not occupied. It seems that Balayan does not know that Russia really occupied the Caucasus, Central Asia and other places, or he demonstrates his intentional ignorance...

Balayan happily quotes from the speech of the deputy from Urmia: *If a referendum is held among Azerbaijani residents, who separated from Iran according to the terms of the treaties of Gulistan and Turkmenchay, they will vote for re-joining Iran. And there is only one reason: If only, if something happens, not to be in Turkey.*

It turns out that the citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan are just waiting for a favourable time to form a part of Iran, and they are very afraid of their relationship and potential unification with Turkey. I am not aware...

“...Vladimir Vladimirovich, I beg you, let us think with all our hearts, sincerely and openly about the dilemma- what kind of compromise can we talk about... You see, according to the logic of historical truth, when we talk about the real compromise, in our specific case, we have to have in mind the entire Armenian Nakhichevan (the entire autonomous republic), the Shaumyan region, the Elizavetopol province, Chardakhlu,

the legendary village of Armenian marshals and generals and many other regions. ”

Balayan does not accept any compromise. The issue is not about the compromise for Nagorno-Karabakh; Nagorno Karabakh and all 7 regions of Azerbaijan surrounding it are already under the control of Greater Armenia; it seems, this problem, according to Balayan, has been solved completely. He has a wish of turning all of Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic, the former Shaumyan region, the city Ganja and its surrounding area, that is the old Elisabethpol gubernia, Chardaqli village and many other regions into Armenia. He cannot bear to compromise on any single village or hill from these territories. Such a cruel man, Balayan; he doesn't feel any remorse or empathy for us...

I also want to address Putin, of course, in Russian: Владимир Владимирович, очень прошу Вас, давайте, положи руку на сердце, искренне и открыто задумаемся над тем, как помочь Балаяну? Неужели вы не можете дать этому бедному Балаяну что-то? (Vladimir Vladimirovich, I beg you very much, let us think with all our hearts, sincerely and openly, how to help Balayan. Is that so? Can you not give this poor Balayan something?).

The Karabakh Conflict: What was Thought? What was Done?

What kinds of things were done after the first Karabakh war to solve the Armenia-Azerbaijan-Nagorno Karabakh conflict, which was the most problematic territorial conflict in the territory of the former USSR?

From a broader perspective, there are 3 sides trying to solve the problem: the Armenian side, the Azerbaijani side, and the international community. Considering the aims each side pursues, there are overlapping, different and also totally opposing views. All sides wished for a peaceful solution to the problem, this is clear. But how can such a peaceful solution have been possibly achieved? Is it possible to find a solution through negotiations that will satisfy all sides?

The Minsk group, representing the international community, pointed out that *the only way is a peaceful way, through negotiations; there is no other alternative but to conduct the intensive negotiations via our mediation and find a solution within mutual compromise*. As a result of the negotiations with both sides, the Minsk group put forward two strategies in line with the solution: a packet solution and a gradual solution. The packet solution supported the view that everything should be completely decided in advance and a peace treaty should then be signed. Under the “everything,” Armenia wanted the status of Nagorno-Karabakh resolved with clarity and, as a solution, wanted it recognized as an independent state. This strategy failed since it was against the main principle of protecting the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan.

Discussions were, consequently, based on a gradual solution. This was thought to mean the return, according to a certain schedule, of the occupied lands of Azerbaijan outside of Nagorno-Karabakh, the opening transport corridors, the return of refugees back to their lands, the attainment of the security of Nagorno-Karabakh at that time and the postponement of the painful issue of status and, thus, self-determination for some time. The Armenian side insisted on adding to the packet solution certain points about the status of Nagorno-Karabakh (the combined form of packet-gradual solution). In response to this request, Azerbaijan put forward the possibility of granting Nagorno-Karabakh the highest possible autonomy inside the Republic of Azerbaijan. In fact, in the international arena, where territorial integrity is considered as an unquestionable principle, self-determination implies a high right of self-government. Certainly, in diplomatic negotiations, some details and specific issues were not missed.

After all this, why was the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict not solved in a peaceful way?

The answer can be found in the quite dissimilar attitudes of each of the three sides regarding the problem.

What did this mean? The Azerbaijani side accepted the gradual solution, whereas, the Armenian side, in every possible way, tried to subvert the process, attempting to prolong the negotiations, and to preserve the status-quo. The Armenian public policy was totally focused on “Karabakh,” as if the most important issues were Karabakh and Great Armenia, but not the development and progress of Armenia itself. According to the Armenian view, if all the world, including superpowers like the USA and Russia, say that *the only possible solution is the peaceful one*, then there will not be any war for Karabakh. If there will not be any war, then why should we give back the occupied lands to Azerbaijan in vain, without reason, for nothing? Let Azerbaijan recognize Karabakh as an independent state and then, as a result, we may give back the lands that we gained through war, maybe with the exception of one or two districts. That is all. If Azerbaijan does not accept this, it is its business. Over time, both Azerbaijan and the world will have to accept the current situation ...

As such, the view of the Armenian side was clear enough. But what about the Minsk group, could they, and superpowers in general, not put pressure on Armenia in favor of the peaceful solution, i.e. a gradual solution of the problem? Could they not put some sanctions on Armenia in the case of its persistence? My answer: no they could not. The Minsk group, as well as other world powers involved, were not so worried about either the protracted lengthening of the problem or the continuation of the status-quo. I would say they did not even consider the possibility of placing any amount of pressure on Armenia. They only supported the continuation of the negotiations, which only played into Armenia’s hands and was in line with its wish to preserve the status-quo.

Another issue that made Armenia careless was the mindset: *Azerbaijan can't achieve anything even if they started a war*. There were two reasons for this; they thought that the Armenian military was a strong one, it had already proved this on the battlefield. Also, the USA and Russia would not let the war stretch out too long. In case of any extension, they could come in to help the Armenian side. The Armenians ignored the warning signals of Armenian politicians and intellectuals like A. Shirvanzade, Kachaznuni, Ter-Petrosyan, J. Libarian etc. Myths like “Great Armenia,” “We are strong,” “All the world ignores the Azerbaijanis and loves us” prevailed over all rational thinking. “The history of Karabakh itself shows that when Armenians have not found the solution, someone else has imposed it and has made the conflict irrelevant”.²²⁰ Really, why did the Armenians fail to solve this problem? I would say that a thought I heard, voiced by an intelligent man of Armenian origin, could help us arrive at the answer: “*Karabakh was always separate from Armenia, it had never been a part of Armenia; it was even a separate sub-ethnic group.*”

Thus, it became clear what the Minsk group, the representatives of the international community, and the Armenian side, thought about the solution to the Karabakh conflict. But what did Azerbaijan, the oppressed and occupied side, think? I guess neither Armenia nor the Minsk group were totally aware of it.

* * *

Azerbaijan had never agreed with the occupation of its lands; when talking of Azerbaijan, I mean everyone – from the leaders to ordinary citizens, regardless of their ethnic identity, Language and religion. The prolongation and the failure of the negotiations leave the people tired and annoyed and lead to desperate questions like “can we solve the problem through a military manner” or “how can it be resolved at all.”

Having lost a considerable part of its lands, Azerbaijan didn't mourn, but started to develop its economy. It spent the revenue derived from oil and natural gas and other sources on the rebuilding of the country, reducing poverty, the improvement of public lifestyle, non-oil sectors, and on culture.

I am far from idealizing Azerbaijan. There are unresolved issues. However, with the passage of time, the progress of Azerbaijan found a better and better pace. Once I took part in an academic conference in China, one representative from each participating countries was invited to the board of the conference meetings, I was there as well. A professor representing South Korea approached me at the break and we got acquainted. He said they want to visit Azerbaijan, Baku. I promised to invite them with great pleasure, then I asked about the reason for their interest to see Azerbaijan, as Azerbaijan and South Korea are so far apart, and, besides,

²²⁰ Op. cit. 157.

Azerbaijan is not so big a country as to be attractive. The explanation the professor provided was quite interesting. He told me the economics experts of their university had conducted research on the fastest changing, developed, and growing beautiful cities all over the world - Baku came in first. That is why they wished to visit this city and build a relationship with its universities...

Not only Baku, but all the regions of Azerbaijan, small and big cities, have been undergoing rebuilding and renewal, with new roads in every direction being constructed and the old ones repaired. Administrative and residential buildings, business centres are being erected to the highest standards. There used to be people, complaining about money being wasted on outward beauty and luxury; at times they are right. But now, doing everything to visually appealing and high quality standards is the leading tendency and this is very good. All these led to the thought, consciously or subconsciously, that “the Karabakh conflict should also be resolved once and for all; we can do it, we must do it seriously.”

It is very important to create the broad impression all over the world, as far as possible, about the issues like: “*what is the place of Karabakh in Azerbaijani culture? Why is Karabakh Azerbaijan?*” The Armenian diaspora spread all over the world, especially to developed countries, to superpower, introducing itself there for ages, busy with strong lobbying. While, the spread of Azerbaijanis all over the world is just a new tendency. Although there were many things done for Azerbaijan in a short time, it is impossible to ignore the big power of the Armenian lobby. I would like to provide an example. In 1993, we managed to set up a partnership program between Khazar university and a well-known UCLA, that is University of California at Los Angeles. The visits of our instructors-specialists to Los Angeles, and theirs to Baku started. The library of UCLA is considered to be one of the richest libraries in the US. While working there, I looked through the catalogue of the library wondering what I could find on Azerbaijan. I also had a consultant librarian on hand. There were approximately 250-300 books on Azerbaijan, mostly Soviet publications in Russian. Then I wondered about what the library had stocked on Armenians. The librarian responded to my inquiry saying *it was an easy deal, since we have a special Armenian studies section*; there were more than 60 thousand books in English, Russian, French and other languages...

* * *

The Heydar Aliyev Foundation played a most overriding and indispensable role in the promotion of Azerbaijani and also Karabakh culture. A variety of factors have greatly contributed to the promotion of Azerbaijani culture and the promotion of Karabakh, and in general to the growth of Azerbaijan’s international prestige. Among these have been exquisite books and magazines published in different languages, major conferences held abroad or within the country, international festivals, art exhibitions, musical events, charity occasions, cultural days, events demonstrating cultural diversity and religious tolerance, recognition of the Khojaly

genocide, the support for Azerbaijanis living abroad, and a number of various other ventures and enterprises.

We also have engaged in small-scale measures to do with Karabakh geared to establishing direct cultural communication with American society. In 2008, several men, including me, discussed the idea of creating a non-political organization called Karabakh Foundation which was to operate in the US. There were people volunteering to fund this foundation which aimed to introduce the cultural heritage of Karabakh to the Americans; after the establishment of this charitable fund, there were hopes of attracting additional financial resources. Eventually, it was agreed that Co-Founders and Board of Directors would consist of three people: Prof. Dr. Hamlet İsaxanlı (or Isakhanli), Dr. Adil Baghirov and Dr. John Vafai. As a result of these efforts, the Karabakh foundation with the status of 501 (c)(3) was established in Washington in 2009. It was announced that all the activities in accordance with the main purpose of the Foundation will be taken into account and looked on with complete goodwill, including international cooperation, exchange in science and education, interesting publications, exhibitions, and music programs. Up to 2015, the Karabakh Foundation implemented extensive programs. But after that, the Fund faced financial difficulties and gradually weakened.

The Second Karabakh War: The Karabakh-Gordian Knot

The President of Azerbaijan, İlham Aliyev, has stated over and over again at international and local, official and unofficial meetings that *we want a peaceful solution to the Karabakh conflict, but if it is not resolved, we will settle the problem by military means*. He has stated decisively that *we would never allow the establishment of a 2nd Armenian state in the territory of Azerbaijan, and that the status quo could not last indefinitely*. The President's words were taken mostly to be military rhetoric in diplomatic circles and the media; he was told *to continue the peace talks*, but they were indifferent to Armenia's attempts to disrupt and prolong the negotiation process as much as possible.

In my opinion, the President of Azerbaijan has long been aware of the fact that the talks would never be a route to any viable success, and of the fact that the issue will not be resolved without resorting to military means. Consequently, he chose the path of maximizing Azerbaijan's military power. He has never concealed this decision, even warning Armenia *that the money allocated for the development of the Azerbaijani military is more than Armenia's entire state budget*, calling on Armenia to return the occupied lands peacefully. Armenian (and several Russian) politicians referred to the victory of Azerbaijani troops in the battles of April 2016 and the liberation of certain territories as if nothing serious had happened. They tried to reassure their people that *Armenia had driven Azerbaijan back, Azerbaijan had not recaptured any places of strategic importance, and Azerbaijan neither had*

the ability to run and last in a blitzkrieg war nor withstand a long-term conflict. Armenian politicians and the Armenian military, it seems, did not see reality; they did not see the shift of power.

In order to enter the war, develop a war strategy, and gain victory, a number of factors must be considered. First, it is necessary to prepare a strong army, to provide it with modern state-of-the-art weapons and military technology, to have a well-trained corps of officers, to make sure that the army is far stronger than the army of the enemy, to conduct serious expedient pre-war military exercises, to organize all kinds of military supplies, and to choose the right time for the attack. There are other vital issues, each of which can turn the tide: the economic situation of the country, propaganda on the international arena, and the presence of strong allies are important examples. Close allies are especially beneficial because they can try to neutralize forces, namely the states that can help enemy side. It is necessary to think about and observe the situation surrounding the adversary as a whole, especially regarding its military, and to be able to obtain information concerning the enemy.

* * *

For Shusha and its surrounding area, expressions such as *the real Armenian lands, the ancient Armenian city* (истинно армянские земли, древний армянский город), sounded in the utterances of both those who were aware and those who were not aware of the real facts, leaving all Azerbaijanis aggrieved and afflicted. It was absolutely illogical to rename the occupied regions of Azerbaijan, including its cities and villages.

Recently, the words and actions of Pashinyan, the Prime Minister of Armenia, who made peace talks meaningless, were obvious. His explicit statement that the so-called parliament of Nagorno-Karabakh will be located in Shusha and his dancing in Shusha on Cıdır düzü (Horse Racing Field), did nothing but touch the patriotic feelings of every Azerbaijani, insulting the Azerbaijani people. His actions already got on the people's strained nerves. The Azerbaijani people felt humiliated. They demanded war. Unity and morale in the people and the military are decisive factors in war.

But who should open the way to victory? Who should lead the country and the military to victory? The President, Supreme Commander-in-Chief and the people! The Supreme Commander-in-Chief said that victory was achieved thanks to the blood of the Shahids (Martyrs) as well as the heroism of our soldiers and officers. He is right! But I am sure that the knowledge, culture, strength, determination, anger, passion, military and diplomatic skills, speech, and sense of humor of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, as well as his status as a man of the people, are also decisive factors in achieving victory. The strategy for the country's progress, the strategy of building a strong modern military is the responsibility of the President. Decision-making is a difficult job that requires an immense amount of responsibility; the fate

of the country depends on how and when to take decisive steps.

To whose advantage did time work? With the exception of a small group of intelligent Armenians, most Armenian politicians and the people who believed in their propaganda supposed that time worked in Armenia's favor. Time, in their view, could perpetuate the status quo, which was quite stable. The great Jafar Jabbarli is remembered here:

Axan çaylar, sən kiminsən? – Mənə körpü salanın!
 Doğan günəş, sən kiminsən? – Məndən işıq alanın!
 Sonsuz fəza, sən kiminsən? – Məndə qanad çalanın!
 Həyat, söylə, sən kiminsən? – Mən həyatı öyrənənin, bacaranın, alanın!

Flowing rivers, to whom do you belong? To those who build a bridge over me!
 Rising Sun, to whom do you belong? – To those who get the light from me!
 Infinite space, to whom do you belong? To those who flap wings in me!
 Life, tell me, to whom do you belong? – I belong to those who learn, succeed, and earn life!

Note. Composer Ramiz Mirishli wrote beautiful music to these words, and well-known singer Elmira Rahimova sang this song beautifully. Young singer Kamila Nabiyeva was also able to demonstrate a worthy performance.

That is, the flowing rivers, the rising sun, the infinite space, and life itself are the possessions of those who sit with it, deal with it, and are able to appreciate it! Time belongs to those who value it! When President Ilham Aliyev spoke about the Karabakh problem in an interview, he stated that *everything should be done in its time*. I noticed it as a sign of war.

The war was to begin when the time came. This is precisely what happened. The Army of Azerbaijan served as an army of victory. Azerbaijan's soldiers and officers, modern weapons, technology, and diplomatic preparation were utilized masterfully. The First Karabakh War lasted a long time: mutual attacks, defenses and counter-attacks inflicted heavy losses on both sides. As a final result the Armenian side won and was able to occupy large swathes of territory. The Second Karabakh War was very different. In a war that lasted only 44 days, the Azerbaijani side had an incomparable advantage: The Azerbaijani side attacked sharply while the Armenian side was defensive. We witnessed the high fighting spirit of the Azerbaijani army; the unity of the country and of Azerbaijanis worldwide was felt. Azerbaijan saw its ally near itself in political and military preparations. The Azerbaijani army appeared to have an overwhelming advantage over the Armenian army, and the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of Azerbaijan had an overwhelming advantage over the Armenian Supreme Commander-in-Chief.

* * *

According to Greek mythology, the Phrygian ruler Gordius built a city in his name (Gordium) and declared it the capital of the state (now Yassıhüyük, 70-80 km southwest of Ankara). The essence of the legend is the following: King Gordius placed his axle chariot in the city temple and tied the axis of the bogey to the yoke with a strong rope made of cornel fibers. There, he tied a knot in the yoke so intricate that it was impossible to untie it. This knot entered history as the *Gordian knot*. Again, according to legend²²¹, Alexander the Great (of Macedonia) went to the temple after he captured the city. Aware that it was said that whoever could untie the Gordian knot would conquer Asia, Alexander, who himself harbored such ambitions, tried to untie the knot with his hands. At first, he failed. However, after he failed to untie the knot with his hands could not, he took out his sword, cut the knot with one blow, and proclaimed, *I have untied the knot*.

This legend gave rise to the phrase *Cutting the Gordian Knot*: if a person solves a seemingly intractable problem in an unusual way, that person *is said to have cut the Gordian knot*. For many years, for decades, they said that the *Karabakh problem could only be resolved peacefully, that is, the Karabakh knot could only be opened by hand*. The President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, tried to do so, to untie the Karabakh knot, which had become the Gordian knot. He attempted to resolve it peacefully. Then, seeing that this was not possible, he raised his iron fist and smashed the knot with a single blow, militarily.

The phrase “Paşinyan nooldu?!” (“Pashinyan, what happened!?”) entered the phraseological dictionary of the Azerbaijani language. It is more appropriate at this point to place question and exclamation marks together because there is both a question and a triumph here. Some expressions found in the works of our poets and writers have become proverbial phrases in our language: “Salam verdim, rüşvət deyil deyə almadılar” (“I greeted them, they ignored me because it was not a bribe,” M. Fuzuli), Uzeyir Hajibeyov’s “Heç hənanın yeridir?!” (“It is untimely to talk about henna”), “Bəs mənim bir abbasım?!” (“But what about my one abbasi (20 qepik)?!” “Bir eybim var, o da eyibsizliyimdir” (“I have a shortcoming which is my irreproachability”), “Tarixi Nadir’i yarıya qədər oxuyub” (“He read half of Tarixi Nadir” - History of Nadir), “Yox, mən o məcnunlardan deyiləm” (“No, I am not one of those mejnun - mad with love),” “Mənə meymun deməyin bəs deyil?!” (“It is not enough to call me a monkey?!”), “Babalı Sərvərin boynuna” (“May the guilt fall on the Server”), “Bir nəfər molla, üç manat pul, bir kəllə qənd” (“One mullah, three manats, one loaf of sugar”), and “Öz cəzandır, çək, Balaş” (“It’s your punishment, endure, Balash,” Jafar Jabbarli) and others. President Ilham Aliyev added new expressions to our phraseological dictionary, proverbs and sayings; “Pashinyan, nooldu?!” is one of them. When a person commits inept actions, stirs up somebody’s anger, as the phrase goes, when he or she swaggers, is disrespectful, or brags, but

²²¹ Plutarch. 1987. *Selected biographies. Volume 2*. Moscow:Pravda. See in, Alexander and Caesar, p. 378

in the end falls into a sorrowful condition, it is worth saying “Pashinyan, nooldu!?” (What happened, Pashinyan!?)

* * *

After the First Karabakh War, the period of lengthy peace talks began. The maximalism of the Armenian side and the passivity of the international mediators thwarted the peace talks. The course of the Second Karabakh War showed that the Azerbaijani side had the unmistakable advantage; the liberation of Azerbaijani lands began. However, the President of Azerbaijan said that *if the Armenian Prime Minister announced the time for the gradual withdrawal of his army from the occupied territories, the Azerbaijani army would stop at that moment*. Because the goal was not war; war was a means to the goal, which was to end the occupation. The goal was not to destroy the Armenian army, but to restore justice with as few casualties as possible. On November 9-10, 2020, the President of Azerbaijan showed he was a man of his word, and the Presidents of Azerbaijan and Russia, and Prime Minister of Armenia signed a tripartite declaration on the cessation of hostilities and the settlement of post-war affairs. Azerbaijan had gained victory. The Second Karabakh War was called the *Patriotic War* in Azerbaijan.

Some maximalists (from the Azerbaijani side) were of the opinion that *the Azerbaijani army should have soldiered on to the end*. However, there is no alternative to the liberation of large areas without shooting a single bullet or bloodshed. Maximalism would not allow for the creation of a transport corridor connecting Nakhchivan and Greater Azerbaijan as well as Turkey and Azerbaijan. Maximalism would lead to the blood of thousands of people being spilled, civilian casualties, and the destruction of towns and villages far from the battlefield. I am sure that no one doubts the determination and patriotism of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief. His speeches and interviews were interpreted and translated immediately throughout the world, far and wide, raising the prestige of Azerbaijan. According to one commentator, Azerbaijan has entered the top league of world politics. The Supreme Commander-in-Chief made this decision; this is probably the best among all possible outcomes. Being a maximalist often does not only not bring good but also sometimes even leads to disaster. Also, there are many things the leader knows that we do not know, and there may even be some things that even his closest confidants are not aware of.

What To Do Now? Where Do We Go From Here?

One of the songs performed by Zeynab Khanlarova is called “Mother’s voice.” It was originally composed by Alakbar Taghiyev and its lyrics were written by Novruz Ganjali.

Ana qəlbim odlanır söz düşəndə davadan.
 Bəs deyilmi, ey insanlar, töküldü qan, axdı qan?
 Bəs deyilmi, qara torpaq su içdi göz yaşından.

.....
 Mən anayam, bu səsəmdə yerin, göyün dərdi var,
 Sülhə gəlin, ey insanlar, yoxsa dünya məhv olar.

My mother's heart catches fire when we deal with war.
 Isn't it enough, o people, blood was shed, flowing blood?
 Isn't it enough that the black soil was awash with tears?

.....
 I am a mother, there is the pain and sorrow of the earth and sky in my voice,
 Come to peace, people, or the world will be ruined).

Armenians and Azerbaijanis! We need to make peace; has enough blood not been shed? In some hearts and minds, the war still goes on. It is time to change! Now there is a need to put aside the question of *who is to blame*. It is time to direct bilateral talks. Extremist nationalism gives the nation a myth and brings only misery. Imagination is a winged creature; it flies, but reality walks on the ground. It is good to dream, but in real life, a person does not fly - they walk. Let us think about today and tomorrow. Emotional shock is understandable. There have been tragedies in the history of every nation. This is not supposed to result in everlasting hatred between nations. Hatred is building a wall in the present, which limits us, deprives us of seeing the other side of the wall. We need to build a bridge: a bridge of human relations. Economic and cultural cooperation is better than the construction of the walls of hatred. History has shown that over time, animosity between nations and states disappears because there is no point in perpetuating hostility; it harms both sides.

* * *

It is not easy to move from yesterday's hostility to tomorrow's cooperation. Yesterday - memory prevents it. But tomorrow - the future wants it. What else prevents us? Religion?

There is a front, a facade, created by the West against Islam that portrayed it as conservative monster that fights on a front against other religions, feeds terrorism, and so on. This is the result of prejudice built in the West. Do you think freedom of speech provides a basis for offending people's deepest feelings? Is drawing a caricature of Prophet Muhammad not an insult to Muslim students, their parents and the Islamic world? When it comes to terrorism, it has nothing to do with religion, it has nothing to do with a terrorist who uses a flag or a shield as a religion, and a believer, a Muslim or an atheist. There is Armenian terror, but there is no Azerbaijani terror. Azerbaijan lost the First Karabakh war, but it did not think of engaging in terrorism.

I ask a question: Azerbaijan, Georgia or Armenia - which one is more religious? According to a US Gallup poll²²² conducted in 2008, Azerbaijan ranked as one of the top eleven least religious countries in the world! The study consisted of three variables: the importance of the role of religion in people's daily lives, the amount of religious practice, and the degree of trust in religious institutions. According to the survey, Azerbaijan is the least religious of the three nations on all accounts.. Armenia is more religious than Azerbaijan and Georgia is even more religious than that! In Azerbaijan about 65% of the population are Shiites and 35% are Sunnis. Trust in religious institutions is 63% in Azerbaijan, 80% in Armenia, and 86% in Georgia. Azerbaijan is one of the most secular countries in the world! Wise Armenians, Azerbaijanis and others have repeatedly stated that the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict is not a religious one. However, sometimes, Armenian ideologues have called *for the protection of Christians and their religious monuments from savage Muslims* in order to win the sympathy of the West, calling on them and Russia for help.

On the other hand, in the wars between Russia or European countries from one side and Iran or Turkey (Ottoman) on the other side, some Armenian citizens of Iran and Turkey have showed Christian solidarity, supporting not their own countries, but Russians and Europeans, fighting on their side in hope of using them to gain autonomy or independence. When Russian or European forces withdrew, most Armenians in Turkey and Iran were forced to leave their countries. Thus, choosing the superiority of religious solidarity over civil solidarity ultimately harmed the Armenian community.

* * *

Who and what else serves as an obstacle on our path to peace? Russia?

In the last two centuries, Russia has become a leading power in our region, and as a result of wars, it has annexed many of its neighboring territories, including the Caucasus. At that time, neither the Georgians, nor the Armenians, nor the Azerbaijanis had the opportunity to become truly independent states. The Georgian principalities and the Azerbaijani khanates remained between Russia, Iran, and to a lesser extent, the Ottoman Empire. Russia came out strong in this confrontation. Russia can be blamed; its policy at that time, in addition to its aggression, suffered from other shortcomings. However, it would be unfair to deny that Russia provided a safe and peaceful life and contributed to the development of the Caucasian peoples in terms of science, education, and culture.

Although there have been short-term injustices against Armenians, it must be said that *Armenia was created by Russia*. It was Russia that named the territories of

²²² Charles, R., 2010. *Religiosity in Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan. Caucasus Analytical Digest*. No. 20, October 11.

the Yerevan and Nakhchivan khanates *Армянская область* (the Armenian region) in pursuit of a policy of Armenianization. Eventually, one of the places it named, *Ериванская губерния* (the Yerevan province), formed the basis of the future Armenian state, the Republic of Armenia. Armenia, which was in a bad situation due to its foolish war declared against Turkey, was rebuilt by Russia through Sovietization. Russia has traditionally defended Armenians.

However, blaming Russia for not doing this or that for Armenians stems from a misunderstanding; first, Russia has always had its own state interests which sometimes do not coincide with the will of Armenia, and secondly, Russia cannot always do what it wants; it has to reckon with Turkey or Britain or other powers.

The Russian factor is decisive in the Caucasus. As the situation in Russia changed, the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict flared up. It suffices to recall 1905, 1918-1921, 1945 and Perestroika which began in 1985, and the collapse of the USSR at the initiative of Russia.

What did the Minsk Group, an international organization established for the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, accomplish? Almost nothing. The 1994 Armenian-Azerbaijani ceasefire agreement was reached with Russia's help, thanks to whom the April 2016 ceasefire was also reached. Finally, the end of the Second Karabakh War was directly mediated by Russia. Has Armenia always had good relations with Russia? Recently, it seems, there has been a tendency for Armenia to distance itself from Russia. Armenia condemned its ally Russia for selling arms to Azerbaijan. However, Russia has always provided arms to Armenia free of charge and on very favorable terms, that is, it has helped Armenia, whereas it sold arms to Azerbaijan at market prices. Therefore, it is possible that Azerbaijan received better quality, more expensive weapons from Russia.

Before the Second Karabakh War, many Russian politicians and journalists wrote that if a war broke out to liberate the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, Russia would not interfere. Russia did not really interfere because Azerbaijan did not attack Armenia, it was fighting on its own land recognized by the international community. In addition to being an economic and military strategic ally with Armenia, Russia had close relations with Azerbaijan as well. One thing should be noted for sure. In my opinion, if Armenia was not a member of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (ОДКВ - Организация Договора о Коллективной Безопасности), which envisages Russian intervention in the attack on it, in the Second Karabakh War, Azerbaijan could attack not only in the occupied territories, but along the vast Armenian border. Azerbaijan had the right to do so: you have occupied my territory and you are not retreating, so I will encroach on your territory; if you retreat, I will stop.

* * *

What and who else is stopping us from coming to peace? Turkey?

It is clear that Turkey and Armenia have tense relations. But what is to be done about it? Does a policy of eternal hostility benefit Armenia? Tragedies occurred during the Ottoman period. I commented on this above. The Turks say that the Armenians attacked them, rebelling; they wonder why the Armenians joined Russia as Ottoman citizens, committing treason against their homeland, and so on. Any great tragedy or massacre, must be condemned - no matter who did it, no matter who it happened to. It's hard to forget, but life goes on; today, now it is impossible to live in the past.

The Armenians living in Turkey are very satisfied with their lives. It should also be noted that the image of the brutal Turk was not created by Armenians alone, "The missionary establishment and the British propagandists created an enduring Myth of the Terrible Turk like other myths, whether dangerous or harmless, it became so ingrained in the minds of believers that it was accepted without investigation or rational consideration." Justin McCarthy sees one of the reasons for this misconception in the lack of familiarity with the Turks: "Unfamiliarity with the Turks surely fed the myth... It is astonishing that the prejudices against the Turks live on in the twenty-first century, both in popular culture and in histories and textbooks... The textbooks...tell the same tale: Christians always innocent, Muslims always guilty".²²³

These anti-Turkish views are also found in Russia, where Russian and Armenian commentators threaten Russians with rumors of Turkish domination and Turanism. The Turks translate the works directed against them in Western and Armenian historiography and give readers and specialists the opportunity to get acquainted with them. I think it would be better if Armenians and Russians translate the relevant works by Turkish authors, as well as a number of works by Western authors into Russian or Armenian that do not correspond with traditional Armenian or Russian positions and prejudices.

* * *

Who else hinders us Armenians and Azerbaijanis on the road to peace? Ourselves!

Although it is difficult to forget the pain of the past, we must abstain from shrinking into ourselves, into our own little shells; we must be able to joke and make fun of ourselves. Let us investigate war crimes ourselves. What happened in the past? Khojaly. What is happening now? A criminal case has been filed in Azerbaijan over the treatment of several Azerbaijani soldiers of a few Armenian captives...

²²³ McCarthy, J., 2010. *The Turk in America. The Creation of an Enduring Prejudice*. The University of Utah Press; pp. 287 - 289.

Some Armenians say it is impossible to live together with Azerbaijanis. Why? Have Azerbaijanis and Armenians not lived side by side for centuries!? I talked about this in detail above. Unfortunately, there are also Azerbaijanis who do not consider it possible to live in peace with Armenians. Why are Georgians and Azerbaijanis or Georgians and Turks not enemies!? Along with Azerbaijani Turks, Lezgins, Russians, Talysh, Avars, Mehseti (Akhiska) Turks, Tats, a certain number of Armenians, Georgians, Kurds, Ukrainians, Jews, Tatars, Udis, Sakhurs, Rutuls, Khinaligs, Kryz and other Shahdag peoples, Gypsies, Europeans, Americans, Indians, and Pakistanis can all be found in Azerbaijan. Do they not live together in a friendly way in Azerbaijan?

Some arrogant and violent anti-Azerbaijani Armenians tried to organize the Lezgi, Talysh and Kurds against the Republic of Azerbaijan, promising to extend a hand of brotherhood to them and work together to create an independent Talyshistan and Lezgistan during the occupation of Azerbaijan in the near future. But I am sure that all the people from minority groups living in Azerbaijan love Azerbaijan and do not succumb to any provocations. Of course, there are some separatists in every nation; I do not take them into account, their number is too small, and their strength is negligible. I want the Azerbaijani government to be more sensitive to the rights of national minorities in Azerbaijan. It is necessary to create all conditions necessary for the development of their language and culture.

Let Armenia recognize the territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and let Azerbaijan, in turn, recognize the territorial integrity of the Republic of Armenia. Let Azerbaijan ensure the security and self-expression of the Karabakh Armenians, the system of local self-government, the development of education and culture, and the protection of their cultural heritage. Azerbaijan is not the younger brother or satellite of any country. There exists a brotherhood between Turkey and Azerbaijan. With its well-thought-out policy, Azerbaijan can and should try to further the improvement of relations between Iran and Turkey, Turkey and Israel, and Turkey and Armenia.

* * *

What do Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians gain and lose by being Azerbaijani citizens?

I do not know what they will lose, but it is clear what they will win. They will live comfortably in Karabakh, which they consider their homeland. Social security will be much better than in Armenia and far more than that provided by the separatist organization trying to secede from Azerbaijan. They will be able to find easier and more profitable jobs; many workers will be needed to restore and rebuild the liberated territories.

Note. The people were shocked by the terrible situation of completely destroyed cities and villages liberated from occupation. The EuroNews TV program called the remains of Aghdam the “Hiroshima of the Caucasus.”

Based on the information provided by international organizations, I compare the three South Caucasian republics on several important indicators that determine the standard of living (data is fixed during the writing of this work):

1. Poverty. According to 2018 data, the poor make up 5.1% of the population of Azerbaijan, 20.1% in Georgia and 23.5% in Armenia.
2. Unemployment. According to the data for 2020, the unemployment rate in Azerbaijan is 6%, in Georgia - 11.5%, and in Armenia - 18.9%.
3. Price of gasoline (Octane - 95), which changes frequently. At present, the price of a liter of high-octane gasoline in Azerbaijan is \$0.47, in Georgia - \$0.90, and in Armenia - \$0.92.
4. Quality of roads (1 point as minimum, 7 points as maximum). The information for 2019 is as follows: Azerbaijan ranks 24th in the world with 5.2 points, ahead of countries such as England, Belgium, Italy, Australia, Israel, Greece, Turkey, and Russia, and is first among the countries of the former Soviet Union. Georgia ranks 117th in the world with 3.8 points, and Armenia ranks 92nd in the world with 3.6 points.
5. Gross Domestic Product Purchasing Power Parity (GDP PPP) - the Republic of Azerbaijan is 74th in the world with \$147 billion, Georgia is 103rd with \$56 billion, and Armenia is in 114th place with \$41 billion in this important economical index. As can be seen, the Armenian GDP PPP comprises only 28% of Azerbaijan's GDP PPP, while the Georgian and Armenian GDP PPPs together account for only 66% of Azerbaijan's GDP PPP. This will allow Azerbaijan to make large investments, work on major projects, including the restoration of liberated lands. In turn, the provision of life in these areas will further increase GDP.
6. Happiness index. Azerbaijan ranks 89th, Georgia 117th and Armenia 116th. It would not take much guesswork to realize that Azerbaijan's index must have changed for the better and Armenia's for the worse following the end of the Second Karabakh War.

Azerbaijani and Armenian people are doomed to live in the same neighborhood, as history has shown. I want them to live not as doomed or condemned people, but as good neighbors with favourable relations, comings and goings.

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