

ARIF YUNUSOV

KARABAKH:

PAST AND PRESENT

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The current research is dedicated to the history of Karabakh since ancient times up to nowadays. The main attention is paid to the history of appearance and different aspects of Armenian-Azeri conflict because of the Karabakh. The basics of the research made the many year long studies of the author undertaken in that respect from the very beginning of the conflict and up to day. The publication is addressed to everybody who is interested in the Karabakh problem as well as various aspects of Armenian-Azeri conflict.

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Instead of fore word

Not long ago, the Caucasus, where more than one hundred nationalities lived, was known to everyone as the land of longevity and rest and it was called “sunny and blessed.” Today it is a region which is primarily associated with wars and interethnic conflicts, ethnic cleansing and terrorist acts, a dire economic situation and the forced mass emigration of the population and where tourist complexes and rest homes that are no longer in use are filled with unhappy refugees.

The beginning of all that was caused by the Armenian-Azeri war over Nagorny Karabakh. Today it is not only the oldest conflict in the territory of the former Soviet Union but also it is the most intricate and complicated one. For a long time now it has turned into a modern “Gordian knot” and neither famous international organizations nor the leading powers of the planet can undo it.

Today very few people remember, or wish to remember, how and why that conflict started. But, on the whole, an opinion was formed, particularly in Western societies, that the Karabakh conflict is “an episode in an epic struggle between the traditions and institutions of the Turkic and Armenian nations” (1). However, in concrete, the main reasons for it, as accepted in the West today, were the determined decision of Stalin in 1921 to pass Nagorny Karabakh to Azerbaijan and the national oppression of Azeris over Armenians in soviet times. Meanwhile, Armenians, as one of the ancient Christian nations with a complicated history aroused great sympathy, whereas Turkish-speaking Muslim Azeris were perceived in the West through the prism of the tragic events of 1915 in Turkey and the Islamic revolution in Iran.

However, such a pared-down perception only aggravates the situation and does not allow us to assess it realistically, nor to develop concrete proposals to put an end to that conflict. Moreover, today the Karabakh conflict is not that much in the center of attention for the world community. Or, it is considered a local and yet insoluble struggle between two Caucasian peoples.

Hundreds of books and brochures, let alone thousands of articles, have been published during the years since the beginning of the Karabakh conflict. As a whole, they were subdivided into two groups and correspondingly expressed the point of view of one of the parties in the conflict. In other words, if the author was ethnically Armenian or sympathized with them, he tried to prove that Karabakh was historically populated only by Armenians who, over the course of centuries, were fighting for their existence with the numerous foreign enemies (Iranians, Arabs, Turks, and Mongols). Azeris or, as Armenian historians wrote, “nomadic Turkish tribes” appeared in Karabakh only in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Then the destiny of Karabakh Armenians was saved by the Russian empire, but after the establishment of the Soviet power, “a historical injustice” was committed when, by the direct instruction of Stalin in 1921, Nagorny Karabakh was included within the territory of Azerbaijan.

However, if the author was Azeri or sympathized with them, everything was vice versa: Karabakh became native Azeri territory and Armenians were announced to be a newly-arrived people who appeared there only after the occupation of Northern Azerbaijan in the early nineteenth century by the Russian Empire and the initiation of a wide-ranging resettlement of Armenians from Iran and Ottoman Turkey to that region at that period of time. Meanwhile, the settlement of Armenians led to the sudden change of the demographic composition of the population of Karabakh and became grounds for the future territorial claims of Armenians in respect to Azerbaijan. At the same time, each side used mainly works by historians of their own ethnicity. But the information of the ancient and medieval authors was chosen very selectively.

Indeed, to the degree that Karabakh and the conflict around it were losing their actuality in the West, interest in the past was becoming weaker. In reality, it appears it is precisely now,

when the emotional strain of passions has considerably decreased, that the time for a new and unbiased application to the past of Karabakh has come. For this reason the author of the current lines took on the work of researching Karabakh's past, taking into account not only one side of the conflict but also opposing view.

In that respect, it would be appropriate to remember the famous Armenian writer Hrant Matevosian, who sadly pointed out in one of his works: "For the time being, my word is only the word of an Armenian and the words of Azeris or Turks are not equally included in it. And collaboration is not happening yet. May be it is yet to come?" (2). Truly, having understood the pain and suffering of each side, their thoughts and psychology, it is possible to understand the conflict and to try and find a compromise settlement. Naturally, it is difficult for one of the parties accustomed to propagandistic stamps to perceive such an approach to the history and the current situation of the Karabakh Conflict, but there is no other way. As it is said: "Sowing a falsehood will reap trouble" (The parable of Solomon, 22:8).

Karabakh in ancient times

The territory of modern Karabakh has been populated since the olden days. It was not by accident that the oldest traces of life and human activity were found in the cave of Azykh (Hadrut district, not far from Fizuli city). Thanks to the findings of Azerbaijanian archeologists, it was possible to prove that more than a million years ago the oldest site of man in the whole area of Eurasia existed in the territory of Karabakh (3). However, it is important to our topic to begin the description of the situation in the region after the appearance of the first tribes and nations.

Modern historical science, including Armenian, determined a long time ago that both Karabakh and the territory of the modern republic of Armenia, as well as the current Armenian plateau in Asia Minor, were not the native home of Armenians. History finds the Armenians on the Balkan peninsula, from whence, together with their kindred Thracian tribes, they moved into Asia Minor at the turn of the second and first millennia and settled there for a long period of time (4).

The penetration of Armenians into the area of the South Caucasus refers to much later period. Here we should mention that the Erebuni fortress that started the city of Yerevan was founded in the eighth century, not by Armenians, but by Urartians. Moreover, it was founded in the territory of the country of Az, which was named "hostile" in Urartian inscriptions (5).

History did not fix any Turkish-speaking tribes on the territory of the South Caucasus, including in Karabakh, at that period of time. They appeared there only in the first centuries of our era. Before that, tribes speaking Caucasian and Iranian languages, who settled there as a result of the campaigns of the Cimmerians and Scythians, mainly lived there. Moreover, in the seventh century B.C. a considerable part of modern Karabakh was included in the Scythian realm and later ended up being included in the leading states of the Middle East: Media and the Achaemenid Empire, where Persian-speaking nations played the main role. However, in ancient times the local Caucasian people played a dominant role among the tribes residing in the territory of Northern Azerbaijan.

It is important to mention here that in the middle of the eighth century the famous king of Urartu, Sarduri I, undertook a campaign in the area of Goycha (Sevan) Lake and reached the country of Urtekhi or Urtechini (6). Modern Armenian researchers point out that the later name

of the region “Artsakh” originated from “Urtekhi.” It is interesting that Azeri historians also agree with this viewpoint (7). The only difference is that Armenian authors consider that name a native Armenian one while Azeris do not agree, as there was no Armenian population in the territory of Karabakh at that period of time. In fact, the name of the Artsakh area had already appeared for the first time in the Avesta, the oldest memorial of the Iranian people, as “Arzah/Arasahi,” meaning “the eastern continent of the earth” (8). But it is most likely that the toponym “Artsakh” has a local Caucasian origin. The word *artsesun* means “to sit, to sit down” in the language of the Udins, who lived under the name of “Utii,” namely in Karabakh, in the area called Uti. The word *artsii* meaning “settled, people leading a settled life style,” was derived from that verbal form (9). Correspondingly, the toponym “Artsakh” was derived from the root of the word *artsii* and the suffix *akh*. The ancient geographical names of such establishments that were characteristic of Caucasian languages - Darbakh, Karakh, Dusrakh, Mikakh, Khindakh, Chirakh, etc - have remained in the territory of Azerbaijan as well as in the Northern Caucasus until now.

However, we receive a more or less detailed and trustworthy account of the ethnic composition of the region for the first time only after the Caucasus appeared in the field of vision of the ancient Greeks and Romans in the second part of the first millennium B.C. An ample quantity of historical and geographical essays appeared, in which a description of the territory of Northern Azerbaijan was given. In particular, it was mentioned there that, at least during the campaigns of Alexander at the end of the fourth century B.C., 26 tribes – Albanians, Utii (Udins), Gargars, Legis, Caspians, Tsavdeis, Gels and others - lived there. Meanwhile, each of them spoke their own language, which naturally made their interrelation with each other difficult. The offspring of some of those tribes survive in the present day and, as in former times, have not lost their native languages. These are the Udins, Budugs, Khinalugs, Kryzs and Lezgins, i.e. people belonging to the Caucasian language group.

At the turn of the third and fourth centuries B.C., a Union of 26 tribes of Northern Azerbaijan established independent state. The state was known by the name of “Albania,” after the name of the biggest tribe, and as “Caucasian Albania” in modern science. Indeed the local population called the country “Aran” and that is why the territory of modern Karabakh was known by the name of “Aran” in eastern early medieval Iranian and Arabic sources (10). However, in ancient and medieval ages the territory of Northern Azerbaijan was more often known under the name of “Albania” in Western and Russian historiography. For this reason that name will be used in the current work.

As the initial stage of the history of Karabakh was connected with that state, different points of view on the past and the further destiny of Albania appeared between Armenian and Azeri historians long ago. The main issue is that, before the beginning of the Karabakh conflict, Armenian historians did not deny either the existence of Albania or Albanian ethnicity. The disputes were about the borders of that state and the level of its development. Armenian researchers considered that the modern territory of Karabakh, (i.e. the country between two rivers Kura and Araks) was not included in the territories of ancient Albania, but was the part of Armenia over the course of many centuries. In their opinion, the border between Armenia and Albania passed along the river Kura. Correspondingly, Albanian nations living in Karabakh quickly became Armenians. In contrast to that, Azeri historians, proceeding from the data of classical authors, did not agree with that and declared that the territory of ancient Albania almost completely complied with the area of modern Azerbaijan and, in a number of periods, even exceeded it. The process of Armenisation of Albanians was of longer duration and, as a whole, ended up in the nineteenth century. At the same time, the fact that the language of the Albanian tribes belonged to the Caucasian language group did not raise any doubts for either Armenian or Azeri historians at that period of time.

However, after the beginning of the Karabakh conflict, the situation suddenly changed. Then Armenian researchers began to prove that Albanian people did not exist at all and that Albania was simply a geographical term meaning a part of the “Eastern land of Armenia.” In response, Azeri historians began to point out that at least some of the Albanian tribes were of Turkish origin and that the names “Artsakh” and “Albania” were Turkish ones.

But how did the history of Karabakh really develop in ancient times and in the early medieval ages? Actually, a part of Albania turned out to be under the power of Armenia in the second to first centuries B.C when, after the collapse of the Achaemenid empire, the aggressive campaigns of the Armenians began. Particularly successful for the Armenians was the reign of King Tigran II (95-55 B.C.), undoubtedly one of the most outstanding rulers in the history of Armenia. A contemporary of Caesar and Cicero, he was fighting for all 40 years of his reign. In the beginning, fortune was with him and in 15 years of aggressive campaigns a part of Central Asia was fully under his power. That was the period of the ascent and greatness of the ancient Armenian state, which still remains in the memory of Armenians as a mythical dream about “Greater Armenia from sea to sea.”

There are no direct sources on the conquest of the territory of Karabakh by Tigran II; however the ancient authors listed some areas of Albania as provinces of the Armenian state. As the territory of Karabakh was the western part of Albania and bordered the Armenian realm at that period of time, it is possible to suppose that land was conquered in the time of Tigran II.

However, very soon that expansionist policy brought the Armenians to a confrontation with the most powerful empire of the ancient world: Rome. In 66 B.C., Tigran II signed a humiliating agreement, dictated by Pompei, according to which the Armenian king was deprived of all conquered lands, “remaining as the king of only one home country” and becoming a Roman vassal (11).

Armenia did not recover from that blow and “had to refuse expansionist politics and foreign invasions. Since then, and for many centuries, its main task was to protect the territorial integrity reached with so many difficulties” (12). In 114, the emperor Trajan declared Armenia a Roman province and, although his successor formally restored the local king to the throne, Armenia still remained a vassal of Rome. Until 194, the occupational Roman troops, the chiefs of which were the real owners of the country, were in Armenia. The fact that Armenia paid duties to Rome until 358 also spoke of the vassal dependence of Armenia (13).

Thus, from the first to fourth centuries, the Armenian state was under vassal dependence to foreigners and could in no way undertake new invasions, including on the territory of modern Karabakh. It is quite natural that there was no such information in the sources of that period and that was the assumption of the modern Armenian historians.

Karabakh in the early Middle Ages

In contrast to Armenia, the destiny of Caucasian Albania turned out to be more favorable at that period of time. Even if sometimes Albanian kings had to stick to the Roman or Iranian orientation, nevertheless they managed to save their independence and territorial integrity. In particular, the regular coinage of Albanian money was evidence of that. All that in its turn beneficially influenced the development of the culture and the process of uniting of Albanian tribes into a unified ethnos.

In the early fourth century, the pressure of Sassanian Iran on the countries of South Caucasus became stronger. From time to time, the territory of Albania turned out to be dependent on to the Sassanids. At the same time, Christianity was announced as the state religion in the Byzantine Empire, another leading power of the Near East. And then in 313, being guided by political considerations Albania, Armenia and Georgia simultaneously announced Christianity as the state religion. That event led to the establishment of contacts and close connections between peoples of the whole Southern Caucasus, particularly Armenians and Albanians. As a result, in the early fifth century the founder of the Armenian alphabet, Mesrop Mashtots, created the Georgian and the new version of the Albanian alphabet. According to the ancient authors, the Albanians had their own written language at least since the first century B.C. and they sent letters to the Romans (14). It is also known that the new version of the Albanian alphabet Mesrop Mashtots made was, as Movses Khorenatsi, the Armenian historian of the early middle ages described it, “guttural, absurd, barbarian, the rudest language of Gargarians” (15). Another prominent Albanian historian of that period, Moses from Kalankatuk, repeated the same some time later (16). Those characteristics once again proved the fact that Albanian ethnicity existed and its language belonged to the Caucasian group of languages.

It was only in our time that two versions of the Albanian alphabet consisting of 52 letters (there are 38 letters in Armenian alphabet) were found in 1937 in Armenia and in 1956 in the USA. And although after 510 Albania came to be dependent on Sassanid Iran, nevertheless the period of the fifth to seventh centuries was a time of prosperity and culture for Albanians, during which they played a remarkable role in the region and were well known in the East. It was mentioned in the “Syrian Chronicles” of Zahariya from Mitilen (VI c.) that there were “five faithful nations” in the South Caucasus and, among them, “there is Aran, a land with its own language and nation, faithful and christened, they have a king obedient to the Persian one” (17). It was exactly then that the self-consciousness of Albanians was formed and that was particularly pronounced in the work of the local historian Moses from Kalankatuk: he distinguished Albanians from Armenians and other nations and genetically derived Albanians from Kitties, another tribe of biblical Japheth. Meanwhile he wrote that “one of the offspring of Japheth named Aran inherited the valleys and mountains” of Albania from the river Araxes to the fortress of Hnarakert on the border with Georgia (18). In other words, if his contemporary Movses Khorenatsi and other Armenian authors considered Hayk, great-great-grandson of Japheth, as the ancestor of Armenians, then the Albanians considered Aran such an ancestor for themselves.

Albania and the Turks

Hunns, Sabirs, Hazars and other Turkish tribes began to appear and settle in the South Caucasus and, first of all, in Albania in the second century but particularly in the fifth to seventh centuries. From that period of time the Turkish factor began to play a serious role in the region. Very often Albanians called the Turks for help in their struggle for independence against Iran. In 515, the Albanian bishop Kardost in his turn spread Christianity among some of the Turks, having assembled a “Scripture” in the Turkish language. After the conquest of Azerbaijan by the Arabs in the seventh century, there were several important events in the life of the population of Albania. There began the expansion of the new religion – Islam. On the other hand, after the arrival of the Arabs the name “Albania” remained only in the essays of medieval Armenian and Byzantine authors. Since then, the original name of the country, not in the previous form of “Aran,” but the Arabic version, “Arran,” was used in the Muslim ones. Meanwhile, Muslim authors of that period by Arran meant the land between the two rivers Kura and Araxes: that was the territory of Karabakh. Finally, it is also important to point out that in Azerbaijan, including in Karabakh, the number of Turks greatly increased in that period of time. The weight and political influence of Turks in Albania were so great that when the Arabic Muslim Caliph Muaviyya I (661-680) asked one expert on the history of Azerbaijan, he heard that “Azerbaijan has been the land of the Turks since ancient times” (19). The Turkisation of the country also continued in the following centuries and, by the twelfth century, the Turkish language became the language of the Azeri ethnos that was already formed, which also included Albanians who accepted Islam as well as many other local tribes.

The union of eight Turkish tribes known under the common name of Pechenegi (“Pachinak/Patsinak” in Armenian sources and “Badjnak”- in Muslim ones) played a particularly noticeable role among Turks who settled in Karabakh during that period of time. Already in the seventh century, two out of 12 districts in Artsakh had Turkish origins: Kolt, derived from the name of the Turkish tribe Kol and Panskank, or Pazkank district, connected with the Pechenegs. At the same time, the Albanian historian Moses from Kalankatuk mentioned that the population of Pazkank soon accepted Christianity (20). Another Pecheneg tribe of Tsurs had already accepted Christianity in the fifth century and founded the city of Tsur in Artsakh (currently a village in the Hadrut district of Nagorny Karabakh), which the local Albanian historian also noted many times (21). But the most powerful among the Pechenegs who settled in Karabakh was the tribe - Karabag or Karabay, translated as “mighty master.” Mentioned for the first time in the tenth century in an essay by the Byzantine emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus (22), that tribe left its memory in many countries and regions of the East. The ruins of the city of Karabakh remain in Turkey, where the descendents of Karabags still lived in the nineteenth century. There are also populated areas and regions with the name “Karabag” in the territories of modern Iran, Afghanistan and Uzbekistan. But most of all, traces of that tribe’s habitation were left in Azerbaijan. In the middle ages three cities named Karabag existed at once. Moreover, according to the words of Evliya Chelebi, the famous Turkish traveler of the seventeenth century, “each of them reminds us of paradise” (23). Especially after the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Turks, including those from the Karabakh tribe, were fixed in Azerbaijan on the land between the two rivers Kura and Araxes. As an anonymous Persian geographical essay dated in the early thirteenth century mentioned, “Arran ... is a rich and blessed place, the winter residence of the local rulers... There is no other place of such a gathering of Turks. They say there happen to be about one thousand Turkish riders” (24). That information was confirmed in an Arabic essay of the early thirteenth century and it was figuratively mentioned that so many Turks lived in Arran “that if they gather, then they will be like a gathering of ants or a cloud of locusts” (25).

It is quite natural that the complete dominance of Turks in Arran from the seventh to the thirteenth centuries led to the fact that at the same period of time that part of Azerbaijan began to be called “Karabakh” in Turkish. Truly, as there were several populated areas and regions with

the same name in the Muslim East, the land between the two rivers Kura and Araxes was named as “Arran Karabakh” in Muslim sources from the thirteenth to the fourteenth centuries. The famous Muslim historian of that period, Rashid ad-Din, for the first time named that territory in connection with the events of 1284 and also as the place of wintering and rest for Eastern rulers, including the well-known Tamerlane. Other Muslim writers of the fourteenth century referred to it in the same way. (26). It was also conditioned by the fact that the term “Karabakh” was used in two senses: in the narrow one – as the mountain part of Arran, and in the broader one – as equal to Arran, the territory between the Kura and the Araxes. That is why the same Rashid ad-Din mentioned two areas of the region: mountainous Karabakh and flat Arran (27). It was only later, since the fifteenth century, that the term “Karabakh” fully replaced “Arran” and already began to mean the whole territory between the Kura and the Araxes.

The Decline of Albania

Apparently, the ethno-political situation in Albania was pretty complicated in the early middle ages. The majority of Albanians were Christians, but the minority kept their loyalty to the paganism. However, Turks that settled in Albania only partially adopted Christianity. There were a lot of representatives of other religions in Albania: fire-worshippers lived in the zone near the Caspian Sea, but in the north part of the population stuck to Judaism.

This mixed ethnic and religious character of Albania was affected during the invasion of Albania by the Arabs in the seventh century. That was a tragic period in the history of Albania the echo of which reaches the present, as the dominance of the religious interests over ethnic ones was characteristic of the Middle Ages. Each person, and correspondingly, each nation was involved to a certain degree in “its own world” and in “the world of the unfaithful.” The conversion to another faith meant going over to another world of values and the rejection one’s own nation. That is, if a Greek adopted Islam, then his compatriots and his entourage perceived him as a Muslim even if he continued to speak his own language and considered himself a Greek. Apostasy was perceived very negatively and, as a rule, was punished by death. Mixed marriages between observers of different religions were almost nonexistent, as, in that case, one of the spouses had to reject his own faith.

That is why the medieval chroniclers placed a special emphasis on the religious, not the ethnic, origins of inhabitants of this country or that. It was mentioned directly in an essay by George Merchul, a Georgian author of the tenth century, that Georgia was considered a land where the church service was held in the Georgian language (28). Naturally, the countries in which the church service was held in the Armenian language were considered by his contemporaries a part of Armenia, although ethnically they might not be Armenians; but politically that was another case.

At that period of time, conversion to another path or sect, even within the framework of a common religion, was considered a break with one’s own nation. In that respect, the destiny of those Armenians who, in the middle ages, repudiated the “national” monophysitism and became Orthodox was noteworthy. If those Armenians adhered to the Georgian orientation, their compatriots and entourage immediately called them “Ivers” (i.e. Georgians), but if they stuck to the Byzantine one, “Tsats” (i.e Greeks) (29). Meanwhile, nobody doubted that they were Armenians in origin and language, but nonetheless, because of their belonging to another religion, they were not recognized as “their own Armenians.” As time went by, those Armenians forgot their native language and de-ethnicised and became Greeks or Georgians.

The above-mentioned processes took place in Azerbaijan as well. The destiny of Tats is particularly noteworthy in that respect. That Persian-speaking nation was known in Azerbaijan since the early middle ages. After the conquest of the country by Arabs in the seventh century, the Tats were divided into three groups according to their religion. The first one, and the most numerous, adopted Islam and today actually became part of the Azeri ethnos. Another one living in the northeast of Azerbaijan adopted Judaism together with the Turkish speaking Hazars and today have assimilated with Jews and are called “mountain Jews.” The third, the least numerous group of Tats, adopted Christianity of the monophysite direction which made them closer to Armenians. In the early nineteenth century they lived in Khachmaz, in the settlements Kilvar (modern Devichi district) and Madrasa (Shemakha district), having kept themselves as a distinct ethnicity. However, the number of Armenians that moved there then increased and that considerably accelerated the process of Armenisation among Tats. “As a result, by the end of 1920 about 90 percent of Kilvar inhabitants spoke Armenian, although they spoke the Tat language with each other, but in Armenian with the newly-arrived Armenians. The young people who left for seasonal jobs in Baku mainly spoke Armenian.” The same process of Armenisation also took place among Tats living in the village of Madrasa, “where in the 1920s only the aged

knew the Tat language” (30). In soviet times, that group of Tats was completely Armenianised and when the Karabakh conflict flared up in 1988, they were perceived by those around them as Armenians and soon left Azerbaijan for Armenia and Russia.

The destiny of the Albanians turned out to be more tragic, particularly after the invasion of the country by Iran. According to the Armenian historian Sebeos (VI c.), the ruler of the Albanian area Sunik (modern Zangezur), which was a part of Armenia at that time, “rebelled and separated from Armenia and asked the Persian king Hosrov that the archives of Sunik land be moved from Dvin to the city of Paytakaran (Baylakan) and that their city be included within the borders of Atrpatakana (South Azerbaijan). Thus, the name of Armenians would be taken away from them. The order was implemented” (31). After the Arab invasion of Albania, most of the population adopted Islam and a small number kept their loyalty to their religion. Afterwards, Muslim Albanians assimilated, having become a part of the Azeri ethnos. However, Muslim Albanians who became Turkish remembered their origins for a long period of time. In 1961 in the late Azeri village of Urud situated in the modern Sisian district of Armenia (historically Sunik), a headstone, dated 1578, was found on which was written in the Azeri language “Iftikhar from the generation of Albanians” (“ovlade agvan”).

However, the fate of the Christian-Albanians was different. A small number of them living in the northwest of Albania who stuck to the diphysite doctrine became Georgians in the course of time. The majority of them, primarily those living in Karabakh, stuck to monophysitism and were perceived by those around them as Armenians, which was reflected in the works of Armenian and Muslim medieval authors.

However, the Christian population of Karabakh remembered their past for a long time and continued their struggle for the reestablishment of an independent Albania. According to the information of Moses from Kalankatuk, in 866 the Albanian prince Grigory Hamam “restored the abrogated realm of Albania as Ashot Bagratuni had restored that of Armenia. These things were done simultaneously” (32). But soon that state was defeated by the Arabs. However, the Albanians managed to keep partial independence in mountainous Artsakh. The Khachen principdom arose in the twelfth century and reached its peak in the thirteenth century during the reign of Hasan Djalal, who assumed the title “the king of Albania.” Between 1216 and 1238, he built the now-famous Gandzasars temple in Karabakh. It was then that Gandzasar became the center of the Albanian church and residence of its Catholicos. Even having lost its political independence in the fifteenth century, the descendents of the Djalalids remained members of the higher orders of clergy among the Christians of Albania.

All that delayed the process of de-ethnisation of the Christians of Albania. It was not by accident that Muslim authors of the tenth and eleventh centuries (Masudi, Istakhri, Mukaddasi, Yakut and others) mentioned that the majority of the population of Azerbaijan spoke the “Azeri language” while in Arran and particularly around the city of Barda in the “Arrani language.” Meanwhile, the “Arrani” language differed sharply from the Armenian language, which according to the Muslim authors of the Middle Ages, people spoke in neighboring Armenia (33). Thus, despite the expanded Armenisation, Islamisation and Turkisation of Karabakh in the middle ages, the local Christian-Albanians managed to preserve their ethnicity. In that respect, it is noteworthy to mention the indication of thirteenth century Armenian historian Kirakos Gandzaketsi that he considered it necessary to include a chapter about Albania and its population in his “History of Armenia,” “as of our congeners and coreligionists and as their leaders were Armenian-speaking many of them spoke Armenian” and that is why “it is necessary to speak about two nations together” (34). In other words, even at the end of the thirteenth century only representatives of the nobility knew the Armenian language among the Albanians in Karabakh.

The turning point happened at the end of the fourteenth century when the South Caucasus was exposed to the devastating invasion of the troops of Tamerlane. Remembering that period of

time, Armenian poet Grigor Khlatetsi wrote in 1422 that the troops of Tamerlane “entered the country of the Albanians from Ararat land” where they organized a wild pogrom that turned Karabakh “into a desert” (35). Tamerlane resettled thousands of the surviving Albanians in the territory of modern Afghanistan, where they later adopted Islam. That tragedy was so well remembered in Karabakh that even in the early eighteenth century Albanian Catholicos Yesai Hasan Djalalyan recalled it, pointing out that Tamerlane then moved out a considerable number of Albanians from Karabakh to “Horasan and Kandagar,” and even considered the offspring of resettled Albanians as Afghans (36).

If we take into account that the realm of Khachen ceased to exist at that time, it is clear that the Albanians who escaped the pogrom of Tamerlane’s troops had few chances to preserve their ethnicity. The religious expansion of the Armenian Catholicos, which aimed to supplant the Albanian one, was strengthened all the more. The struggle between Armenian and Albanian churches was long and aggravated. In 1750, the Armenian Catholicos Lazar even sent out an official document to Armenian communities, including those in Russia, in which, returning to the times of Tamerlane, he particularly mentioned that then “the whole Agvan nation young and old, grandee and beggar, was picked up and settled together with their prisoners inland of Horasan and beyond Kabul to Kandahar, while some Armenians settled in the new sacred capital Djuga, in Fahrabad, in Hamadan in the Mazandaran district, but the Agvan people who were resettled in the area of Kandahar, while living with the Persians there, became accustomed to their disposition...” Thus, if to be brief, our speech only concerns those sitting in Gandzasar and called Agvan. The Catholicos grazed the local population, Armenians, not Agvans, in origin, our nation, not theirs and they’ve been governing them until today mutinously...” (37). The argument of the Armenian Catholicos, as we see, is simple: Albanians were driven out but the Christians currently living in Karabakh were Armenians who were headed by the Albanian Catholicos in disobedience to Echmiadzin.

However, despite all that, the Albanians of Karabakh still kept their ethnic identity even at that period of time. Thus, it was said in a famous letter prepared by Karabakh Udins in 1724 and addressed to Peter I: “We, Agvans and Utians by nation” (38).

The outcome came at the beginning of the nineteenth century when the South Caucasus was invaded by Russia. The latter counted on the support of the Armenians in its foreign political interests in the Caucasus and that is why they made a number of concessions to them. In 1836, according to the Provision on the Armenian Church, the Albanian Catholicos was abolished and the areas dependent on it were subordinated to the Echmiadzin Catholicos. In 1857, the concepts “Albanian church” and “Albanian eparchy” were cancelled altogether.

Thus, the history of Albania ended. At the end of the nineteenth century, Russian publicist and historian V.A. Velichko, quite familiar with the realities of the Caucasus, exactly described it: “The issue of Caucasus Albania, or Agvania in Armenian, is very interesting. That country which included the current Elizavetpol province and parts of Tiflis province and Dagestan was populated by nations of non Armenian origins... A separate Agvan or Gandzasar Catholicos, which competed with the Echmiadzin one, and which, from time to time was independent from the latter one, existed until the beginning of the nineteenth century. Currently the Christians who were once a congregation of Agvan Catholicos are considered Armenians and, having mixed with them, they assimilated their character” (39).

Karabakh in the Muslim Period

After the conquest of the country by Arabs Karabakh, the constituent part of Christian Albania, remained a part of Azerbaijan. But after the fall of Arab dominance, Karabakh was included step by step into the territories of Azeri feudal states. In the ninth and tenth centuries Karabakh was under the Sadjids' power, in the tenth under the Salarids, in the eleventh and twelfth, the Shaddadids, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the Ildenizids.

After two centuries under the Mongolian yoke in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the local Turkish dynasties Kara-Koyunlu and Ak-Koyunlu, who played an important role in the Middle East at that period of time, reigned in Azerbaijan in the fifteenth century. Despite the current widespread opinion among Armenian researchers, the Turkish leaders of Kara-Koyunlu and Ak-Koyunlu treated the Armenians and Albanians very highly and provided them with all kinds of patronage. The consequence of such a policy was the removal of the center of the Armenian Catholicos in 1441 from the city of Sis in Asia Minor to Echmiadzin in the territory of modern Armenia. This policy of the Azeri rulers led to a situation in which at that period of time Armenians even had hopes of restoring the Armenian realm with the help of the Azeri Turks (40). Although those hopes were not realized, they are, however, very demonstrative in understanding the attitude of the Muslim-Turks of Azerbaijan toward their dependent Christian population. In the early sixteenth century Azerbaijan became the part of the Safavid state, one of the leading states of the Middle East. It was then that Safavid rulers divided the state into a number of areas, or beglarbekts, one of which was Karabakh. By the end of the sixteenth century the tribe of Djevanshirs, which headed 32 local Turkish tribes, arose in the territory of Karabakh. For that reason, the union of Karabakh tribes was sometimes named "Otuz iki" ("thirty two"). At the same period of time there was a considerable resettlement of Kurds from Iran to Karabakh. According to a sixteenth century Kurdish historian, "twenty four Kurdish families live in Arran Karabakh and are known under the common name "Igirmi dort" ("twenty four"- A.Y.)" (41).

In the early eighteenth century the Safavid state experienced a serious crisis and the Ottoman and Russian empires took advantage of that and tried to invade Azerbaijan. The Ottoman and Russian armies virtually simultaneously started their campaigns. Each party counted on the support of the population: the Ottoman Turks hoped for the support of the Muslim population and the Russians relied on Christians. However, on 20 March 1724, an event occurred in Karabakh which would be considered fantastic in the light of contemporary Azeri-Armenian interrelations: the Christians of Karabakh concluded a pact of friendship and mutual aid with the local Muslims. According to that pact, in case of an attack by outside forces on Karabakh, Azeris and Armenians would help each other. But if one side should be refused "its friendship and debt of neighborhood," the other side would be called "traitor, coward and false to its promise" (42).

Nevertheless, in the 1720s the whole territory of Karabakh ended up under the authority of Ottoman Turkey, which in 1727 took the first census of the population in the history of the region. It appeared that in 1,179 populated areas and in 478 villages (40.5%) (Turkish were the overwhelming majority), there were no inhabitants. 11,818 Muslim families (11,068 out of them were Turkish and 750 Kurdish) and 7,577 Christian ones lived in the rest of the settlements(43).

In 1747, the Karabakh beglarbek achieved its independence and began to be called the Karabakh khanate. Panah Ali-khan became the founder of that Azeri khanate. The khanate also included the mountain districts of Karabakh populated by Christians. Moreover, as it was said in a historical essay of that period, the most authoritative among the Karabakh Armenians, Melik (prince) Shakhnazar "underlined his loyalty and love to the khan in all possible ways" (44). He gave his daughter in marriage to the son of the khan and the future ruler of the Karabakh khanate, Ibrahim Khalil. It was expressly according to the advice of Melik Shakhnazar that in 1754 Panah Ali-khan built a fortress-city which was originally named Panahabad in honor of its

founder and became the capital of the khanate. A little later the city was renamed Shusha after a village of the same name situated nearby (45).

The Karabakh khanate achieved prosperity in the reign of the successor and son of Panah Ali-khan, Ibrahim Khalil-khan (1759-1806). In 1795, at the end of his reign, Iranian troops, trying to restore their authority, undertook a devastating campaign against the khanates of Northern Azerbaijan. Many areas of Azerbaijan were defeated. The Iranians also attacked the Karabakh khanate. For 33 days the invaders unsuccessfully besieged Shusha, which was protected by Azeris and Armenians together (46). Finally, the siege was lifted and Iranian troops left the territory of the Karabakh khanate. However, the threat of the new inroad made by Iranian troops remained and under those conditions in 1796 Ibrahim Khalil-khan applied for the help and patronage of the Russian empire.

The Russian Empire and Karabakh

In the first quarter of the eighteenth century the Russian empire had already begun to show an interest in Azerbaijan. In 1722, in the time of Peter I, Russian troops occupied the eastern areas of Azerbaijan along the Caspian Sea but by 1735 they had to leave. At the end of the eighteenth century Russia, considerably strengthened, began the second stage of invading, not only Azerbaijan, but the whole South Caucasus. At the same time, it counted on the local Christians and, first of all, the Armenians, who hoped to restore the Armenian state with the help of Russia. However, at that period of time many Azeri khans saw more threats for themselves in the face of Ottoman Turkey and especially Iran, while the authorities of Russia then held a very careful policy with respect to Azerbaijan. At that time, Russia aimed not so much to conquer the Azeri khanates, but to bind them with agreements to make them dependent on it, although rulers would have unlimited authority in internal affairs.

The constant threat of an invasion by Iran forced Karabakh Ibrahim Khalil-khan to seek the support of Russia, considering this course the least evil for himself. That is why in 1796 after the siege of Shusha by Iran, Ibrahim Khalil-khan sent his son with other high ranking officials of the khanate with a written declaration of obedience. It was then that the Russian troops left for Azerbaijan.

However, the death of empress Katherine II influenced the course of events: the Russian army urgently returned to Russia and Iran immediately attacked and plundered Shusha. Under those conditions the Karabakh khan was forced to surrender to the Iranian Shah. The daughter of Ibrahim Khalil-khan was sent to the harem and his son was sent as a hostage to Iran (47).

In a few years the Russian army again returned to the region. In 1801 the Russian empire joined Eastern Georgia and established the Caucasian region ruled by a governor. After that Russia began the invasion of Azerbaijan. In 1803 Russian troops conquered Ganja and abolished the Ganja khanate. Iran requested the withdrawal of the Russian troops from Azerbaijan, but the request was rejected and in the summer of 1804 the Russian-Iranian war began.

As mentioned in a source of that period, both Russia and Iran considered the Karabakh khanate “the gates of Azerbaijan” (48). Both sides did everything in their means to attract the Karabakh khan to their own side. At the same time, the Iranian shah appealed not only to religious feelings but also the fate of the daughter and son of Ibrahim Khalil-khan who were in Iran. Further, the Shah of Iran offered to expand Ibrahim Khalil-khan’s possessions at the expense of the former Karadag khanate in Southern Azerbaijan if he would remain loyal to Iran. Moreover, the Iranian shah agreed that two of his sons would stay as hostages in Shusha. However, the Karabakh khan very well remembered the previous period of relations with Iran. Thus, although it was written in a source of that period that the daughter of the Karabakh khan “was the main and loved wife” of the shah of Iran and that his son was a hostage, Ibrahim Khalil-khan nevertheless “neglected the Iranian state and its offers” and sent his ambassador to the commander of the Russian army in the Caucasus, General P.D. Tsitsianov, “with a request to meet and conclude compilation of the terms of a treaty on nationality” (49). The proposal to meet and the request of Ibrahim Khalil-khan were accepted by the Russian side.

On 14 February 1805, Major Lisanevich arrived in Karabakh and handed Ibrahim Khalil-khan a draft of the peace treaty. On 21 February 1805, having studied its text, the Karabakh khan announced his agreement with the suggested text of the draft treaty (50). On 14 May 1805, Ibrahim Khalil-khan on the one side, and general Tsitsianov from the Russian side, signed the treaty on the inclusion of the Karabakh khanate into the Russian nation. The treaty was signed in the camp of the Russian army on the bank of the Kurakchay river 20 km from Ganja. According to that treaty consisting of 11 points, Ibrahim Khalil-khan refused subordination to Iran or any other state and recognized only the authority of Russia over him. At the same time, the Karabakh khan was deprived of the right of foreign relations. As a sign of loyalty he sent the grandson of his eldest son as a hostage to Tbilisi, from where the headquarters of the Russian commander-in-

chief were situated and 500 soldiers and officers of the Russian army with artillery were guided to Shusha. He was obliged to consult with Russian representatives on issues of domestic policy and to pay an annual tribute in the amount of 8,000 gold coins to the tsar's treasury in two installments (on February 1 and September 1). In his turn, the Russian tsar provided guarantees that the integrity of the country would be preserved, the authority of the khan and his successors "over the Karabakh khanate" would not be changed, and all the masterful functions connected with domestic governance, such as the court and the whole income collected from the khanate, would remain in the full authority of the khan. Finally, in accordance with the agreement Ibrahim Khalil-khan was awarded the title of General-Lieutenant of the Russian army (51).

It seems outwardly strange and not clear that modern Armenian researchers who have published hundreds of books, brochures and articles on the history of Karabakh and, moreover, on the issue of the annexation of Karabakh to Russia, not only did not describe the Kurakchay treaty but thoroughly try to avoid even mentioning that treaty. However it is possible to understand them, as nothing was said about Armenians in any article of that treaty on the voluntary annexation of Karabakh to Russia. The Kurakchay treaty of 1805 became a political-legal act that reflected the voluntary transfer of Karabakh as an Azeri khanate into vassal dependence on Russia. Let alone the fact that the treaty was signed between the Karabakh khanate in the person of Ibrahim Khalil-khan as Azeri ruler and Russia in the person of general Tsitsianov as its authorized representative. It should be mentioned here that the example of the Karabakh khan turned out to be contagious. It was in that same year of 1805 that the Sheki and Shirvan khanates of Azerbaijan voluntarily, and by the urgent request of Ibrahim Khalil-khan, took Russian citizenship. It is interesting that the texts of the treaties with those khanates repeated the terms of the Kurakchay treaty.

Such a course of events in Northern Azerbaijan seriously worried Iran. In 1806, the Iranian Army attacked the Karabakh khanate. Russian troops came to help Karabakh. The war took on a lingering character. It was only in 1812 that Russian troops delivered the decisive blow. As a result, on 24 October 1813, Iran had to sign a peace agreement at the Karabakh fortress of Gulistan, according to which the Karabakh khanate and five other khanates of Northern Azerbaijan passed under the authority of Russia. Thus, the Gulistan treaty meant for the Karabakh khanate a confirmation of the Kurakchay treaty of 1805. After that, Russian authorities acted much more determinately in Azerbaijan. General A.P. Yermolov, appointed in 1816 to the post of the Governor of the Caucasus, treated the Azeri khans with suspicion, considering them potential enemies and that is why he constantly looked for an opportunity for the official abolishment of the khanates. In 1822, the Karabakh khanate was declared a Russian province.

The second Russian-Iranian war began in 1826. Once again, the main action developed in Karabakh: the Iranian army besieged Shusha for 48 days but failed to capture the city. On 22 February 1828, the parties signed new peace agreement at Turkmenchay near the city of Tabriz. Since then Karabakh as well as other khanates in Northern Azerbaijan, including the Irevan and Nakhchevan khanates, were included as territories of Russia.

The tempestuous military-political events of the first quarter of the nineteenth century considerably changed the ethnic and religious picture of Azerbaijan, particularly of Karabakh. P.S. Kotlyarevski, the commander of Russian troops in Karabakh, pointed out in one of his reports: "according to my inquiries, about 10,000 families were counted while entering Karabakh in the citizenship of Russia in 1805, but according to the register made in 1808, 7,474. Of those, the number carried away by the enemy or departed for abroad were 367 in 1806, 323 in 1809, 276 in 1810, 274 in 1811, and 977 in 1818... In total, the number of carried away and dispersed families made 4,845. Correspondingly, today there should be about 5 thousand families remaining in Karabakh" (52).

From the very beginning of the invasion of Azerbaijan, the Russian authorities who distrusted Muslim nations began to purposefully resettle Christians there. In 1819 several hundred families from remote Germany were settled in the north of Karabakh. However, at that period of time the Russian authorities were not sure that it was necessary to fully colonize and Russify Azerbaijan. The complexity of the situation made Russians careful to still take into account the local traditions and interests. In that regard, the Russian authorities then counted on Armenians in their policy in Azerbaijan. Since 1805 the Russian authorities resettled Armenians from Iran and other regions in Azerbaijan and, first of all, in Karabakh (53).

In 1810, according to official Russian data, about 12,000 families already lived in Karabakh. 9,500 of them were Azeri (79% of the population) and 2,500 (21%) Armenians (54). Immediately after the abolishment of the Karabakh khanate and the establishment of the province of the same name in its place in 1823, a tax register was worked out according to the instruction of General A.P. Yermolov. That was the first Russian document of the nineteenth century that provided detailed data about the number and ethnic composition of the Karabakh population. According to it, 20,095 families, or 90,000 inhabitants, lived in Karabakh. 15,729 of them were Azeri families (78%) and 4,366 (22%) Armenian. Of those, about 1,111 Azeri families and 421 Armenian ones lived in Shusha. There were more than 450 Azeri and 150 Armenian villages around Shusha, where about 14,618 Azeri and 3,945 Armenian families lived (55). Apparently, even taking into account that the register did not consider the number of resettled Armenians, there was an undoubted dominance of Azeris in Karabakh after its annexation to Russia.

After the Russian-Iranian war of 1826-1828 the ethnic situation in Karabakh, as well as in the whole of Azerbaijan, began to sharply change. According to chapter XV of the Turkmenchay Treaty, during the period from March to May 1828 alone, Russian authorities resettled 8,249 Armenian families, or about 40,000 people, from Southern Azerbaijan, which was left as a part of Iran, in Karabakh as well as in the territory of modern Armenia. By early 1829, i.e. a few months after the conclusion of the Turkmenchay peace treaty, about 40 thousand families were resettled from Iran to Azerbaijan (56).

In 1832, the Russian authorities tried for the first time to take a census of the population of Azerbaijan. 20,546 families, or 54,841 men (women were not taken into account in the course of the census) were established in Shusha and 741 in the surrounding villages in Karabakh. Meanwhile, it turned out that 13,965 families, or 68% were Azeris; 6,491, or 31%, Armenian; and the other 90 families (1%) included Gypsies and Greeks. Only four years later, in 1836, 20,449 families, or 54,851 men, were fixed in Karabakh. At that period of time, there were no longer any Gypsies or Greeks among them, as they had left the region. There remained only 35,046 Azeri men ("Tatars", according to the Russian terminology of that time) and 19,805 Armenians. In other words, in a four-year period, the number of Azeris was reduced to 64% versus 36% for Armenians (57). This is despite the fact that, in those years, a number of the Armenian immigrants, having faced problems in living conditions, returned to their previous places of residence in Iran and Ottoman Turkey. In that respect, Russian official P.V. Gan asked in his report that Emperor Nikolai I stop the process of re-emigration by Armenians using any means, including the use of the armed forces (58).

Then in that regard, A.S. Griboyedov, the famous Russian writer and ambassador to Iran pointed out in his note to the Governor of the Emperor in the Caucasus, I.Paskevich, that "Armenians were mainly settled on the lands of the Muslim landowners." As that naturally did not elicit positive emotions from the latter, Griboyedov advised that he take measures that would reconcile Azeris "with the current charge, which will not be long-lasting, and to extirpate from them the fears that Armenians will own their lands forever where they were left for the first time" (59).

The fears of the local Azeris of Karabakh with respect to the migrants arriving in the region were not ungrounded, as that was only the beginning. In the 1830s and 40s, Russian authorities resettled 84,000 more Armenians from Turkey in the South Caucasus, mainly settling them in the best state lands of the Karabakh and Irevan provinces. On this topic Tsarist official N.N.Shavrov mentioned then that “it is necessary to take into account that besides 124,000 officially resettled Armenians there were many of them who were settled unofficially; thus the total number of resettled people considerably exceeded 200,000 people” (60).

It is interesting that, before the beginning of the Karabakh conflict, contemporary Armenian researchers recognized the fact of the resettlement of the Armenian population in Karabakh and at the same time underlined the important role of A.S. Griboyedov in the issue of the resettlement of Armenians from Iran (61). There was even an obelisk constructed in 1978 (which was destroyed by Armenians in 1988) in honor of the 150 year anniversary of the resettlement of the pioneer hundreds Armenians from Iran to Karabakh. One of the ideologists of the Karabakh movement, Zori Balayan, mentioned in his 1988 book that, in the South Caucasus, including the area of modern Armenia, mainly lived the offspring of those Armenians who “in 1828 were rescued by Russian ambassador to Iran Alexander Griboyedov. They were repatriated from Persia. And in general, many of our populated areas appeared in time of Griboyedov” (62). However, after the beginning of the Karabakh conflict, the views of Armenian researchers on the resettlement of Armenians in Karabakh suddenly changed, as in that case the propagandist myth about the permanent superiority of Armenians in their number in the region would disappear. As a result, publications began to appear that read as if A.S. Griboyedov had no relation with the resettlement and did not write anything on that theme and as if Armenians made up 97% of the population of Karabakh when it was included in the Russian territories (63). However, as we have seen, according to the data of the Russian officials of the nineteenth century, things were actually quite different.

The Russian authorities regularly registered the resettlement of Armenians in the South Caucasus from Iran and Turkey in the ensuing decades of the nineteenth century as well. As a result, in 1871 the number of Armenians in Azerbaijan, in comparison with the year 1832, increased from 80,000 to 193,000 people, and thus made up more than 15% of the local population. But in spite of the establishment of peace and economic development, the proportion of Azeris in their country declined during the same four decades from 65% to 59%, although at the same time their total number increased from 430,000 to 733,000 people. Nevertheless, the majority of the population of Karabakh, as earlier, were Azeris: 87,800 people, or 73%, while Armenians made up 29,200 or 24% of the population (64).

The resettlement of Armenians to the regions of the South Caucasus took on a more expanded character after the Russian-Turkish war of 1877-1879. As a result, the general census of the population taken in the Russian empire in January 1897 fixed 415,721 people in Karabakh, which then consisted of the Shusha, Djebail, Djevanshir and Zangezour uyezds of the Yelizavetpol province. 235,304 persons or 57% out of them were Azeris and 172,872, or 42%, Armenians (65). At the same period of time about 900,000 Armenians lived in the South Caucasus and in 1908 there were already 1 million 300 thousand people and 1 million of them were resettled there by the government of Russia. For comparison, Tsarist official N.N. Shavrov mentioned that at the same period of time, i.e. from 1805 to 1907, Russia removed 240 thousand Russians as well as 150 thousand Greeks, Poles, Germans, Czechs and representatives of five more nations to the South Caucasus (66).

The situation remained permanent in the following years too. It became clear in 1912, fifteen years after the general census of the population taken by the Russian empire, that the Armenian population of the South Caucasus had increased by 3% and made up 22% of the population of the region. As Armenian researchers of that period noted, such a mechanical

growth of Armenians in the region “should be attributed to the migratory movement of Armenians from Turkey to the breadth of the Caucasus” (67).

About 534,387 people lived on the territory of Karabakh on the eve of the Russian revolution of 1917 and the further impetuous events of 1918-1920. About 302,366 people (57%) of them were Azeris and about 218,507 people (41%) Armenians. At that time Armenians already dominated in Shusha, one of the four Karabakh *uyezds* (provinces) : there were about 23,396 people in Shusha itself and 75,413 people in the whole uyezd, while Azeris correspondingly made up 19,121 and 66,501 people (68). However, those figures were not quite exact, as, at that period of time, natives of Karabakh living in other districts of Karabakh were also added to the number of Karabakh Armenians. About 30,000 Karabakh Armenians lived in Baku alone. In that regard, the “Memoranda on redemption-fees of land grants in the South Caucasus,” dated 1912, and the agricultural census dated 1917 were more accurate. According to them, the number of Armenians who permanently lived in Karabakh on the eve of 1917 came to only 170,000 people, or 36% of the population of the region, while Azeris made up 62%.

The first Armenian-Azeri Conflict

Thus, after Northern Azerbaijan became part of the Russian empire, the ethnic as well as economic and political situation there seriously changed there over a one hundred-year period. The policy of increasing the Christian population in Azerbaijan at the expense of Armenians by the end of the nineteenth century caused undesirable consequences for the Russian authorities themselves. There was no longer a particular threat from Turkey or Iran and, beginning in the 1840s, the issue of the colonization and Russification of the region appeared. It then became clear that there were few free lands left for the Russian migrants as the majority of the state land available, moreover the most profitable land, was already in the hands of Armenians. Armenians bought tens of thousands of Azeri lands, primarily in Karabakh, very cheaply. As a result, in a century of Russian governance in the region, they discovered with irritation that “the economical dominance in the South Caucasus is concentrated in hands of Armenians - now they are the owners of the territory” (69). Armenians, not Russians, let alone Azeris had the majority of posts even in state services in Azerbaijan.

Thus, in the 1890s a threat to implement the policy of colonization and Russification in the South Caucasus, and particularly in Azerbaijan, appeared there in the form of the Armenians and their political organizations. As the Tsarist officials mentioned at the time “Russian state affairs should be carried out by Russian people with the help of natives and properly contacted local forces in any land: Georgians in Georgia, Azeris in Karabakh and Dagestanians themselves in Dagestan” (70).

Thus, in the 1890s a chill in Russian-Armenian relations appeared for the first time. Prince G.Golitsyn, appointed to the post of General-Governor of the Caucasus in 1896, undertook a number of measures aimed at weakening the influence of Armenians and improving of the position of Azeris. He considerably reduced the number of Armenians in the state service and employed Azeris in their place. And in 1903 he confiscated the property of the Armenian church.

In response, Armenians organized a series of terrorist acts against Tsarist officials in the territory of the Russian empire for the first time. As a result, Golitsyn, wounded in 1903, left the Caucasus. Then the authorities of Russia adopted a policy of kindling Armenian-Azeri discord. In February 1905, during the revolutionary unrest in Baku, the first Armenian-Azeri clashes

occurred, which very soon covered almost the whole of Azerbaijan, especially Karabakh, as well as Yerevan and Tbilisi.

However, even that oldest policy of “divide and conquer” was not carried out very thoughtfully and consistently by the Russian authorities.” Earl I. Vorontsov-Dashkov, appointed in May 1905 to the post of Viceroy of the South Caucasus, did not hide his pro-Armenian sympathies and thought that friendship with the Armenians was the basis for Russian dominance in the South Caucasus. As early as May 1905 Russian troops took an openly pro-Armenian position in the conflict and attacked, often jointly with Armenians, Muslims in many districts of Azerbaijan. In August 1905, a Tsarist decree to return property to the Armenian church and permitting Armenian schools to open followed.

But that first Armenian-Azeri conflict left a deep impression in the memories of people of the time who realized what kind of genie had been let out of the bottle. Thus one of them wrote: “Before the appearance of Armenian revolutionary figures, and especially the party “Dashnaktsutun,” the South Caucasus lived in peace and quiet. Here nobody remembers even a shadow of those terrors that we saw in the frequently and widespread Armenian-Tatar (that is how Azeris were mistakenly called in the Russian empire – A.Y.) slaughter...Then the Dashnaks came with their propaganda about the establishment of an entire Armenian territory for the future autonomous Armenia and then the feelings of national hostility and hatred burst into the patriarchal life of Transcaucasian villages...” It is no longer a secret to the Armenian population that “Dashnaktsutun,” which played a leading role in Armenian-Tatar slaughter, often used the proofs of their necessity for purely provocative actions, as in so-called tactical attacks of bands of “fidays” on the neighboring Tatar (Azeri - A.Y.) population, who in turn naturally paid the Armenians back. That tendency of “Dashnaktsutun” was explained by their struggle to establish more or less considerable territory with a solely Armenian population to prepare better grounds for the establishment of an autonomous Armenia in the future (71).

That first Armenian-Azeri conflict, which cost about 10,000 lives from both sides (72), revealed the main distinguishing features of the two nations and their actions in those and other circumstances. The better organized and considerably better armed Armenians widely used terrorist acts as well as “scorched earth” tactics and sudden attacks, forcibly ousting Azeris from the territories of the future Armenian state and, first of all, from Armenia and Karabakh. The propaganda machine was also utilized very well: the Russian and Western press, reflecting the mood of the public, highlighted those events in the early twentieth century with obvious sympathy for the Armenians. The Russian and western readership was also under the strong impression of the bloody events of the 1890s, that took place in Ottoman Turkey, and numerous articles about Pan Islam. At the same time, the Armenians used both methods of threat, in the form of terror acts, and bribery in their search for allies “from Christian nations in their struggle with Islam” and in their relations with the authorities of Russia.

In turn, although the actions of the Armenian nationalists caused universal indignation and spontaneous repulsion among Azeris, nevertheless, the latter, as a law-abiding people, placed their hopes in the authorities of Russia for a long time. That is why, despite numerous signs of an upcoming disaster and the provocative role of the Russian authorities, Azeris did not hurry to organize any defensive measures. Even when the first victims appeared, Azeris tried not to make show of it and sought a compromise and initially even hid the number of dead. That is why the actions of Azeris in the military-political and propagandist spheres appeared out-of-date, as if “in pursuit of events.”

The Second Armenian-Azeri Conflict

The First World War, and after it the Russian revolution, sharply changed the situation in the South Caucasus. Truly, until 1917 the outward situation in the region was relatively stable. However, combat operations on the Russian-Turkish front prepared the ground for future shocks. Since the autumn of 1914, Armenian volunteer units, founded in the South Caucasus, came forward against the Turks. A little bit later in 1923, one of the leaders of the “Dashnaktsutun” party and the first prime-minister of independent Armenia, O. Kachaznuni, exactly described the situation that then existed in Armenian society: “We unconditionally orientated ourselves with Russia. Having no ground, we were keen for victory; we were sure that the tsarist government would grant the autonomy of Armenia that would consist of the released Armenian areas in Turkey and Transcaucasus Armenia for our loyalty, our efforts and support. Our idea was cloaked in the mist. We imposed our own desires on others; we gave great importance to the insignificant words of irresponsible people and ceased to understand reality and, under the influence of self-hypnosis, lapsed into daydreams. We overestimated the power of the Armenian people, our political and military importance as well as the support that we provided the Russians. We also overestimated our pretty modest worth and, naturally, we exaggerated both our hopes and expectations (73).

That very strange wordy reasoning of one of the leaders of the Dashnaks and of Armenia in 1918-1920 was cited especially in order to illustrate how similar were both the reactions and psychology of Armenians in the initial stage of conflicts with Azeris early in, as well as at the end of, the twentieth century. That serious disappointment which, as usual, awaited the Armenians, was natural.

But then in 1917 the revolution burst upon Russia and the people of the Transcaucasus were left on their own. They used that opportunity very poorly and, mainly because of the policy of the leaders of “Dashnaktsutun,” who again turned out to be under the influence of the idea of establishing “Great Armenia from Sea to Sea” that had been cultivated for decades. That is why, having come to power on 28 May 1918, Dashnak leaders almost immediately made territorial claims to Georgia and Azerbaijan. Certainly there were also territorial disputes between Azeris and Georgians. Nevertheless, the leaders of Azerbaijan and Georgia held negotiations and on 25 April 1919, managed to solve territorial issues and later, on 27 June 1919, even signed a joint defense agreement against the aggression of Russia.

Unfortunately, they failed to analogously solve their problems with Armenia. Moreover, in early December 1918, Armenia suddenly launched a war against Georgia. Due solely to the intervention of the English, combat operations were stopped in three weeks.

Armenian-Azeri relations, which Armenians considered through the prism of events in Turkey and dreams of “Great Armenia,” were much worse. The fact that, in 1917 after the collapse of the Russian empire, only Armenians had serious armed forces in the South Caucasus--as many as 35,000 Armenians that fought with Russian troops against the Turks--played an important role (74) and they formed the basis of the Armenian army, which many Russian officers and soldiers joined. Besides that, the Dashnaks had armed units (four thousand) that also played a role in Azerbaijan, primarily in Baku. In November of 1917, soviet power was established in Baku. Meanwhile, Stepan Shaumyan headed the Baku Council of Commissars. All key posts, including the military, were also occupied by Armenians. A month later, the first Armenian units appeared in Karabakh and smashed twelve Azeri villages there. That forced Azeris to form self defense units. For that purpose, arms were obtained or forcibly captured from Russian soldiers who were retreating to their homeland through Azerbaijan.

The fast growth of popularity and influence of “Musavat,” the national party in Azerbaijan, made soviet power in Baku unsteady. The situation became complicated in the spring of 1918 when the Musavatists, who had been very loyal to the Bolsheviks, then demanded that to provide Azerbaijan with autonomy. In a letter from Moscow dated 19 March 1918,

Russian communists advised Shaumyan to meet the demands of the Azeris. However, Shaumyan was an ardent opponent of providing autonomy, considering it “a dream of Azeri nationalists” to make Baku “the capital of an Azeri khanate” (75). The tragic conclusion was inevitable. On 30 March 1918, during a protest meeting of Azeris against the disarmament of several hundred soldiers of the former Russian “Muslim division” to the Soviet units that were returning through Baku to Lankaran, an incident occurred that served, in the words of Shaumyan, “as a cause” for large-scale operation against the peaceful Azeri population. Besides that, 6,000 soldiers of the Red Army as well as 4,000 people, including a unit of Dashnaks, were consciously used by Shaumyan and his associates and, as a result, those bloody events took on the “character of a national slaughter” even in the estimation of Shaumyan (76). And so it was, as the Red Army in Baku was also headed by Armenians and, at the same time, a number of them were Dashnaks. As a result, about 12,000 peaceful inhabitants died and tens of thousands of Azeris escaped from the city (77).

The mass slaughter of Azeris leaped over the borders of Baku. Units of Armenians under the command of Dashnak S. Lalayan organized a real pogrom in April in Shamakha city, killing 7,000 Azeris there and in 58 surrounding villages. At the same time, a unit of 2,000 Dashnaks under the command of Amazasp was sent to the north of Azerbaijan by the order of Shaumyan. There it smashed Guba city and 122 surrounding villages, killing 2,000 Azeris. The cities of Agdash, Goychay, Salyan Lankaran were smashed, or, as the soviet historians later wrote, “soviet power was established there.”

At the same time, Armenian military units began the mass massacre of Muslims (Azeris and Kurds) in the territory of Erivan province, trying to clear the territory of them and to marshall the compact Armenian population for the announcement of an independent Armenia. According to incomplete data, about 80,000 Muslims then escaped from Armenia to Azerbaijan. This led to the breakdown of the Transcaucasian Sejm that formally carried out the authority in the region. Georgia on 26 May 1918, and Azerbaijan and Armenia on 28 May announced their independence. As Baku was under the control of the Bolsheviks and Dashnaks, Ganja became the temporary capital of Azerbaijan at that period of time.

The announcement of Azerbaijan’s independence was met with extreme hostility in Baku and on 12 June, by Shaumyan’s order, Red Army and Dashnak units began attacking Ganja. As Armenians constituted the majority of the attacking troops, events took on pronounced national character. That is why the Azeri population in the region rose up hand-in-hand for the struggle and, with the help of Turkish units, defeated the enemy by the 1st of July. Then, having assumed the offensive themselves, Turkish and Azeri units entered Baku by force. On 15 September 1918, Turkish-Azeri units entered Baku. The March pogroms were yet fresh in memory and then it was the turn of Armenians: at least 9,000 Armenians died in the course of battles on the avenues of approach to the city and during slaughters in the city (78).

Meanwhile, the chief events developed in Karabakh. At the end of summer 1918, the Armenian army, under the command of Andranik, entered Zangezur and by October defeated 115 villages there, killing 7,700 and wounding 2,500 Azeris and Kurds. 50,000 people escaped far inland into Azerbaijan. In Armenia itself, where 135,000 people lived in 199 Muslim villages were defeated. Many Muslims died and others escaped to Nakhchivan (79). At the end of September, Turkish units began an attack against Dashnak units and on the 1st of October they entered Shusha without a fight. The Dashnaks units retreated to the mountainous parts of Karabakh and declared the establishment there of “Nagorny-Karabakh Republic” (80). Thus, the term “Nagorny Karabakh” appeared for the first time.

Meanwhile, in November 1918 the First World War ended. Germany and its allies took second place. Turkish troops left the South Caucasus. Placing their hope in the allies, the Armenians stopped attacking Karabakh by the request of England and France. Moreover, in

Tbilisi on 23 November 1918, representatives of the governments of Armenia and Azerbaijan, through the mediation of the allies, signed a ceasefire and agreed to solve their territorial disputes at the Paris Peace Conference.

However, resolute Dashnaks who also hoped to expand their territory were very soon disappointed by the actions of the allies in the South Caucasus. As O.Kachaznuni then mentioned, the English “showed such an absolutely unexpected and strange generosity to the Georgians and Azeris. Certainly we were dissatisfied with the English and discovered that they were ungrateful. That was the easiest way to explain to oneself this incomprehensible phenomenon. We found them ungrateful and alleviated our souls. But we did not look for the sources of their ingratitude anymore” (81). The response of the Dashnaks to the “ungrateful” allies soon followed: in early December 1918, Armenian troops almost simultaneously attacked Georgia and Azerbaijan. About 40 Muslim villages were destroyed in Zangezur. Combat operations were stopped only after a sudden protest by the English.

In early January 1919, Major-General V.M.Thomson, the commander of the allied troops in the region, sent Khosrov Sultanov, as a representative of the government of Azerbaijan in the capacity of Governor-General to Karabakh and Zangezur (82). In response, on 19 January 1919, units of the Armenian army began an attack on Shusha and on the 21st of January the government of Armenia issued an edict announcing the establishment of a “Temporary administration of the Armenian units of Zangezur and Karabakh” headed by Arsen Shakhmazyan.

In February of the same year, the head of the allied mission in Karabakh, English Major-General D.I.Shuttleworth, put forward the project of governing that area. By his order, Kh.Sultanov was recognized as the general-governor of Karabakh and his assistant was Armenian. A Council consisting of three Armenians, three Azeris and an Englishman, a member of the allied mission, answered to them. However, Dashnak leaders in Karabakh rejected that project (83).

In March and April 1919 Thomson in Yerevan and Shuttleworth in Shusha unsuccessfully tried to find a compromise solution. The English, irritated by the confrontational position of the Karabakh Armenian national council, which was under the strong influence of dashnaks, promised to expel the latter from the region. The firm position of the allies had its results: on the 23d of April 1919, the fifth session of Armenians of Karabakh for the first time recognized the authority of Azeri general-governor although with a minor reservation. The conflict parties began to look for forms of cooperation. In order to resolve the contested issues, on 25 June 1919 the government of Azerbaijan offered the leadership of Armenia to establish a joint governmental-parliamentary commission consisting of representatives of both parties and representatives of the allied powers. In early July, Sh. Rustambekov, a member of the Azeri parliament, took part already as a member of the government in the work of the sixth session of Karabakh Armenians. Finally, on the seventh session, held on 15 August 1919, the Armenians of Nagorny Karabakh passed an agreement with Azerbaijan. According to it, the Armenian part of Nagorny Karabakh would be included in the territory of Azerbaijan on the basis of territorial autonomy of the whole Karabakh and national-cultural autonomy of its Armenian population until the final resolution of the issue at the Paris Peace Conference. Meanwhile the Shusha, Djevanshir and Djebrail uyezds constituted a special administrative unit of general Karabakh province and, at the same time, the administration in the mountainous, Armenian zone was appointed by Armenians. A council was established consisting of three Azeries and three Armenians under the general-governor himself. The latter were elected by the Congress of Armenians of Nagorny Karabakh. The functions of that council under the general-governor were very broad and thus the principal issues of interethnic character could not be implemented without prior discussion in the council. Under the general-governor himself there was an

assistant on civil matters, to which position an Armenian was appointed. At the same time the Congress of Karabakh Armenians nominated two candidates to the Azeri government one of them would be approved. The limited military units would lodge only in Shusha and Khankendi and any their movements should be carried out according to the agreement of Armenians (84).

Contemporaries highly evaluated that agreement which formed the basis of the English draft with certain corrections. On 5 September 1919, the newspaper "Borba" ("Struggle") in Tbilisi noted: "Maybe the Karabakh Agreement will not accomplish a lot. It should not be forgotten that a century long hatred cannot be eliminated so soon. Maybe it will be violated tomorrow. Maybe the mountain part of Karabakh will soon again become an arena of combat operations. While not overestimating the importance of that agreement, we can not help welcoming it. We can not help mentioning that in this case we see the first serious experience in solving the Armenian-Muslim dispute by mutual agreement not slaughter... Life in Karabakh has made the conflict parties understand that even the worst peace is better than continuous slaughter... Armenian and Tatar (Azeri - A.Y.) masses everywhere should sooner or later understand that the sword is not capable of cutting the knot of contradictions that is known as Armenian-Tatar relations..." It was not without reason that the Dashnaks tried to defile and to annul the Karabakh agreement. The party, while living with the concept of national hatred, instinctively felt that there was even the most insignificant, even the least possibility to end the fatal hatred of the two nations".

The Western powers decided not to rest on their laurels. American Colonel William N. Haskell, appointed by the Union Supreme Commissariat of the South Caucasus, visited Yerevan and then in early September he paid a visit to Baku, where he met with the head of the Azeri government, N. Usubbekov. In the course of their last meeting, Haskell rejected the words attributed to him by the Armenian press and mentioned "that he considered it necessary for Karabakh, including Zangezur, to ultimately pass to Azerbaijan. But as for Nakhchevan, Sharur and Daralgez, that territory should compose a neutral area. That zone should be governed by the local population itself through their elected people and the administration should be headed by a European or American general-governor. Meanwhile, Azeri currency should be used in that neutral zone." Thus, the zone would be beyond any influence of the Armenian Republic and the Armenian armed forces would not be allowed there and only refugees can return there" (85).

After the negotiations and the receipt of the agreement by the leadership of both republics on 25 October 1919, the powers of Entente announced the establishment of the allied zone of governance under the command of an American general-governor in the Nakhchevan and Sharur uyezds. U.S. Army Colonel Edmund D. Daily, a US Army engineer, was appointed to that post. A month later in Tbilisi, on 23 November 1919, an agreement between Azerbaijan and Armenia was signed. According to it, the parties agreed to stop combat operations and to solve the disputed issues in a peaceful way. Meanwhile, according to that agreement, Armenia removed its troops from Zangezur. It was also decided to convene an Armenian-Azeri conference as soon as possible. On 14 December 1919, the conference took place and the outcome of the November agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan was confirmed.

On 11 January 1920, on the initiative of Lord George Kerzon, the Supreme Council of allied powers unanimously passed the decision on the de-facto recognition of the independence of Azerbaijan, as well as of Armenia and Georgia. At the same time, the peace conference in Paris recognized Azerbaijan's right to Karabakh (86).

Having already accused the allies of "ungratefulness and the betrayal" of their interests, Dashnak leaders again took up arms. While Armenian troops gathered in Zangezur, the Dashnaks launched a broad propaganda campaign in Karabakh. In the meantime, the situation of Azerbaijan was extremely difficult, as in January 1920 Soviet Russian troops approached the border of Azerbaijan. And so, on the night of March 23 1920, while Muslims were celebrating

their New Year, Armenians suddenly attacked Azeris in Shusha and other populated areas of Karabakh (87). That aggression and the attack begun by Armenian units forced the government of Azerbaijan to send almost all their armed forces to Karabakh. Shusha suffered most of all in the course of the March battles in Karabakh. It was literally ruined. Both sides had big losses. Then, in April 1920, the 9th Congress of Armenians of Karabakh passed a decision to renege on the agreement concluded on the 7th congress about joining Azerbaijan (88).

The heavy fighting in Karabakh and other districts of the country served the communists of Azerbaijan as a cause to appeal to Russia. On 27 April 1920, Soviet troops captured Baku and a month later Karabakh. Thus, independent Azerbaijan ceased to exist. A little later the turn of Armenia and Georgia came and, after a two year break, the authority of Russia, now Soviet, was restored in the South Caucasus.

Summing up the outcome of the second Armenian-Azeri conflict, the following should be noted. On the one hand, the better orderliness and propagandist abilities of Armenians were confirmed once again. Moreover, the attention to that was paid not only outside Azerbaijan but also inside the republic. The newspaper *Azerbaijan* stated directly on 8 December 1918: “We Azeris are not yet experienced in politics and we can not use those methods which others do, particularly our evil-wishers. We could not make noise all over Europe, to importune the mighty of the earth and we even failed to get “good press” in Europe.”

At the same time, the important role of Russia in the lives of the nations of the South Caucasus was revealed. The revolution in Russia and the civil war that broke out drew the attention of Russia away from the region. The leading political forces of the nations of the South Caucasus, being left on their own, had no tradition or experience of independent state governance. That made their situation very shaky even against the background of a weakened Russia. However, instead of uniting their small forces, they immediately began combat operations against each other. That happened mainly because of the phantom and dangerous struggle of the leaders of the “Dashnaktsutun” party to restore the ancient “Great Armenia from sea to sea,” which made territorial clashes with Georgians and Azeris inevitable.

Finally, unlike the first Armenian-Azeri conflict, the leading countries of the West then played a certain role in the fate of the region. At a certain stage in 1919, the western powers even managed to restore peace for a short time in Nagorny Karabakh, which they considered part of Azerbaijan. However, the activity of the allies was not very active or consistent. That is why, when the authority of the communists became stronger in Russia, they established their power over the pallid republics of the South Caucasus without difficulty.

Bolsheviks, Stalin and the Karabakh Issue

The establishment of Soviet power in the South Caucasus did not immediately take the Karabakh issue from the agenda. Although, at that time no combat operations were undertaken, as the Soviet army controlled the situation in both republics. However the situation was very complicated and Soviet power was completely established in the South Caucasus only by 1922. Before that, anti-Soviet rebellions broke out in one republic or another. That forced Moscow to still be as careful as possible in the solution of interethnic disputes. But the Karabakh issue was the most difficult, as mass pogroms and deportations were yet very fresh in the memories of both people. This explains the diplomatic fight between Russian and the South Caucasus communists over the territorial rights of Karabakh as well as Nakhchevan and Zangezur. Although from a strategic point of view, it did not have any special importance, since the independence of Soviet Armenia and Azerbaijan were fictitious as Moscow had the last word.

The issue of the lot of Soviet Karabakh appeared for the first time on 19 June 1920. On that day George Chicherin, acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of Soviet Russia, sent a telegram to Sergo Ordzhonikidze, who headed the Caucasian Bureau of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (CC RCP) in which he raised the issue of the necessity of occupying Karabakh and Zangezur “with Russian occupational troops.” Although Ordzhonikidze immediately replied that “Azerbaijan can in no way do without Karabakh and Zangezur,” nevertheless Chicherin repeatedly indicated in many letters of that period to Lenin and communists of the South Caucasus that “Karabakh is an aboriginal Armenian area.”

In response, numerous telegrams were sent addressed to Chicherin as well as his supporter, The People’s Commissar on National Issues – Stalin. As a result, Chicherin had to admit in a letter addressed to Lenin and dated 29 June 1920 that “he personally is not aware of the internal policy of Azerbaijan” and that his judgments were drawn from “the stories of Caucasian interlocutors” (89,) meaning representatives of the Dashnak government of Armenia, with whom negotiations were then held in Moscow and Yerevan.

Such narrowness was striking. That is why Ordzhonikidze, who was more familiar with the situation in the region and who could hardly be accused of sympathy with Azerbaijan, mentioned in his telegram to Moscow dated 19 June 1920 that Karabakh and Zangezur “consider themselves as a part of the Soviet Azerbaijan Republic” and advised Chicherin: “In general, from my point of view, a representative of Azerbaijan should be called to Moscow and all the issues referring to Azerbaijan and Armenia should be solved with him. It should be done before signing an agreement with Armenia” as our trust in the Dashnaks “will absolutely cause us to collapse here” (90). In another telegram from communists of the South Caucasus, N. Narimanov, B. Mdivani, A. Mikoyan, A. Nuridjanyan pointed out to Chicherin: “But referring to the so-called debatable Zangezur and Karabakh that are already included in Soviet Azerbaijan, we categorically declare that those areas are indisputable and henceforward should be within the bounds of Azerbaijan” (91).

There were many such telegrams, reports and pieces of information addressed to the Center from the South Caucasus in June and July of 1920. As if summing up, Ordzhonikidze clearly stated in his note to Lenin, Stalin and Chicherin concerning the possession of the aforementioned areas by Azerbaijan and warned: “The Armenian government intentionally misinforms you... Such an attitude towards Azerbaijan seriously compromises us in the eyes of the wide masses of Azerbaijan” (92).

The establishment of soviet power in Armenia in November 1920 created favorable conditions for communists to solve the Karabakh problem. On 30 November 1920 in a session of the leadership of the Communist party of Azerbaijan it was decided to apply to the government of Soviet Armenia by means of a Declaration which would mention that there were no longer any borders between the two republics. Meanwhile, Zangezur passed to Armenia and Nagorny Karabakh was granted the right of self-determination. Having sent the telegram with this content,

the head of the Azeri government, Narimanov, read the text of the declaration in a session of the Baku Commissariat in which was stated: "Henceforth no territorial issues can be the cause of mutual blood-letting between two centuries-old neighbors: Armenians and Muslims; the working peasantry of Nagorny Karabakh was granted the full right of self-determination" (93).

However, those documents were translated and published in another way. That extract from the Declaration published in the *Communist* newspaper in Yerevan on 2 December read thus: "From now on, no territorial issues can be the reason of the mutual blood-letting of two centuries-old neighboring nations, Armenians and Muslims. The territories of Zangezur and Nakhchevan uyezds are integral parts of Soviet Armenia and the working peasantry of Karabakh are granted the full right of self determination." As we see, the passage about Zangezur and Nakhchevan appeared in the Armenian translation and the adjective "Nagorny" was thrown out of the concept "Nagorny Karabakh." But apparently that seemed insufficient and, on 7 December, the text of the telegram of congratulation from Narimanov, dated 30 November 1920, was republished in the same newspaper where it was already mentioned: "Nagorny Karabakh, Zangezur and Nakhchevan are recognized as constituent parts of the Armenian Socialist Republic" (94).

Having found out about that, Azeri communists demanded a retraction. However no attention was paid to that in Soviet Armenia at that period of time. And there was an explanation for that. Even having lost authority in Armenia, the Dashnaks continued to play a very notable role in the life of the republic at that time. That is why the communists of Armenia left many of them, even if temporarily, in their previous posts. That was particularly the case in the Soviet Army, which was commanded by Dashnak general Dro, who was known for his atrocities against Azeris in Karabakh and Zangezur. However that Bolshevik-Dashnak alliance in Armenia ended with the rebellion of the latter in the middle of February 1921. Having captured Yerevan, the Dashnaks restored their authority over a part of Armenia. By the middle of April 1921, units of the Soviet army urgently redeployed from Georgia kicked the Dashnaks out of Yerevan. The latter strengthened in Zangezur, where they had the support of the Armenian population, especially of the settlers from Turkey. Playing for time until additional forces arrived, the communists of Armenia granted amnesty to the participants of the rebellion and held negotiations with the Dashnaks, at the same time flirting with the local population. In consequence, in June 1921 the leadership of the communist party of Armenia raised the issue of Karabakh and Zangezur, hoping this would attract Turkish Armenians to their side.

On 12 June 1921, the government of Armenia passed a decree which stated: "It is declared on the basis of the declaration of the Revolutionary Committee of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Azerbaijan and the agreement between the Socialist Republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan that henceforth Nagorny Karabakh is part of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Armenia" (95).

On 27 June 1921, the Presidium of the Caucasian Bureau of the communist party of Russia was held. On the eve of the meeting, a very important conversation between the members of the Azeri delegation in Tbilisi was held with Narimanov via telegraph. The latter asked from Baku to bring to the attention of the members of the Presidium that if the Armenians "refer to my declaration, the following was literally stated in it: Nagorny Karabakh is granted the right of self determination." Narimanov further stated that he would soon bring some material to Tbilisi and "then it will be clear that our Armenian comrades think only about territory, but not about the happiness of the poorest population of Armenians and Muslims and strengthening revolution" (96).

Meanwhile, it was decided in Tbilisi to call a special session of the Plenum of the Caucasian Bureau in early July. On July 2 the Plenum began its work. For the first two days, the Armenians made territorial claims in Georgia, demanding the Akhalkalak and Borchaly uyezds.

Relations between the parties were tense and Stalin, who had been in Nalchik since May (97), had to cut his holiday short and rush to Tbilisi in late June. From the very beginning, he had taken an active part in the work of the Plenum of the Caucasian Bureau between 2 June and 7 June 1921.

The session of the Caucasian Bureau on the Karabakh issue began on the evening of 4 July. According to the minutes, besides the members of the Caucasian Bureau (Ordzhonikidze, Makharadze, Narimanov, Myasnikyan, Kirov, Nazaretyan and Figatner) Stalin, a member of the CC RCP and people's commissar of Russia on nationalities, as well as three members of the CC CP of Georgia and secretary of the Caucasian Bureau of Komsomol, took part in it without the right of deciding vote.

After a stormy debate, there was a vote in which four people with the right to vote (Ordzhonikidze, Myasnikyan, Kirov and Figatner) voted for the Armenian position and three persons (Narimanov, Makharadze and Nazaretyan) voted to leave Nagorny Karabakh belonging to Azerbaijan. Meanwhile, the majority came forward against the participation of the Azeris of Nagorny Karabakh in a plebiscite on that issue. But Narimanov's statement followed it immediately: "On account of the importance that the Karabakh issue has for Azerbaijan, I consider it necessary that it be passed for the final solution of the CC RCP (b)."

The concluding decision of the day ran: "On account of serious disagreement that the Karabakh issue caused, the Caucasian Bureau of the CC RCP considered necessary to pass it for the final solution of the CC RCP" (86). Thus, on 4 July 1921, despite the claims of contemporary Armenian researchers, the session of the Caucasian Bureau did not pass the decision to hand over Nagorny Karabakh to Armenia but postponed that issue touching the interests and destinies of hundreds thousands of people in the region to the extended discussion of the CC RCP.

The next session of the Caucasian Bureau on the Nagorny Karabakh issue was held on the next day. That time, besides Stalin, only members of the Caucasian Bureau (only Orakhelashvili who was absent on the previous day joined them) and the people's commissar for foreign affairs of Azerbaijan, Guseynov, took part in its work. The issue of the destiny of Nagorny Karabakh was again raised on the initiative of Ordzhonikidze and Nazaretyan. The new session passed the decision: "Proceeding from the necessity of national peace between Muslims and Armenians, the economic connections between Upper and Lower Karabakh, and its permanent connection with Azerbaijan, it has been decided to leave Nagorny Karabakh within the bounds of Azerbaijan SSR, having granted it broad regional autonomy with an administrative center in the city of Shusha, which is in the autonomous area." It was further informed in the protocol without personal mentioning of the names that four persons voted for that decision of the Caucasian Bureau, three persons abstained from it and no voice was against it. (98).

Thus at the earliest stages of soviet power in the South Caucasus, the plenum of the Caucasian Bureau concluded and the final "I's" on the territorial possession of Nagorny Karabakh were dotted.

The establishment of the NKAA

The decision of the Caucasian Bureau caused ambiguous reaction in Azerbaijan. On 19 July 1921, having approved the decision of the Caucasian Bureau to leave Nagorny Karabakh in the territory of Azerbaijan, the leaders of the local communist party were careful on the issue of granting autonomy, fearing that that would have difficult consequences in the future. On 26 September 1921, the Politburo of the CC Communist Party of Azerbaijan decided: "To ask the Caucasian Bureau to reconsider its decision on the separation of Nagorny Karabakh: henceforth not to announce autonomy before that" (99).

A month later, on 21 October, the conference of communists of Nagorny Karabakh also came forward against providing the region with the autonomy. The delay of the issue of granting Nagorny Karabakh autonomy 15 months later forced the communists of the South Caucasus to return again to the Karabakh problem on 27 October 1922 and to demand that the CC of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan implement the decision of the Caucasian Bureau dated 5 July 1921. Only later, on 15 December 1922, was the commission on that issue established.

However, resistance to Nariman Narimanov who, according to his own words, "was against that autonomy just because Armenian-peasants did not want that themselves" lay ahead (100). Only after Narimanov was transferred to work in Moscow beginning in January 1923, did the situation in Azerbaijan suddenly change. On 27 June 1923, it was decided in a session of the plenum of the Transcaucasian District Committee of RCP (b) to charge the new leadership of the communist party of Azerbaijan with solving the issue of granting Nagorny Karabakh autonomy in a one month period. Already on 1 July 1923, the leadership of the communist party of Azerbaijan passed the corresponding decision and on 7 July 1923 the government of the republic passed a decree to establishment an autonomous area (NKAA) with the center in Khankendi from the Armenian part of Nagorny Karabakh.

A week later, on 16 July, the leadership of the communist party of Azerbaijan again returned to that issue and made a decision to expand the territories of NKAA, including Shusha and a number of the low-lying lands of Karabakh in it. Finally, on 18 September of the same year, 1923, it was decided in a session of the Karabakh regional committee of Azerbaijan to rename the administrative center of the NKAA from Khankendi to Stepanakert in the honor of Stepan Shaumyan.

Deportations of Azeris from Armenia from 1948-1952

The establishment of soviet power in Armenia and Azerbaijan did not remove the Karabakh issue from the agenda, but simply transferred it into another level. That was explained by the fact that the idea "of Great Armenia from sea to sea," the active propaganda of the Dashnaks, at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries still existed and had many supporters in Armenia, which was by that time communist. It was natural, as many generations of Armenians were brought up on that idea. That is why in 1923, Kachaznuni, one of the leaders of the Dashnaks, openly declared to his companions-in-arms in the party: "Dashnaktsutun led the Armenian issue and brought the political release of the Armenian people to a certain point. From here to the next point Bolshevik-Armenians should lead it... Bolshevik-Armenians are Dashnaktsakans per se, the only Dashnaktsakans today, and there are more Dashnaktsakans than me and you" (101).

The experienced politician was well aware of the psychology of his nation, as if he foresaw the future. In fact, to begin with, in the 30s the leadership of the communist party of Armenia began a campaign to replace Azeri geographic names in the republic with Armenian ones. Most important during that time was the decision of the Supreme Council of Armenia dated 3 January 1935, according to which 51 Azeri names of villages were Armenised within the

republic. Afterwards, particularly between 1946 and 1952, as well as from the 60s to the 80s, that campaign took on a multi-dimensional character and, by the beginning of the Karabakh conflict in 1988, more than 600 Azeri toponyms were Armenised. That was an intentional policy of the leadership of Armenia to do away with the evidence of the Azeri presence in the region.

After that, a downturn in the Azeri population, and that of the Muslim Kurds came. An excuse for that soon appeared: immediately after the end of the World War II, a movement to return to the homeland developed in many foreign Armenian colonies. Mainly because of Anastas Mikoyan Stalin highly regarded that, and in November 1945, he gave his agreement to organize the repatriation of foreign Armenians to Soviet Armenia. As at the beginning of 1946 the number of those wishing to return to Armenia had already reached 130 thousand people, a Committee under the government of the republic to accept and place the repatriated Armenians was established (102).

Taking advantage of that, Grigoriy Arutyunov, the acting head of the communist party of Armenia at that time, in November 1945 applied to Stalin with a letter in which he raised the issue of including NKAA in the territories of Armenia in the capacity of Karabakh area (103). On the instructions of Stalin, secretary of the CC UCPB (b) Malenkov sent an inquiry to the secretary of the communist party of Azerbaijan Mir Jafar Baghirov about the proposal of Arutyunov. Bagirov offered another decision; namely a territorial exchange: the whole territory of the NKAA besides the Shusha district populated mainly by Azeries would be passed to Armenia. In lieu thereof, three districts of Armenia bordering on Azerbaijan and populated mainly by Azeries would pass to Azerbaijan.

Such an alteration obviously did not suit the Armenians and that is why they preferred to pull the issue of NKAA from the agenda and, before that, to finally solve the “Azeri issue” in Armenia itself. For that the leadership of Armenia found the support of Stalin. On 10 March 1948, Resolution N 754 of the Council of Ministers of the USSR “Concerning events on the resettlement of collective farmers and other Azeri population from Armenian SSR to Kura-Araxes lowland of Azerbaijan SSR” was signed by the hand of the “father of the people.” According to it, over a period of 3 years more than 100,000 people would be resettled “of their own accord” from five mountain districts of Armenia – Azizbekov, Yekhegnadzor, Sisian, Vedin (later renamed in Ararat district), Basarkechar (later - Vardenis) - to the waterless Mil-Mugan steppe. Meanwhile, according to the plan, 10,000 Azeries were planned for the first year, 40,000 in 1949 and 50,000 in the next year. According to the resolution, all this was carried out in order to increase the population of those districts of Azerbaijan where ... the pat grew. However, the real reason was explained in point number 11 of the resolution: “To permit the Council of Ministers of the Armenian SSR to use the buildings and dwellings released by Azeri populationfor the settlement of foreign Armenians who arrived in the Armenian SSR” (104).

Thus, already for the third time in the twentieth century, the exile of Azeris as well as Kurds from Armenia began. This time, it was organized under the control of state structures and concluded with Stalin’s death. In fact, by early 1953 the number of the forcibly resettled freight-car Azeris and Kurds reached the number of 150,000 people. As it was impossible to settle all of them in the steppe districts, some of them were placed in new cities – Sumgayit and Mingechaurlu -that were under construction at that period of time. Thus, a time-bomb was placed that would explode in forty years in Sumgayit.

The Karabakh Issue in the Time of Khrushchev and Brezhnev

Based on the support of Anastas Mikoyan, who became the chair of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the USSR (i.e. the president of the country), and taking into account the successful transfer of the Crimea to the Ukraine in 1954, on 19 May 1963, 2,500 Armenians of the NKAA sent a petition to Nikita Khrushchev. In it, they again raised the issue of the transfer of NKAA to Armenia or RSFSR (105). Khrushchev refused to consider those demands and strict measures were undertaken against the initiators. Many of them were arrested and, if Armenian sources are to be believed, 18 of them were even killed (106).

The situation changed after the fall of Khrushchev in October 1964 and Leonid Brezhnev's coming to power. For a start, the Armenians, with the help of the same Mikoyan, managed to receive a permit to conduct a 50th anniversary of the tragic events that took place in 1915 in Turkey. Since the end of 1964, the republican Mass Media had already begun an openly anti-Turkish campaign that immediately affected the joyless position of Azeris, even without that campaign in Armenia. The Karabakh issue was again raised in the press and an informal "Committee for Reuniting Armenia" even appeared which enjoyed the unconcealed support of the republican leadership. On the eve of the 50th anniversary, i.e. on 24 April 1965, that Committee promulgated its program in numerous leaflets and posters: to avenge the year 1915; to exile all Azeris from Armenia; to reunite the NKAA and the Nakhchevan ASSR with Armenia. The republican leadership made its modest contribution, starting a mass campaign to discharge Azeris from responsible positions. As a result, only in one of 17 districts of Armenia populated by Azeris – Amasiy district- did an Azeri remain in the post of the first secretary. Armenians took their positions in all the rest of the posts. At the same time, more than 300 Azeri populated areas were renamed.

Soon, having realized that the situation was getting out of control and correspondingly clashes could be possible, from the beginning of April the army units began to be on duty in all Azeri quarters of Yerevan as well as in the Azeri villages of Armenia. Azeri schoolchildren and students did not attend classes. On 15 April, additional military units under the command of colonel M.Bazayev were introduced to Yerevan for the protection of the Azeri quarters. However, it was impossible to avoid attacks on Azeris and clashes between the military and Armenians occurred. Only after that did Moscow react and restore order. But henceforth every year in late April – on the anniversary of the persecution of Armenians in Turkey–Azeri residential areas were protected by military units and militia. That, however, did not allow Azeris to avoid violence and insults in this volatile atmosphere.

The KGB and Armenian terrorism

The leadership of the USSR and its punitive body, the KGB, although well informed of the events occurring in Armenia, did not pay the proper attention to those events. That was explained in a very matter-of-fact way: as the “cold war” was taking place, any means were good in the struggle against the “imperialistic West.” Today, however, it is now recognized that the center of international terrorism that became the real scourge of the planet in the 70s and 80s was the USSR. In other words, behind the Arabic, Kurdish and many other terrorist and ultra-left organizations, was the KGB using them for its own purposes. Foreign Armenians played a significant role in that policy of the soviet leadership.

In August 1961, the government of the USSR adopted a resolution on organizing the repatriation of foreign Armenians and in early 1962 the first group of repatriates from Cyprus arrived. In total, more than 26,000 Armenians arrived in Armenia between 1962 and 1973 (107). At the same time, secret contacts between the KGB and the “Dashnaktsutun” began, which were openly anti-Soviet spirited. While playing on the national feelings of Armenians, it also allowed them to carry out certain events in the republic in that respect, which, however, did not touch upon the basics of the soviet structure. In response, the KGB began to actively use the foreign Armenians in the struggle against the West. Meanwhile, every terrorist organization had its own specific targets. Thus, Arabs led their struggle with Israel and the USA, while Armenians had to deliver a blow to Turkey, the partner of the West on the southern flank of NATO.

On 27 January 1973, the Dashnaks opened a series of terrorist acts against Turkish citizens, shooting three Turkish diplomats in Los Angeles. But that dubious activity was not really appropriate for a party that pretended to be respectable. In 1975, a special terrorist organization - ASALA (Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia), closely connected with the Palestine terrorists and the secret services of the socialist countries, and primarily the KGB, was established. Today it is well known that about 90% of the former Soviet secret services in the Middle East were Armenians and many of them interacted with ASALA (108). That is why very soon ASALA became synonymous with the KGB.

Since 1983, the leader of ASALA had been Monte Melkonyan. Later, after the beginning of the Armenian-Azeri conflict, he came to Nagorny Karabakh in 1991 and headed units in the Martuni district. In June 1992, he was killed there and buried with honors in Yerevan.

Afterwards, the connection with the KGB was turned against the Dashnaks. In July 1992, the president of Armenia, Levon Ter-Petrosyan, in his TV appeal to the people accused “Dashnaktsutun” and its leader, Grayr Marukhanyan, of cooperation with the KGB, referring to available documents. As Ter-Petrosyan explained, from the beginning of the Karabakh conflict, Marukhanyan and other high ranking Dashnaks met with the leaders of the republican and all-union KGB. As a result, it was then that an agreement was sealed according to which the Dashnaks, while cooperating with communists, should start a struggle against the ANM, having received in exchange the permission to return to Armenia. That is why Ter-Petrosyan demanded that Marukhanyan leave Armenia within 48 hours. The latter, with no objections, quickly left for Greece.

But that happened later and, for the time being, the Dashnaks and other foreign Armenian organizations started a real terror campaign against Turkish citizens in the 1970s and 80s and, at the same time, took part with the Palestinians in many events in the Middle East.

It is important to mention here that the Soviet Union, having revived Armenian terrorism in the 70s, later suffered from it itself. In 1967, inspired by the latest events in Armenia, young nationalistically spirited Armenians established an exclusive secret organization, The National Unity Party, which was headed by Paruir Hairikian and Stepan Zatikyan. They demanded that Nakhchivan, Nagorny Karabakh and the eastern districts of Turkey be ceded to Armenia. In 1974, the KGB arrested all of them. Zatikyan who was soon released, crossed from the moderate wing of the party and became a supporter of terrorism. It is good that at that time ASALA widely

developed its activity and was very popular among Armenians. And on January 8, 1979, Zatikyan, along with Akop Stepanyan and Zaven Bagdasaryan, detonated a bomb in the Moscow subway. As a result, seven innocent people died and 37 were wounded (109). Two years later, all three terrorists were shot according to the verdict of the court.

Azerbaijan soon faced its first terrorist act: on 17 June 1984, a bomb exploded on regular bus 106 in Baku. As a result, a woman died and nine people were wounded. S. Vartanov, who was apprehended, later acknowledged that he had decided to take revenge on Azeris and, symbolically, on the Turks for the events of the distant 1915. The people of the republic perceived that as a terrorist act, as a barbarous and incomprehensible event. Moreover, the authorities, fearing interethnic complications, tried to smooth that event over. Two years later, as a result of sabotage, the Baku the Theater of Opera and Ballet, and the Exhibition Center for National Economic Achievements were burnt one after another. Although nobody suffered, there were serious losses. And although those sabotage actions clearly displayed an “Armenian trace,” and were again connected to the events of 1915, the authorities decided not to intensify the situation and again smoothed the event over.

Gorbachev’s Perestroika and Karabakh

In March 1985, Gorbachev, who realized that the socialist system was experiencing the strongest crisis and that serious reforms were necessary to keep the authority of the CPSS, came to the power. That is why he declared a “revolutionary perestroika” in all spheres, “a new way of thinking”, “glasnost (publicity) and the democratization” of soviet society.

However, not all communists, particularly representatives of the higher echelon, liked the new “general line” of the CPSS leadership. Per se, yesterday’s reactionaries but from different generations, took up perestroika of the USSR. On one hand, the senior generation of the CPSS, spiritually educated on Stalin, made up the central basis of Brezhnev’s guard. Headed by Yegor Ligach, they came forward for merely cosmetic reforms that would not touch the foundation of the soviet system and were against declaring Stalin anathema. On the other hand, “the young,” headed by Gorbachev, whom Khrushchev had time to infect with anti-Stalinism. They did not think of perestroika other than as a complete break with the Stalinist past. Thus, it was already the second time since Khrushchev that one’s attitude toward the personality of Stalin became the watershed in the leadership of the CPSS.

The conflict between “the seniors” and “the young” was unavoidable and only CC CPSS was authorized to solve that dispute. But, as it mainly consisted of the CC members of Brezhnev’s time, their sympathies were on the side of Stalinists in the Politburo. Very soon, the invisible outward struggle in the Politburo touched every level of Soviet society and the Stalin theme became the most popular at that period of time. Under these circumstances, Gorbachev began cleaning out the upper echelon of the CPSS. In response, the first blow of Brezhnev’s old guard followed in December 1986 in Kazakhstan. Then blows followed in Azerbaijan and Armenia.

On the one hand, even a measured “glasnost” caused a real explosion in the national self-consciousness of Azeris and Armenians. Consequently, since 1986 numerous informal organizations engaged in problems of history, culture and ecology appeared in both republics. On the other hand, as earlier, both republics were headed by representatives of Brezhnev’s old guard.

Heydar Aliyev, once almighty head of Azerbaijan, was in Moscow as a Politburo member since 1982 and his discharge from power was only a matter of time after Gorbachev decided, first of all, to discharge Karen Demirchyan from the post of the first secretary of the communist party of Armenia.

In the middle of 1986, the CC of the communist party of Armenia received a document from the CC CPSS on the “serious shortages of the ideological and organizational activity existing in the republic,” but Demirchyan simply did not pay attention to that. Then, at the end of the same year, careful critics of the leadership of Armenia began to appear in the central vehicle of the Mass Media. In response, Demirchyan stated in one of his interviews that perestroika in Armenia began long before April 1985, i.e. before the official announcement of Gorbachev. That was an open call. In the spring of 1987, Gorbachev did not simply criticize but made fun of Demirchyan in public and, according to unwritten soviet law, that meant the inevitable displacement of the latter.

It was urgently necessary to deflect the blow from themselves. Meetings of the communists were held with the resolution of reuniting Karabakh with Armenia. Those meetings were held in the Academy of Sciences of Armenia and in the university in Yerevan on the initiative of the CC of the communist party.

Gorbachev, strengthened by summer, began a determined response and, at the June plenum of the CC CPSS in 1987, with one blow got rid of a big group of Brezhnev’s old guard. Heydar Aliyev was among them, and he was sent “to pension due to his state of health”, i.e. retirement. A very strong blow was delivered to Demirchyan as well: at the same plenum Gorbachev exposed him to the sharpest critics, the leadership of Armenia. By his instruction,

critical material about the leadership of Armenia, and personally about Demirchyan, began to appear one after another in the central newspapers. And in July 1987, i.e. only a month after the appearance of Gorbachev in Moscow, the first secretary of the Hrazdan district committee of the party Haik Kotanjian demanded, still unsuccessfully, the retirement of Demirchyan at a plenum of the CC of the communist party of the republic held in Yerevan.

After that, events began to take on the character of an avalanche: in August a petition on behalf of 75,000 Karabakh Armenians was sent to Gorbachev. The petition was on joining that area to Armenia. In September, Zoriy Balayan and in October the son of Anastas Mikoyan, Sergey, appeared in the foreign press on the Karabakh theme, pointing out to the Armenian diaspora that the conditions for a fundamental solution of the problem were then very favorable. On 17-18 October the first sparsely attended demonstrations were held in Yerevan (110).

It is clear today that the countdown to this century's third Armenian-Azeri conflict would be started: namely, in the summer of 1987. As so many years past, it is undoubted that Gorbachev and his opponents in the Politburo and the leadership of the republics hardly realized fully at that time what kind of genie they had let out of the bottle. Certainly Gorbachev was well informed about events taking place in Armenia and Azerbaijan, but he did not see any particular danger to himself and the Soviet system. On the contrary, he obviously hoped to use the incipient Karabakh movement as a cause to subvert representatives of Brezhnev's old guard in both republics. However, the actions of his opponents in the field and in Moscow were also understandable: they hoped to kindle a big fire and take advantage of that as an excuse to displace Gorbachev and to stop perestroika, which was becoming dangerous for them. It did not seem difficult to stop the movement after the implementation of their plans, considering previous soviet experience.

The position of Gorbachev at that time was evidently preferable: he was considered both in the country and outside it as a reformer and a fighter for democracy and for this reason he was very popular. That is why he began the decisive attack: on 18 November 1987 in Paris his advisor on economic issues, Abel G. Aganbegiyani, appeared with the economic rationale for the necessity of joining the NKAA to Armenia. Two weeks later, during his visit to the USA, Gorbachev himself stated in his interview with CNN that in the past serious mistakes were made in determining the borders of the republics and he assured them that he was looking for approaches to solve the issues connected with that.

In an interview given to the Russian newspaper *Express-Chronicle*, Karen Ohadjanyan, one of the activists of the Karabakh movement, very clearly described the mood and reaction of Armenians at that time: "Our hearts quailed: we took that on our own account. Then the delegation from Nagorny Karabakh went to Moscow where Demichev, the deputy of Gromyko, received two of them: the deputy of the Supreme Council, the notable tractor driver Vazgen Balayan and with him Arthur Mkrtchyan, 28 year-old director of the museum. Demichev told them: "Your affair is right". And a month later the deputy department of the CC CPSS Mikhaylov, to the question of the writer Gurgen Gabrielyan "Do we have the least pink chance?" answered: "Why pink one? You have the biggest red chance." That was the beginning of 1988 (111).

This is very reminiscent of the state of Armenian society at the beginning of the century, so clearly noted then by O.Kachaznuni: and that is very natural, as no principle changes on the main issue were made in the Armenian public consciousness even during the seven decades of Soviet propaganda of internationalism. The same Karen Ohadjanyan directly pointed out in the same interview that the thought of the possible acquisition of Nagorny Karabakh from Azerbaijan came to his mind when he was "9 or 10 years old. I read and dreamed a lot about the Great Armenia. I thought about the reasons for such historical injustice? And a romantic hope for the rebirth of the nation lived in me" (112). The Armenian publicist A. Yegiazaryan echoed him,

mentioning that until February 1988 “We were doomed and sighed while remembering not only the grief of Ararat, which was our emblem, but also for our border, about Karabakh and Nakhchevan” and that’s why the hearts of Armenians “were poured with blood once we looked at the map” (113). That is why in Moscow, both Tsarist and Soviet, it was not difficult at all to provoke the appearance of Armenians in the necessary riverbed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as well as in our civilized century. Thus, in the “epoch of perestroika,” having forgotten history and not understanding that Moscow offered a “red chance,” Armenians again believed in the literal, not in the figurative, meaning and started a strong propaganda campaign in the Soviet and foreign mass media.

Meanwhile, the public consciousness and stereotypes that were formed by that time were wonderfully taken into account. The role of Stalin in the Karabakh issue and so-called “Islamic fundamentalism” of the Azeris were used and incredibly overblown, particularly at that period of time and later.

All that immediately affected the position of Azeris in Armenia which, even without that, was very hard. In November and December of 1987 and in January of 1988 it led to mass clashes and disorders in the Kafan and Megri districts of Armenia and the first several hundred Azeris were forced to leave their homes and to escape to Azerbaijan. In November 1987, the first buses of Azeri refugees from those districts arrived in Baku. However, the authorities of Azerbaijan, obedient to Moscow, did everything in their means then; thus, those refugees would be quickly sent to Sumgayit and other places and the public, neither in Azerbaijan nor especially outside the country, would know about it (114).

However the situation in the Azeri districts of Armenia, as earlier, remained tense. By 25 January 1988, the number of Azeri refugees increased to 4 thousand people and 3 thousand of them were from the NKAA (115). Thus, for the first time in the post war era, refugees appeared in the territory of the USSR. However, all this became widely known much later, but, for a while, neither the Azeri public nor societies abroad had any information about it.

On 12 February the first demonstrations by Armenians in the NKAA began. On 20 February a session of the Regional Council of Deputies applied to the Supreme Councils of Armenia and Azerbaijan with a request to transfer NKAA to Armenia. In Yerevan, rallies involving many thousand people immediately began to support that request. Those demonstrations, according to one of the activists of that period “turned out to be thunder in the clear sky for many Armenians... The KGB, especially the Armenian KGB, headed the organization of the demonstrations. It gathered people for rallies, promoted the leaders, provided the necessary information, slogans and all other necessary elements such as the place, buildings, security, etc” (116).

Certainly, the overwhelming majority of Armenians went to those rallies sincerely believing in the slogans declared in the squares. Not only Armenians believed in Gorbachev and perestroika. Azeris, who came out in counter protest rallies, had the same mood and hope for justice. But a conflict, moreover an interethnic one, has its own laws. Blood was necessary and it very soon poured: on 22 February there was a clash of parties in Nagorny Karabakh near the settlement of Askeran. As a result, two people died and 19 people were injured on both sides. Thus, the account of the first victims of the third Armenian-Azeri conflict was opened. Young Azeries –Ali Hadjiyev and Bakhtiyar Guliyev, inhabitants of Agdam became those victims.

In five days, information about that bloody confrontation below Askeran literally exploded the situation in Sumgayit – the city that was founded four decades ago by Azeri refugees from Armenia and where a new wave of refugees from the Kafan district of Armenia had lately arrived. Late in the evening of 27 February in Sumgayit, the beatings of Armenians began, which, on the next day, grew into pogroms which were stopped by troops and militia only on 1 March. The outcome was the following: 26 Armenians and 6 Azeries died, about 130

inhabitants (54 out of them were Azeri and 34 Armenians) and 275 soldiers and militia officers were wounded. 97 people (93 Azeris, and an Armenian, two Russians and a Lezgin) were arrested, 63 of them were sentenced (117). Unfortunately, the investigation of those two bloody events was not brought to an end and to this day there are no answers to the numerous questions. Among the main questions are the following: who specifically stood behind whom, on whose instruction the firing started, why the militia and troops that had been informed about it beforehand were on the scene too late and how an Armenian, Eduard Grigoryan, who was guilty of the death of five of his countrymen turned out to be among the most active participants of the Sumgayit pogroms? Sentenced to 12 years of imprisonment, after a few years he was released ...on amnesty (!?).

After those bloody events, the socio-political situation in both republics fundamentally changed and the third confrontation of the parties to the conflict officially began. Even after all this happened, Gorbachev hardly realized the character of the conflict in its full extent: in March 1988, while in Yugoslavia, he stated that “nothing anti-constitutional is happening in Nagorno Karabakh and everything corresponds to the goals and objectives of perestroika.” He achieved what he wanted very soon: on 21 May Karen Demirchyan and Kamran Bagirov retired from their positions at the same time and Gorbachev’s people, Suren Arutyunyan and Abdurrahman Vezirov, sent from Moscow, headed to both republics.

At the beginning of March 1988, a committee of the movement “Karabakh” that was headed first by KGB intimate Igor Muradyan serving many important ends but mainly as a disguise for the KGB, and supported by a number of representative figures from the intelligentsia, was established (118). However, after May new faces such as Levon Ter-Petrosyan, who were very critical of the power of the communists and paid more attention to social problems and issues of democracy in Armenia and who forced back such persons as Zori Balayan, Silva Kaputikyan and Igor Muradyan, began to appear on the committee (119). Nonetheless, according to their contemporary Lilia Grigoryan, no matter how much “the committee Karabakh” did, it disappointed its “godfathers.” The latter considered the movement their brainchild and, while pinning different hopes on it right up to provoking a putsch, in due time they continued to secretly protect it and at the same time carefully and skillfully led the game. On the one hand, they prevented any deviation from the Karabakh problem and, with the help of their numerous agents, continually stopped any attempt to raise social issues as tangential matters that would raise obstacles to the reuniting of Karabakh. On the other hand, they provided different services, such as assistance in organizing demonstrations and protection by law enforcement bodies (120).

They provided not only services. South of Yerevan on March 10, five Azeri inhabitants of the Mekhmanlyar settlement were killed. After that, numerous attacks on Azeri villages began to take place in many districts of Armenia, particularly in the Gukark and Kafan districts. That repeatedly led to the victims. Unable to stand it, the inhabitants of seven Azeri villages (about 10 thousand people) of the Ararat district of Armenia escaped to the soviet-Turkish border and lived for four months on the bank of Araxes river. The violence against Azeris in Armenia continued. By the autumn of 1988, Armenians began to form battle units “according to the principles of partnership and place of residence” (121). The main events that year developed in November and December. First, at a demonstration held on 4 November Rafael Kazaryan, one of the activists of the committee “Karabakh,” openly called “to support the emigration in every way. For the first time in decades we have been given a unique opportunity to cleanse (thus in the text – A.Y.) Armenia ... with the help of units ... that were established beforehand. I think this is the biggest achievement of our struggle in ten months” (122).

That process of “cleansing” took place throughout November of 1988: Azeri and Kurdish villages were surrounded and almost every day they were exposed to shootings. From

27 November on, attacks on surrounding villages were carried out almost simultaneously in 19 districts of the republic. Evidently, it was done by plan. Meanwhile the attacks were headed by the responsible leaders of the districts with the direct participation of the KGB and militia. The first secretaries of Gukark, Vardenis, Spitak, Idjevan and a number of other district committees of the communist party in Armenia showed particularly great zeal. In total, 186 Azeris and Kurds died or were frozen in the mountain passes during escape that year. As the attacks on the Muslim population in Armenia continued the following year as well, the total number of the victims of pogroms in Armenia reached 216 people, the overwhelming majority Azeris (123).

Repression and personnel changes in both republics were the response of Gorbachev and his supporters to those bloody events. From December 1988 to January 1989 the leaders of the Karabakh movement were arrested in Armenia and the NKAA. Supporters of Demirchyan were dismissed from their positions. Among them were “Public Prosecutor of the Republic Osipyan and Chairman of the KGB Yuzbashyan, the two initiators and secret supporters of the “Karabakh” movement” (124).

Analogous measures were implemented in Azerbaijan. Many leaders and participants of the November events were arrested. At the same time by order of Moscow, Vezirov carried out a mass cleaning of the leadership of the communist party, KGB and the MIA. According to the press, 22 first secretaries of the district committees of the party were replaced. 612 leaders of different ranks were deprived of their posts in powerful ministries, especially the KGB. On January 12, 1989, a new form of governance – the Committee for Special Governance, headed by Gorbachev supporter Arkadiy Volskiy – was introduced in the NKAA area to stabilize the situation.

However, it was already very difficult to put the genie back in the bottle. Awakened by glasnost, peoples’ movements in both republics were very popular and growing quickly. At the same time, Armenians did not consider the struggle for Karabakh lost at all. But then, they already distrusted Gorbachev and began to diligently form armed forces. Thus, the Karabakh conflict passed into another stage and it began to increasingly take on the characteristics of an interethnic conflict. Moreover, in the summer of 1989 Pan-Armenian National Movement (PANM) and the Popular Front of Azerbaijan (PFA) were formed almost simultaneously in both republics. These movements led their people not only in the struggle for Nagorny Karabakh, but also against the communist system. The latter was more dangerous for Moscow. Azerbaijan began to raise more concerns at that time. The authority of the communist party there was plummeting catastrophically, while the rating of the PFA was getting very high. Meanwhile, parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan were approaching, the outcome of which was not very difficult to predict.

Beginning in the summer of 1989, the situation suddenly became tense in the NKAA and peaceful people often died. In late August, special services tried to play the “Armenian card” for the first time in Baku: they intended to introduce about 300 criminals to the city at the very peak of demonstrations held on August 27 and to organize pogroms against the Armenians and then to put the responsibility for it on the PFA. But the leaders of the PFA, warned beforehand, applied to the authorities with a demand to prevent it. Thus, the first attempt of pogroms in Baku was prevented.

The KGB took that blunder into account and began to prepare operations more thoroughly. By the end of 1989, the leadership of the KGB in Azerbaijan consisted almost completely of officers sent there from Moscow. In early January 1990, a new landing (of about 30 people) consisting of the highest leadership of the KGB of the USSR and headed by First Deputy of the Chairman of the KGB – General, F.Bobkov, arrived in Baku. A little bit later, representatives of the higher echelon of the CC CPSS – Y.Primakov, A.Girenko and V.Mikhaylov - as well as the leaders of the army (the Minister of Defense D. Yazov) and of the

internal troops (Minister V.Bakatin) arrived. On 13 January the pogroms against Armenians began at the very peak of the demonstrations held in Baku. Meanwhile, the militia and military units did not openly intervene. As a result, 66 Armenians and 2 Azeris died. Only on 20 January a week after the beginning of pogroms, did Soviet troops, destroying everything in their way, enter Baku amidst accompanying propaganda about "Muslim fundamentalism." According to official data, 131 Baku inhabitants died and 744 were injured (125). A serious blow was delivered to the PFA. The communists then kept their authority in Azerbaijan under the guard of soviet bayonets. However, Gorbachev, engaged with Azerbaijan, overlooked Armenia: on August 04 1990, Levon Ter-Petrosyan, the leader of the ANM became the speaker of parliament and headed the republic. Fearing that, Gorbachev moved on to a "carrot and stick" policy. On 27 and 28 August 1990, a confrontation between citizens and soviet troops was provoked in Yerevan and, as a result, 23 Armenians and 2 soldiers died. The soviet army began active operations against Armenian military units, which by that time had formed in the NKAA and in Armenia. An awesome ultimatum from Gorbachev demanding the surrender of weapons followed from Moscow. The pragmatic Ter-Petrosyan made the necessary concessions: he started active negotiations with Gorbachev and introduced significant corrections in the personnel policy, providing communists with the lion's share of ministerial posts. In response, Gorbachev "softened" and no longer remembered his ultimatum on the surrender of weapons. Moreover, the command of the Soviet Army secretly began to provide the Armenians with weapons. One of the leaders of the Karabakh movement, Ashot Manucharyan, who later became the chief advisor of President Ter-Petrosyan on strategic issues of national security, confirmed this, stating that "the stories which presented the attacks as an attempt to seize automatic guns and technology only camouflaged the collusion involved in the sale" (126).

After the PANM came to power, the first official negotiations also began between the struggling parties. In September 1990, negotiations between leaders of the USSR and both republics were held in Moscow. However, the outcome was unfavorable, as the main contradictions, which play a defining role even today, were revealed: both parties refer to international law and the Final Clause of the 1975 Helsinki agreement; however they proceed from different principles. Azeris defend territorial integrity and Armenians consider a nation's right of self determination the priority.

Meanwhile, in April 1991, Ter-Petrosyan signed a resolution nationalizing the property of the Communist Party of Armenia. Moscow's response followed immediately: in May and June of 1991, soviet troops deported Armenians from 22 villages in the NKAA and Shaumyan's district of Azerbaijan. Meanwhile, dozens of peaceful inhabitants died. At the same time, the situation on the Armenian-Azeri border became more tense.

After the failure of the August putsch, beginning in the fall of 1991, the second post-soviet stage of the conflict began. That occurred when the collapse of the USSR, legally documented in December 1991, occurred and Gorbachev retired as the last leader of that huge communist power. Azerbaijan and Armenia became independent republics and the Karabakh conflict entered a new stage, quickly taking on the character of a war between two republics.

The aforementioned events immediately affected the nature of negotiations: the head of Russia, Boris Yeltsin, and the head of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, most popular at that period of time, arrived in the region in September 1991 and offered their services as mediators. As a result, on 23 September 1991, an agreement to peace negotiations with the mediation of Russia and Kazakhstan was signed for the first time between Azerbaijan and Armenia in the city of Zheleznovodsk, situated in the North Caucasus. On 16 November 1991, a new agreement on a phased breaking of blockades on transport pathways was signed by the two parties. However, on November 20, battle-hardened Armenians from Nagorny Karabakh damaged an M-8 helicopter on board which were not only high ranking officials of Azerbaijan but also representatives of

Russia and Kazakhstan. All the passengers (21 persons) died. That terrorist act inflamed the situation in the region. On 23 November the parliament of Azerbaijan abolished the NKAA as an administrative unit and a little later, on 10 December 1991 Karabakh Armenians organized a referendum on the independence from Azerbaijan of the self-proclaimed Nagorny-Karabakh Republic. In late December, the USSR also ceased to exist. All that fundamentally changed the geopolitical situation in the region.

A War without Rules

Thus for the second time in the twentieth century, a situation arose when the collapse of an empire and its internal muddles distracted the attention of Moscow from the South Caucasus. Again, as in 1918 through 1920, the battles between Armenian and Azeri armed forces began in Karabakh. And again, as it was seven decades before, the armed forces of Armenia turned out to be better prepared and equipped. As of autumn 1988, Armenians began to establish military formations which, by the beginning of 1992, represented well prepared units capable of resisting the regular units.

All that time, the leadership of Azerbaijan pinned its hopes on Moscow and raised obstacles in every possible way to the formation of analogous military units, as the PFA suggested. Although under pressure from the opposition, it was only on 9 October 1991 that the parliament adopted the decision to form an Azeri army within three months. But even five months later, during a report by the Minister of Defense in parliament, it was revealed that in March 1992 there were only... 150 military servants registered in the Azeri army. And they were mainly local units of self-defense: volunteers and militia that were fighting in Nagorny Karabakh.

That is why immediately after the election of Ter-Petrosyan as the president of Armenia on 16 October 1991, the Armenian armed forces started attacking and, by the beginning of February 1992, they conquered 35 out of 57 Azeri villages, completely burning eleven of them and killing dozens of peaceful rural inhabitants. On the night of 26 February 1992, the bloodiest massacre of that war occurred. In scale, it was in the category of such tragedies of our century as Liditse, Khatyn and Songmi. Armenian units, with the help of Russian Battalion Number 366, invaded the small Azeri city of Khodjaly, where more than 3,000 people and 160 army recruits, militia and self-defense units remained by that time. To the present day, there are no exact figures on the victims of the tragedy that took place during the taking of the city. At the time it was reported in the press that more than 1,000 Khodjaly people died; however, it is now possible to list the names of 636 dead, among which there were hundreds of women, old people and children. Two years later, the Investigation Group of the Public Prosecutor of Azerbaijan distributed information that managed to document the deaths of 485 people, 33 of them children and 106 women. 120 people were missing without any information, 487 were wounded and more than 500 people were taken into captivity. Meanwhile, the bodies of many of the murdered were exposed to mockery, including scalping (127).

Only after that tragedy did it become clear to the international community that a further continuation of the conflict would be fraught with more difficult consequences. They also realized that urgent measures were necessary to stop combat operations. And there were grounds for that: on 30 January 1992, Azerbaijan and Armenia became members of the OSCE and, by that very fact, an opportunity for that international organization to take part in the negotiation process appeared for the first time. Finally, on 24 March 1992, Ministers of the Foreign Affairs of the OSCE established the Minsk Conference on Nagorny Karabakh. Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, The Czech Republic and Slovakia, France, Germany, Italy, Russia, Sweden, Turkey and the USA took part in it. Its goal was to cease fire and to start political negotiations on the final status of Nagorny Karabakh. Belarus offered its capital as a place for the decisive negotiations and from thence the name "Minsk conference" appeared. The place of the preliminary negotiations then was Rome and an Italian, Mario Raffaelli, became the first chairman of the Minsk group.

Another outcome of the Khodjaly tragedy was the retirement of Azerbaijan president Ayaz Mutalibov and the crisis of authority in Azerbaijan. Meanwhile, on 8 May 1992, on the initiative of, and with the immediate participation of Iran, a meeting of the leaders of Azerbaijan and Armenia was held in Teheran. Ter-Petrosyan offered a cease fire along the front line and to unblock communications. After debate, a ceasefire agreement was signed and new negotiations

on a mechanism for stopping combat operations and unblocking communications were begun. For that purpose the leadership of Iran should have visited Baku and Yerevan.

But while negotiations were yet underway, at dawn on 8 May Armenians undertook an assault on Shusha, the last stronghold of Azeris in Nagorny Karabakh, and by the evening of the same day, they took it. The leadership of Azerbaijan, returning from Teheran, along with Iranian president Rafsanjani, managed to contact Ter-Petrosyan only after Shusha ended up under the full control of the Armenians. It became clear that Armenia used the negotiations to divert the attention of the Azeris.

On 15 May the Armenians occupied the city of Lachin and, by that very act, they controlled not only the whole of Nagorny Karabakh, but for the first time they managed to conquer a whole district beyond the borders of the former autonomous area.

The Armenian occupations became the topic of discussion at a meeting of the Minsk group held in Rome in early June. However, no agreement was reached at that or ensuing meetings held in 1992 in Rome, as Azerbaijan demanded the return of Shusha and Lachin, (i.e. a return to the original boundaries) as a preliminary condition to the ceasefire and further political negotiations, but the Armenians were against this.

On 7 June 1992, Abulfaz Elchibey, chairman of the PFA, was elected president of Azerbaijan. By that time, according to the 15 May 1992 Tashkent agreement on the partition of the military legacy of the former USSR, Russia officially delivered to Armenia and Azerbaijan each 220 tanks, the same number of armored cars, 285 units of artillery as well as airplanes and helicopters. Unofficially, both republics acquired even more weapons and technology.

On 12 June the Azeri army, having redeployed forces, unexpectedly began a strong attack and in only 36 hours it controlled the whole Shaumyan district (13 populated areas). On 5 July the Armenians left the city of Agdere (Mardakert to the Armenians).

Under those circumstances, Russia again decided to offer its mediation and in early July it put forth a plan for conflict resolution. According to this plan, Armenian troops would be removed from Shusha and Lachin and afterwards measures for the complete demilitarization of Shusha and Khankendi (Stepanakert) would be undertaken. The route between Agdam-Stepanakert-Shusha-Lachin-Goris was given a special legal status; i.e. it was proposed to create a "road of peace and trust."

In agreement with this plan, the leadership of Azerbaijan instructed its troops on 9 July 1992 to stop the successful attack. However, Armenia was not satisfied with the plan. On 8 July the Armenian parliament adopted a resolution in accordance to which it was decided "to consider any international or internal state documents in which Nagorny Karabakh is mentioned as part of Azerbaijan unacceptable to the Republic of Armenia."

After that, the leadership of Armenia transferred more than 100 tanks and a large number of infantry to the area of combat operations and started a counteroffensive attack. The battles tightened.

Unexpectedly, on 27 August Nazarbayev again offered his services to solve the conflict and, after negotiations in Almaty, representatives of Armenia and Azerbaijan signed a memorandum to cease combat operations beginning September 1992 and to schedule a meeting between the current presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan by the mediation of Nazarbayev in Almaty.

However, that agreement also failed: on the night of 3 September the Armenians began an attack in the direction of Agdam and even managed to reach the suburbs of the city. Russia then organized a meeting of the Ministers of Defense of Armenia and Azerbaijan on 19 September in the city of Sochi. They signed a ceasefire agreement. A new development here was that the Minister of Defense of Armenia, Vazgen Sarkisyan, acknowledged during the negotiations that

the armed forces of his republic participated in combat operations against Azerbaijan. Because of that, he lost his post two weeks later and combat operations started again.

Thus, from the middle of 1992, the character of the conflict changed in quality and it became an ordinary war between two states. But the use of hundreds of armored cars, artillery and aviation as well as the considerable increase in the number of participants in combat operations sharply increased the losses of both parties.

The fall season's bad roads and early snowfall led to a battle for defensive positions until the spring of 1993. Under these circumstances, Yeltsin and G. Bush, the president of the USA, for the first time came forward with a joint initiative for the peaceful resolution of the conflict in January 1993. Recalling previous failures of mediation and not willing to risk their reputations, the presidents of Russia and the USA undertook that step only after having previously received written ceasefire agreements from the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia. However, a scheme that had already become a tradition began to work. An unsteady armistice was immediately violated by the Karabakh Armenians. "Not to take us into account means to lead the situation to a deadlock," Georgiy Petrosyan, Chairman of the Parliament of Nagorny Karabakh, then declared, pointing out that "it is impossible to solve our destiny without us. We will not take part in it" (128).

Nonetheless, at the next negotiations of the Minsk group of the CSCE (Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe), held in Rome on 2 March 1993, progress was made for the first time. Azerbaijan was the first to make a compromise, waiving the preliminary conditions, and the parties managed to adopt a document, the mandate of the leading group of observers in the conflict area. In March, the five parties involving negotiations of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Russia and the USA on determining the dates of cease fire were held within the framework of the CSCE. However, again the traditional Armenian response followed: in April and May 1993 in the course of attack the Armenian army occupied Kelbadjar district. After Lachin that was the second district of Azerbaijan occupied beyond the area of the former NKAA. Although the Security Council (SC) of the UN did not give an evaluation of the aggression in its April 30th session, for the first time in resolution N 822 it named Armenia as one of the parties of the conflict. Before that, documents of the UN and CSCE spoke about conflict without mentioning the involvement of Armenia. At the same time, the resolution contained a demand "to immediately take all the occupational forces out of the Kelbadjar district and other recently occupied districts of Azerbaijan".

At that point Russian president Boris Yeltsin again decided to come forward with another peace plan. That plan was proposed for the consideration of the USA and Turkey. After tense consultations in Moscow held on 3 May those three countries offered to the conflict parties concrete steps for implementing Resolution N 822: a 60-day ceasefire, the withdrawal of Armenian troops from the Kelbadjar district and the continuation of peace negotiations. Azerbaijan immediately gave its consent; however the Armenian side rejected it as it did not provide guarantees for the security of Armenians in Nagorny Karabakh. Protest demonstrations were even held in front of the embassies of Russia and the USA in Yerevan. However, at the end of May Armenia accepted certain clauses in the revised plan of the three countries. Two weeks later, the leaders of Nagorny Karabakh also gave their consent and a meeting of the Minsk group was scheduled to be held in Rome on 22 July.

However, on 4 June 1993, a revolt flared up in Ganja and ultimately President Elchibey escaped from Baku and the rule of the republic passed into the hands of Heydar Aliyev. Taking advantage of internal political muddles in Azerbaijan, the Armenians attacked and took Agdam and almost the whole adjoining district on 21 July 1993 (a day before the meeting of the Minsk group in Rome). In response, the US State Department and the Russian MFA condemned the occupation almost simultaneously and by 29 July the Security Council of the UN adopted a

resolution that “expressed a serious concern in regard of the worsening relations between the Republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan” and called the parties to sit at the negotiation table.

However, after a small break in August, the Armenian army continued its attack and occupied the Fizuli and, in October, the Gubadly districts of Azerbaijan. On 14 October 1993, the SC of the UN adopted a further resolution in that regard, N 874, which revised the content of the previous one. On 12 November after the Armenians had already occupied Zangelan district and the city of Horadiz, the SC of the UN adopted a fourth resolution on that conflict, N 884, which condemned the occupation and again called for both parties to renew negotiations.

The Azeri army recovered only by the middle of December and managed to organize a series of counter attacks. In early 1994, it managed to win back Horadiz city in the south, but 12 villages of Kelbadjar, which it won back at the same time, were lost by the middle of February 1994.

On 18 February 1994, with the mediation of Russia, the parties signed the next ceasefire agreement, which established a security zone and formed a mixed council consisting of representatives from Russia, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Nagorny Karabakh, in total 250 people. However, that agreement was also repeatedly violated, as Azerbaijan consistently opposed the presence of exclusively Russian troops as the peacekeeping forces in the region. Then in April 1994, Armenians launched a strong attack east of Agdam city and frantically but unsuccessfully stormed the city of Terter. Finally, on 12 May 1994, the parties signed a new ceasefire agreement, again owing to the mediation of Russia. On 26 July 1994, the parties extended it. After that, negotiations to sign a Big Political Agreement started. That, however, took a long time and to this point has not produced results.

Having much in common with the two first Armenian-Azeri conflicts of the beginning of the century, the current one is also distinguished by certain differences. First of all, terrorism, as a new phenomenon unknown to other interethnic conflicts in the former USSR, should be mentioned. As previously stated, before the “official” beginning of the conflict on 17 June 1984, the Vartanyans, father and son, detonated a bomb on a regular Baku bus. This resulted in one woman’s death and 9 wounded. The following year, two public buildings were burnt as a result of sabotage. However, the Armenians really took in terror acts after the beginning of the active phase of the Karabakh conflict. However, inexperienced terrorists blew themselves up a number of times due to an inexperienced use of explosive devices. Soon foreign Armenians came to help: in the summer of 1989 the first information about guerillas from the famous ASALA, evidence of whose professionalism was immediately apparent, appeared in the press. On 10 August 1989, a regular bus from Tbilisi to Agdam was bombed, killing 29 passengers and wounding 22. Only two years later was it possible to detain and sentence the terrorists: Tatevosov was sentenced to execution by firing squad and his assistant Avanesyan was sentenced to 15 years of imprisonment.

Meanwhile, buses continued to be bombed as before. At the same time, beginning in October 1989, when a Simferopol to Baku train was bombed, terrorist acts began to be implemented more and more frequently on the railway. The Armenians paid especially keen attention to trains going from Russia to Azerbaijan. Soon terrorist acts began to be implemented on all types of transport. On 8 January 1992, a bomb was detonated on the ferry *Soviet Kalmikiya* in the port of Baku and on 19 March and 3 July 1994 bombs exploded in the Baku subway.

In total, during the period from 1986 to 1994 about 100 terrorist acts were committed in Azerbaijan and about 20 were prevented. Not counting the murders of government leaders and high ranking military officials in Nagorny Karabakh, terrorist acts were committed against 6 buses (1984, 1989-1991), 14 civilian helicopters (1991-1992), the ferry (1992) and two attacks in the Baku subway during that period of time. Besides that, there were many terrorist acts targeting different types of transport and bridges. In total, more than 200 people died and about 1800 Azerbaijani civilians, the majority of whom were women, old people and children were wounded as a result of terrorist acts in the period from 1984 to 1994 (129).

Total Losses of the Parties

From time to time casualty figures appear in the press. Official data began to be brought to the public's attention only at the end of 1993. First, Grant Bagratyan, Prime Minister of Armenia, while in the USA pointed out that over 6 years the conflict had claimed 15,000 lives from both sides (130). At the end of April 1994, the Armenian agency *SNARK* distributed information that Deputy Ashot Bleyan had given while appearing in the Armenian parliament. On 26 April 1994, Bleyan declared that about 1,000 Armenians had died since January 1993 alone and that in total about 15,000 Armenians died as a result of the conflict with Azerbaijan.

Azeri information was also controversial. On 27 October 1993, Azerbaijan's president Heydar Aliyev declared during a meeting in Baku with the President of Iran, Kh.Rafsandjani, that Azerbaijan had lost the lives of 11,000 people and 25,000 had been injured in that war. A week later while appearing on national TV he brought up other casualty figures: 16,000 people died and 22,000 were wounded and about 1 million of people had become refugees. But on 24 December 1993 in a session of the heads of the CIS countries held in Ashkhabad, Aliyev declared that during the years of the conflict 18,000 Azeris died, about 50,000 were wounded and that 20% of the territory of the republic was under the control of the Armenians. And during official meetings held in May and June of 1994, Aliyev brought the number of Azeris killed in that war up to 21,000 people.

It appears even from this brief list of figures from both parties that they were very controversial and propagandistic in nature. In reality, over the seven years of conflict beginning in February 1988 to April 1994, about 11,000 Azeris and 6,000 Armenians died and about 30,000 Azeris and more than 20,000 Armenians were wounded. According to the official data of the State Commission of Azerbaijan Affairs on Missing Persons, Prisoners and Hostages, about 5 thousand citizens of the republic were registered as lost without information, among them 320 women, 71 children and 358 old people. Meanwhile, the whereabouts of more than 700 people in Armenia and in Nagorny Karabakh were known to the authorities of Azerbaijan. During the period from 1992 to 2001 about 1086 Azeris were released and returned from Armenian captivity. Among them there were 67 children, 243 women and 246 old people. The death of 176 citizens of Azerbaijan in Armenian captivity was documented by the International Committee of the Red Cross. In turn, the destiny of more than 500 Armenians who were also registered as lost without information is still unknown.

According to the data of the State Statistics Committee of Azerbaijan, by the end of 2001, 219 thousand refugees (from Armenia as well as Meskhetian Turks who escaped in 1989 from Uzbekistan) and 575 thousand internally displaced persons from Nagorny Karabakh were registered. They constitute about 10% of the population of the republic. According to official data of the Armenian authorities, 310,000 refugees (from Azerbaijan, as well as a small number from Agharia and Chechnya) and internally displaced or about 8% of the population of Armenia were registered in the republic.

By early 1994, the territory of the former NKAA, seven districts and a number of border villages were under the control of the Armenians. According to the Azerbaijan State Statistics Committee, that makes about 12,000 square kilometers or about 14% of the territory of the republic. More than 870 populated areas of Azerbaijan including 11 cities and 5 settlements of city type were situated on that area. In turn, a small enclave of Armenia (the village Artsvashen or in Azeri -Bashkend) that makes about 50 km is under the control of Azerbaijan.

It is no less important to mention the indirect losses of the parties resulting from the Karabakh conflict. Compared with 1989, the birth rate sharply decreased and the death rate of children increased. During the period from 1989 to 1999, the number of orphans increased three times in Azerbaijan and doubled in Armenia. Meanwhile, most of the orphans were fixed among refugees and IDPs in both republics. As a result of the conflict and of the serious social-

economical crisis that followed it about 2.5 million citizens of Azerbaijan (more than 30% of the population of the republic) and about 1 million Armenians (26% of the population of Armenia) left their countries to seek a living. The overwhelming majority of them are men between the ages of 20 and 30 years old. Such a flow of young and able-bodied men sharply and negatively affected the demographic structure of the populations of Azerbaijan and Armenia: it caused a reduction in marriages, a decline in the birth-rate, a reduction of family size and, finally, of the overall population (131).

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