

**Positive Examples of Coexistence from the  
History of Peoples and States of the South Caucasus**

Yerevan  
2009

UDC 94/99 : 32

Positive Examples of Coexistence from the History of Peoples and States of the South Caucasus. Collection of papers by historians and analysts from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia (Yerevan, Armenia). – Yer.: Antares, 2009 - 140 pages.

**Edited by Stepan Grigoryan**

This book is published by the Analytical Centre on Globalisation and Regional Cooperation (ACGRC) with support of Caritas France. The opinions expressed in this book are opinions of the authors from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, and may differ from the official opinions of ACGRC and Caritas France.

UDC 94/99 : 32



Caritas France



Public Union of the Azerbaijan  
Historians



ACGRC



Caritas Georgia

ISBN 978-9939-51-162-7

© ACGRC, 2009

## Contents:

<b>Editor's note</b>	
<b>Stepan Grigoryan</b> .....	5
<b>Armenia</b>	
<b>Haykaz Hovhannisyan.</b> Caucasian Home: History and Reality	
<b>Mikayel Zolyan.</b> Armenians and Georgians: Divided By Common History .....	11
<b>Azerbaijan</b>	
<b>Sevil Huseynova.</b> Azerbaijanis and Armenians in Georgia: Spaces of Coexistence	
<b>Sergey Rumyantsev.</b> Beyond Enmity: Everyday Practices of Mutual Help in Situations of Conflict .....	33
<b>Georgia</b>	
<b>Tamara Sikharulidze.</b> From the History of Azerbaijani-Georgian Relations	
<b>Liana Davlianidze.</b> From the History of Armenian-Georgian Relations .....	57
<b>Armenia</b>	
<b>David Petrosyan.</b> Armenia Now: Inside and Outside .....	87
<b>Azerbaijan</b>	
<b>Rauf Rajabov.</b> Azerbaijan: From Financial Security towards Regional Priorities in Foreign Policy .....	105
<b>Georgia</b>	
<b>Vakhtang Kolbaya.</b> Georgia Now: The Situation after the Russo-Georgian War .....	121
<b>About the authors</b> .....	137



# **Editor's note**

**Stepan Grigoryan**



## **Editor's note**

In November 2007, the Analytical Centre on Globalisation and Regional Cooperation (Armenia) organised, in cooperation with its partners – Public Union of the Azerbaijan Historians and Caritas Georgia – a meeting of historians and civic activists from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. The meeting was organised with support of the Caritas France foundation in Tsakhkadzor (Armenia).

This framework of cooperation was chosen because the experience of developments in the South Caucasus during previous years had shown that many problems in relations between peoples of the region had been a consequence of different interpretation of historical facts, different perceptions and approaches to historical events, and because of absence of papers and books on history written in cooperation by scholars from three South Caucasian countries. Therefore, it was important to organise meetings and facilitate cooperation between historians and civic activists from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

The main outcome of the mentioned working meeting was the communiqué adopted on November 13, 2007. The participants stated, particularly, that direct contacts are important as they let to understand each other better and to exchange information about global, regional and local processes; emphasised their interest in possible submission of common publications to academic and professional journals; stated that such a framework is one of the ways for continued efforts towards development of civil society, for searching common elements in our peoples' historical past, and for democratisation and European integration of the South Caucasian countries; expressed interest in a deeper study of European experience of dealing with historical problems, which may contribute towards reconciliation and establishing an environment of peace and neighbourly relations in the South Caucasus.

Working meeting participants also expressed their distress concerning the reality in which the scientific potential of our countries is being used mainly for proving ancient roots and superiority of every people instead of working on common scientific and educational projects. Yet, science and education have a

great potential for restoration of trust between our peoples and may serve as a fine instrument for development of neighbourhood and cooperation in the region.

The problems are aggravated by the unsolved conflicts that make the situation more difficult. It is, therefore, very important to establish contacts and stimulate cooperation between historians and civic activists in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. There are many positive historical examples of coexistence and cooperation between peoples of the South Caucasus; study of such examples and making them available to our societies is an important task.

This book is a collection of papers about the history of relations between Armenians, Azerbaijanis and Georgians. The first part of the book contains papers written by prominent scholars – Haykaz Hovhannisyan and Mikayel Zolyan from Armenia, Sevil Huseynova and Sergey Rumyantsev from Azerbaijan, and Tamara Sikharulidze and Liana Davlianidze from Georgia. The authors have done meticulous archive work and analysis, and found a great number of examples of positive experiences in coexistence of the South Caucasian peoples. It is interesting that such examples include both the short periods when Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia were independent and time when our peoples fought for their rights and independence, protecting their identities and culture.

In the second part of the book civic activists with expertise in different areas – David Petrosyan from Armenia, Rauf Rajabov from Azerbaijan and Vakhtang Kolbaya from Georgia – provide analyses of the contemporary political, socioeconomic and international standing of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

This book contains scientific and analytical materials and may be interesting for a wide circle of readers, first of all, for representatives of civil society institutions, scientific community, state institutions, journalists, young citizens, as well as international organisations working towards reconciliation, establishment of peace and cooperation.



I believe that the time has come for thinking over many issues and attempting to live in accordance with contemporary ideas and approaches. That is the demand of time and future of the South Caucasian peoples.

Finally, I express our sincere gratitude to the Caritas France foundation for supporting our initiatives and making possible publishing of this book.

*Stepan Grigoryan - chairman of the board of the Analytical Centre on Globalisation and Regional Cooperation.*

July 27, 2009



# **Armenia**

**Haykaz Hovhannisyan - Caucasian Home:**

**History and Reality**

**Mikayel Zolyan - Armenians and Georgians:**

**Divided By Common History**



## **Caucasian Home: History and Reality**

History of the Caucasus occupies an important place in world history. The Caucasus region has been a constant arena of a clash between the political interests of greater powers and lesser actors both in ancient times and in our days. The Caucasus today remains in the centre of attention of greater powers and international public opinion, however this attention has been largely conditioned by unfavorable circumstances. The Caucasus region remains in a state of volcanic activity because, apart from the interests of greater powers, the local peoples also have conflicting interests. For ages the territory of the Transcaucasus has been an arena of devastating wars. For centuries the peoples of the Transcaucasus have been under domination of foreign powers, including the Romans, Persia, Byzantium, the Arabs, the Seljuk Turks, Tatar-Mongolians and other conquerors. In Armenian manuscripts of 13-15<sup>th</sup> centuries, as well as in Georgian sources there is an enormous amount of material regarding the brutalities perpetrated by the invaders, the joint struggle of the peoples of the region against their conquerors in ancient times, when Armenians, Georgians and Azerbaijanis desperately sought for assistance from the outside and, without receiving it, perished in scores in an uneven battle against the more numerous invaders, or left their native lands and sought for refuge in a foreign country.

On the other hand, in terms of its ethnic and religious composition, the Caucasus represents a peculiar mosaic of groups that have their ethnic and cultural distinctions. The problems of Chechnya, Abkhazia and Karabakh exist in the region, European and other international organizations are working on the solution of these problems. However, in spite of the efforts of such organizations, these problems still remain unsolved. From our point of view one of the ways of solution of these problems is the path of returning to the origins of the history of the Caucasus. That would help to understand the essence of these problems. Naturally, it is impossible to do without such an important aspect as spreading light on the role and interests of the parties involved in the process of resolution of these conflicts. The problems of

Chechnya, Karabakh or Abkhazia did not emerge today and not even in this century. In other words, in the current paper we are planning to offer an historic evaluation of what has happened, study and analyze the goals and political interests of the greater powers in the region of the Caucasus in early 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the great battle for the Caucasus started. Without a doubt, these lessons remain relevant today.

The current paper will also be useful for international experts, who have carried out a mission of mediation in the region, in order to understand clearly and realistically the problems, to be well-informed on the history of the issue.

The methodology of research is the following: against the background of analysis of historical events and realities parallels will be drawn between the past and the recent events in the region of the Caucasus as a whole. An impartial evaluation of these events will be given, in order to present the complete historical reality of what has happened.

In the end of 18<sup>th</sup> century and especially in the first half of 19<sup>th</sup> century the Transcaucasus found itself in the center of attention of Russia's vital military and political programs. One of the main directions of the Russian foreign policy was the Eastern Question and the Caucasus was one of its most important elements. Russia's attempts to acquire these territories through peaceful means were not successful. Russia had to solve the issue through military means. A new Caucasian front was formed, which for almost two centuries brought Russia to clashes with two long-time adversaries in the region: first with Persia, later mostly with Turkey. The successes of the Russian military helped Alexander to establish the Russian presence in the region. Russia acquired new extensive territories. The Caucasus was conquered.

Russia was able to present its conquests as defense of the Christian population of the region, which in turn played an important role in the victory of the Russian army. Local Christian peoples, first of all Armenians and Georgians, supported Russians through all possible means, hoping to be liberated from centuries-long Turkish and Persian rule. At the same time, the Russian court was solving important geopolitical problems of the Russian Empire. First, enlargement of the Russian borders opened wide perspectives for Russian

trade on Asian markets. Second, acting as a benefactor of the local peoples, the Russian government acquired not only a political ally but also a hardworking and industrious population, which was useful for the economic development of the southern regions of Russia. Third, the Russian imperial court realized that by taking its borders to Koura and Araks rivers, it would secure its southern borders not only from Persia and Turkey, but also from Britain and France who had their own interests in the region. Moreover, there was a clear understanding that Transcaucasia would become a power base for Russia in order to spread its influence in the countries of the Middle and Near East. These considerations brought Russia to the great battle for the Caucasus.

It is clear that Russia today continues to follow the course of actions of the ancestors and refuses to withdraw from the Caucasus, so that history repeats itself. In our civilized century, when defense of humanitarian values had become a fundamental principle, the aim of the great powers of today, including Russia is to help the peoples of the Caucasus to achieve peace and agreement. The aim of our historians is to promote establishment of the historical truth and impartial evaluation of the events, especially given the reality that these issues have become extremely relevant after the break-up of the Soviet Union, when the interests of the greater powers are again clashing in the region. The region is more than appealing for the European countries that want to establish their positions on this small peace of land. Everyone understands that everything that happens in the region is a result of competing influences in the region.

However, as a matter of fact, the relations between Armenian, Azerbaijani and Georgian populations had been relatively normal, even friendly. In Tbilisi, in Baku, as well as in Yerevan, the center of Eastern Armenia, Armenians, Georgians and Azerbaijanis developed their enterprises, opened shops, solved emerging issues. On the other hand, “thanks” to the empire, the national relations between these peoples were changing, naturally not in the positive direction. All this means that the essence of the problem was the longing of each of the peoples of Transcaucasia for free and independent life: only independence guarantees the formation of each people and opportunities for its future development. Therefore, the peoples of Transcaucasia need to

understand that the newly acquired independence and general development are a higher priority than territorial disputes, which, as history suggests, are unfortunately lengthy and, what is most important, are not dependent on the good will of these peoples. Thus the unification of the peoples of the Transcaucasus in one state, which happened in early 19<sup>th</sup> century, irrespective of the aims of czarism, had a progressive impact not only on their economic and spiritual life, but also on their subsequent national consolidation and strengthening the bonds between them.

Therefore, when we go back to not so distant past, irrespective of our imagination, almost all problems are clear and understandable. Thus, Armenian national bourgeoisie emerged outside of the borders of Armenia, first of all in Tiflis and in Baku: here, as analysts say, comments are redundant. Whatever the course of actions in our region, one thing is clear: Armenians, Georgians and Azerbaijanis lived side by side and will always live side by side. Here are certain statistical data regarding Armenians. According to the census of 1897 there were 1.173.096 Armenians in Russia, of which only 441.000 lived in Yerevan province and Kars region, all the rest lived in other parts of the Caucasus. At the same time, the number of Azerbaijanis in Eastern Armenia was not small either.

It is no secret that famous Armenian industrialists Mantashev, Mirzoyan brothers, Lioznov, Gukasov, Pitoev, Mailov, Aramyants and others developed their industries in Baku. In Georgia industrialists Adilkhanov, Enfadjian, Alikhanov, Khublarov, Tairiants and others were famous. We should treat in the same fashion that fact that before the revolution of 1917 the majority of the mayors of Tiflis were Armenians and Armenian entrepreneurs had large influence on the local industry. And if we look further back in history, the Armenian-Georgian cooperation dates back to 5<sup>th</sup> century, when the Georgian king Vakhtang who fought against the Persian rule asked assistance from an Armenian military leader Vahan Mamikonyan. And in this were many Armenian warriors sacrificed their lives on the Georgian soil, fighting for the freedom of the Georgian people.

It is useful to remember the Armenian-Georgian alliance of the late 12<sup>th</sup> century – early 13<sup>th</sup> century, when the alliance between the Armenian princes



of Zacharid dynasty and the Georgian kings David the Builder and Queen Tamara liberated both peoples from Seljuk rule. Or in the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when Armenian-Georgian forces attempted to combat Ottoman rule, Armenians and Georgians, even before the arrival of the Russian forces, created armed regiments, stirred uprisings. An outstanding role was played by the Armenian patriarch Yesayi Jalalian, who acted in close cooperation with the Georgian ruler. Moreover, Davit Bek who was sent to Armenia, as well as his military commanders had matured in Georgian environment. The peoples of the Transcaucasus, who lived side by side throughout the course of their history, when under the rule of foreign invaders sought assistance from each other, fought against common enemies. Outstanding representatives of culture of the peoples of Transcaucasus – Narekatsi, Rustaveli, Nizami, Hagani, Frik, Sayat-Nova, Vagif and others rejected enmity towards neighboring peoples. All of them praised the friendship between Georgians, Azerbaijanis, Armenians and longed for their spiritual closeness and military cooperation. We can even state that the peoples of the Transcaucasus, going through severe hardships, were able to maintain their physical existence and unique culture, to a large extent due to mutual aid and common struggle against numerous invaders.

On the whole, facts, such as the activity of Armenian entrepreneurs in Baku and Tiflis, prove that Armenians had all the favourable conditions for activities and development and their nationality did not bear any significance. If we add to everything said above that Tiflis and Baku have been important centres of development of Armenian culture throughout 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, in my view all this proves that the three peoples of the Transcaucasus did not have any problems in the sphere of entrepreneurship and culture. On the other hand, the presence of Armenian entrepreneurs and intellectuals, naturally had a favourable influence on Georgian, as well as on Azerbaijani industries and cultural life. In other words, all the three peoples benefited.

## **Conclusion:**

- Common life and multi-faceted development of Armenian, Georgian and Azerbaijani peoples needs to occur in this region, irrespective of the territorial and ethnic problems that have emerged between them. Unlike political problems, business and cultural links between those peoples existed in an atmosphere of willingness to seek compromise and agreement. Therefore, it is necessary to further deepen the entrepreneurial and cultural links, which, at least to a certain degree, will, hopefully, assist in achieving a lasting political agreement in the region.

- As an important step in order to solve the political questions, I suggest to hold discussions between the immediate sides of the conflict, in an atmosphere of mutual self-restraint, and what is the most important, to undertake steps aimed at eradicating the atmosphere of hatred and misunderstanding.

- Continue meetings and discussions between intellectuals representing different spheres of culture of these peoples, regarding the issues listed above, with a special focus on the positive sides of these links. It is well-known that our societies are not yet ready for dialogue, let alone compromise, especially when it comes to territorial problems. Thus the issue lies in the necessity of creating a positive public opinion.

- These are the issues and directions in which the public opinion makers in our countries have serious problems, therefore international organizations and European structures need to double their mediator efforts in the region. Tomorrow will be too late, since conflicts have a tendency to develop. In the end, the Caucasus is our common home and this home needs to have a reliable foundation under a peaceful sky.

In our view, these measures are vital. Otherwise, we as historians will be repeating again that centuries passed in the Caucasus, but the strategies of the greater powers remained the same, and as a result of all this the region of the Caucasus continues to remain in a volcanic condition. There is a saying that the lessons of history do not get old, they only leave the stage temporarily and then return with a vengeance. They definitely do.

## **Armenians and Georgians: Divided By Common History**

(On Conceptual and Methodological Aspects of Research on  
History of Armenian-Georgian Relations)

### **Introduction**

Winston Churchill has once said that the Americans and the British are two nations divided by a common language (sometimes these words are attributed also to Bernard Shaw or Oscar Wilde). Paraphrasing Churchill, it is possible to claim that Armenians and Georgians are two peoples divided by a common history. Armenians and Georgians have a lot in common: from similarities in the traditional practices of everyday life to the common roots of the medieval literary traditions; from certain features of church architecture to the phonetic system of the Armenian and Georgian languages. For centuries Armenians and Georgians lived side by side in the same towns and villages, prayed in temples that stood next to each other, fought against the same enemies, and rebelled against the same foreign rulers. However, today many historians, politicians and journalists are engaged in fierce disputes over history-related issues such as the ethnicity of a certain historical figure, or the rights of one or the other people with regard to a certain church building.

These debates could have remained obscure to wider public, had they been confined to the academic sphere. However, these discussions often find wide public resonance, thus providing generous opportunities for manipulations of public opinion by nationalist political forces and eventually having a negative effect on interstate relations. Clearly, compared to analogous debates in case of Armenians and Azerbaijanis or Georgians and Abkhazians, Armenian-Georgian discussions on history in general remain more academic and relatively less prone to xenophobic attitudes. Compared with cases of open conflict such as the experience of Armenian-Azerbaijani or Georgian-Abkhaz relations, nationalist manipulations of history of Armenian-Georgian relations are not as essential for the respective nationalist discourses. Within Armenian and Georgian nationalist discourses much more powerful images of “enemies”

exist and these images can be evoked in order to achieve nationalist mobilization. Besides, images of “Christian brothers” and “allies in the struggle against the common enemy” play an important role in traditional historical narratives. Nevertheless, time after time certain problematic issues spring up in the relations between Armenia and Georgia, and it is against this background that such historical debates can have consequences that go far beyond the limits of historical science. While discussions between professional historians mostly remain within the limits of intellectual honesty, political correctness and mutual tolerance, the “common people’s” perceptions of history tend to gravitate towards xenophobia and radicalism. And when these perceptions of history become an instrument of manipulations by politicians, such manipulations can present a serious danger to Armenian and Georgian societies.

It is important to clarify what this paper seeks to achieve at and what it does not. Our goal is to attract the attention of the reader to certain conceptual and methodological aspects of Armenian-Georgian discussions in the field of history. The aim of this paper is not to support or challenge opinions held by different historians with regard to certain disputable episodes of history. Not being a historian of antiquity or middle ages, I do not claim to offer breakthrough solutions to issues that have been disputed for decades. Moreover, I will try to refrain from expressing opinions regarding certain debated issues in order not to distract the reader from the main aims of this article. However, I also do not claim absolute impartiality: while any social scientist should strive to be as unbiased as possible, absolute objectivity is an unreachable ideal.

## **A Clash of National Narratives**

The disagreements between Armenians and Georgians regarding history are nothing new. It is not our aim to offer historiographic analysis of the discussions over history taking place between Armenian and Georgian intellectuals for more than a century. We are mostly concerned with the combination of the factors that gave political significance to these disagreements. The first heated debates about the past date back to the time

when the modern Armenian and Georgian national narratives were formed, i.e. the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This was a period when Eastern Europe was going through process of the so-called “national revival”, during which modern national identities and “national projects” were formed. Czech historian M. Hroch describes three phases of that process: on the first stage a group of activists is formed, who devote themselves to studying linguistic, cultural and historical distinctiveness of their ethnic group (phase A); during the second stage the group of patriots is getting larger, trying to recruit as many supporters of their national project as possible (phase B); during the third stage a mass movement begins, which sets the realization of the national project as its goal (phase C)<sup>1</sup>. Of course, to an extent Hroch’s model simplifies the quite complicated process of “national revival”: particularly, the chronological division of the three stages is quite relative. However, this model helps to understand the process of development of national movements in Eastern Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In terms of this process Armenians and Georgians did not fall behind other peoples of Eastern Europe: the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is the period of formation of Armenian and Georgian national intelligentsias, which, in one form or another, were putting forward ideas of national self-government. Thus, among the Georgians “the national revival” was represented by intellectuals who belonged to the so called “first generation” (*pirveli dasi*) and “the second generation” (*meori dasi*), and among Armenians by several generations of intellectuals who included such figures as Mikayel Nalbandyan and later Raffi.

As in many Eastern European countries, in Armenia and Georgia the formation of the narrative of national history was an important component of the “national revival”, since it performed the function of an ideological foundation for the national project. It is no coincidence that the period of formation of the Armenian and Georgian national narratives is precisely the time when the first ideological “battles” in the field of history commenced.

---

<sup>1</sup> **M. Hroch.** “National Self-Determination From a Historic Perspective” in *Notions of Nationalism*, edited by. S. Periwal, CEU Press, Budapest – London - New York, 1995, p. 67.

Being a consequence of the process of creation of national projects, the political ramifications of these disputes were also to an extent rooted in issues of demography. It is well known that in 19<sup>th</sup> century Armenians comprised a large part of the population of Georgian cities, especially in Tbilisi. It is quite notable that, though Armenian presence in Georgia has been quite significant much earlier, e.g. in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, it is in the 19<sup>th</sup> century that serious disagreements emerge in the context of Armenian-Georgian relations. The debates of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century were taking place against the background of a situation, in which the loss of independent statehood and russification policies of the Czarist regime made Georgians feel endangered within their country. Against this background the presence of a numerous Armenian population could be perceived as a potential threat.

Another factor, which conditioned a certain level of competition and mistrust in Armenian-Georgian relations, was the radical transformation of the social-economic structure of the society in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The feudal system was falling apart in the South Caucasus, replaced by the new capitalist economy. This process undermined the power of ethnic Georgian hereditary aristocracy and, on the contrary, helped to bring about an unprecedented rise of ethnic Armenian merchant class. Ethnic Armenian bourgeoisie also strived to strengthen its position in urban self-government, particularly in Tbilisi. There Armenians benefited from the opportunities presented by the Russian urban self-government legislation, which gave disproportionately high representation to the wealthy citizens<sup>2</sup>. The clash of interests between the newly emerging bourgeoisie and the impoverished gentry (as well as between the bourgeoisie and the emerging working class) is a phenomenon quite widespread in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. In Georgia this reality was often seen through the lenses of relations between different ethnic groups. In other words social and economic contradictions became ethnicized. In the intellectual sphere these underlying contradictions were manifested, among other things, in the disputes over issues of the past between Armenian and Georgian intellectuals.

---

<sup>2</sup> **R.G. Suny.** *The Making of the Georgian Nation*, Indiana University Press, 1994, p. 141-142.

Czarist government did not hesitate to manipulate the disagreements between Armenians and Georgians, quite in line with the underlying principle of imperialist politics – “*divide et impera*”. The last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw attempts by the Russian government to play the ethnic groups of the Transcaucasia against each other. A telling example of these policies was the activity of V. L. Velichko, editor of the newspaper “Caucasus” printed in Tbilisi. Velichko, an ardent supporter of Greater Russian chauvinism, attempted to project on the Armenians the standard anti-Semitic discourse of the Russian ultra-conservatives<sup>3</sup>. When it came to relations between Armenians and Georgians, these provocations of the Russian authorities were ultimately unsuccessful, but they could have influenced the climate of Armenian-Georgian relations of that period.

Armenian-Georgian disagreements over history periodically resurfaced during the Soviet years. Under the Soviet regime the historical research on issues of modern and contemporary history was strictly controlled by the local party organizations, which in turn were subjected to the all-union authorities. National narratives continued to exist and develop, but in these conditions it was ancient and medieval history that acquired special significance, because the control of the authorities over these fields was relatively weaker. History discussions acquired political implications time after time. This was the case in the aftermath of the World War II when the USSR presented territorial claims to Turkey. Both Armenian SSR and Georgian SSR claimed some of these territories and these claims were based on historical arguments. Ultimately, the USSR had to drop its territorial claims to Turkey, so the arguments about who should get which piece of land never acquired a realistic dimension<sup>4</sup>.

A completely new situation emerged in the post-Soviet period. The national narratives, which had a semi-official status in the Soviet years, became the ideological bases of legitimacy of the post-Soviet states. In this situation the national narrative provided legitimacy to the newly emergent nation-state,

---

<sup>3</sup> On Velichko’s activities see **R.G. Suny**. *Looking Toward Ararat: Armenia in Modern History*, Indiana University Press, 1993, p. 47-48.

<sup>4</sup> *On Soviet territorial claims to Turkey* **R.G. Suny**. *The Making of the Georgian Nation...* p. 284-285; **R.G. Suny**. *Looking Toward Ararat...*, p. 165-177.

while the state in its turn assigned an official status to the national narrative. Often this process gave way to dilettantism and radicalism in research and teaching of history. Both in Armenian and Georgian societies during the first years of independence ethnocentric perceptions emerged, which were manipulated by those politicians who attempted to play the nationalist card. An example of how such radicalism influences the societies is the debate regarding the origins of a number of churches on the territory of Georgia<sup>5</sup>. Recent developments around the Norashen church in Tbilisi lead to an escalation of nationalist rhetoric in both countries. Unfortunately, these tendencies in the perception of history remain quite widespread in our societies.

However, the situation is far from being hopeless. Unlike Armenian-Azerbaijani or Georgian-Abkhaz and Georgian-Ossetian “memory wars”<sup>6</sup>, the Armenian-Georgian disagreements are relatively moderate and mostly remain within the limits of political correctness. Attempts of constructing an “image of the enemy” based on perceptions of Armenians or Georgians are characteristic for marginal ultra-nationalist groups, rather than for historians remaining within the widely accepted narratives of history. Positive images of neighbours that exist within the framework of traditional national narratives continue to be reproduced. This is, particularly, obvious in the field of history teaching. Thus, in Armenian history textbooks Georgia and Georgians are mentioned almost entirely in positive or neutral contexts, while the tone of presentation about conflictual situations remains quite reserved<sup>7</sup>. In contemporary Georgian textbooks Armenian-Georgian cooperation against

---

<sup>5</sup> Thus, the publication of a map “Armenian Churches of Georgia” became a pre-text for the publication of a book by G. Arveladze “Armenian... Or Georgian Churches in Georgia?!” (Tbilisi, 1998, in Russian). Quoted in **Ю. Анчабадзе**. *“Национальная история в Грузии: мифы, идеология, наука” // Национальные истории в советском и постсоветских государствах*, под ред. **К. Айермахера, Г. Бордюгова**, Москва, 1999, с. 174.

<sup>6</sup> The term “memory wars” was used by V. Shnirelman, see **В. Шнирельман**. *Войны памяти: мифы, идентичность и политика в Закавказье*. М. 2003.

<sup>7</sup> **М. Золян, Т. Закарян**. *Армения: “Образы “себя” и образы “других” в учебниках истории Армении” в кн. Современные учебники истории на Южном Кавказе*. Прага, АМО, 2009, с. 11-32.



foreign enemies is described, and it is stressed that an Armenian community existed on the Georgian territory since ancient time and it has taken an active part in the formation of Georgian statehood<sup>8</sup>.

## **Issues of Methodology**

It can be argued that some of the disagreements over certain issues of Armenian-Georgian relations have emerged as a consequence of projection of modern concepts and perceptions into the past. Debates between Armenian and Georgian intellectuals over certain issues of the past would have been much more constructive, had they taken into account the differences between the realities of the present and the realities of the past.

In order to have a meaningful and adequate discussion of the debatable issues in the history of Armenian-Georgian relations it is necessary to make a clear distinction between the realities of our times and the realities of the historical period in question. In contemporary social science there is a clear distinction between modern and pre-modern societies. It is quite natural that our contemporaries, whose worldview is a product of modernity, tend to perceive events and phenomena of the past through the lenses of contemporary (modern) realities. However, this tendency can lead to distorted and inadequate vision of the realities of the past. Projection of present-day realities into the past is common for perceptions of history both in Armenia and Georgia. Of course, this is characteristic mostly for non-professional discussions of historical topics, however, unfortunately, professional historians are not always able (or willing) to make a clear distinction between the past and the present.

One of the modern concepts that tend to influence the perceptions of the past is the concept of “nation-state”. In contemporary social science it is usually considered that the concept of the “nation-state” in its contemporary form, i.e. a state that represents the will and the common interests of a certain national community, is a product of modernity. The emergence of the nation-state is linked to the phenomenon of nationalism, an ideology which, according to

---

<sup>8</sup> **Н. Чиковани, К. Какителашвили.** *“Грузия: изображение других в учебниках истории для общеобразовательных школ” в кн. Современные учебники истории на Южном Кавказе.* Прага, АМО, 2009, с. 25-26.

Ernest Gellner, is based on the principle that borders of the nation and the borders of the state should be congruent<sup>9</sup>. This principle as a tool of providing legitimacy to statehood emerged in Europe in 18-19<sup>th</sup> centuries in Europe and later spread to other parts of the world. The majority of the states existing today tend to position themselves as nation-states. However, in the pre-modern period the legitimacy of the government was often achieved through other means, such as ideologies based on religion and/or dynastic principle<sup>10</sup>.

Thus, in contrast to modern age, throughout ancient and medieval history, statehood was identified primarily with a certain dynasty, religion or territory, rather than ethnicity. However, in contemporary discussions of Armenia's and Georgia's medieval history the modern understanding of the nation-state is often projected on the historical realities. This leads to endless debates about whether a certain medieval kingdom or principality was "Georgian", "Armenian", "Abkhazian", etc. This question, at least in this form, may be important for us today, but it probably made little sense to the people who actually lived in those political units. Paradoxically, both sides are able to find references proving their position in historical sources. However, this is not surprising given the fact that the idea of "the state border", is a product of modernity, just like the idea of "the nation-state" to which it is closely linked<sup>11</sup>. It was relatively recently that the idea of total control of the state over certain territory emerged, leading to the emergence of the concept of the state border as a rigid and unchangeable demarcation line. In the Middle Ages state borders in our modern understanding of the term did not yet exist. A certain rural or urban community accepted the supremacy of a certain local prince, who in turn accepted the sovereignty of a different feudal or that of a monarch. It was through these power relations that a certain territory and its population were

---

<sup>9</sup> **E. Gellner**. *Nations and Nationalism*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1983; p. 1.

<sup>10</sup> There is a large volume of literature that suggests that the nation-state itself, as well as the present-day understanding of "the nation" as a social and political unit, is a phenomenon characteristic of modernity, e.g. **E. Hobsbawm & T. Ranger** (ed). *Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge University Press. 1992; **E. Gellner**. *Nations and Nationalism*. London, 1983; **B. Anderson**. *Imagined Communities*. London & New York: Verso, 1991.

<sup>11</sup> **M. Billig**. *Banal Nationalism*, London, 1995, p. 20-21.

considered to belong to a certain state unit. Since the same feudal lord could have been subjected to different sovereigns at different times (or even be subjected to several sovereigns at the same time), the same territory could change its status numerous times within short periods of time, even without major conflicts and other perturbations. Therefore, when Armenian and Georgian historians argue whether a certain region (a city, a fortress, a monastery, etc.) belonged to a certain “Armenian” or “Georgian” state unit, both sides of the argument are often able to find references that prove their point within the same historical sources.

Another aspect of constant discussions about the history of Armenian-Georgian relations is the issue of ethnic identification with regard to certain historical figures, as well as in certain cases regarding populations of whole regions. As in the case of the borders, the historical sources provide plenty of opportunities for proposing quite diverging and sometimes completely opposite interpretations. Endless disputes about the ethnic identification of certain historical figures are a consequence of an approach, which in contemporary studies of ethnicity is usually referred to as “primordialism” or “essentialism”. This approach is characteristic for nationalist discourse, and often for grassroots perceptions of ethnicity as well. It views ethnicity as something “natural”, “eternal”, something that is not subject to transformations and development. In modern social sciences this approach is countered by the constructivist paradigm, which argues that identity is constructed, both on individual and societal levels. The debates about history of Armenian-Georgian relations provide many examples of the intellectually destructive influence of the primordialist/essentialist approach.

Under the influence of primordialist interpretations of ethnicity, modern conceptions of ethnic and national identity are often projected on earlier historical periods. Professional historians familiar with medieval sources are well aware that in these sources such terms as “Armenian”, “Georgian” or “Greek” often have meanings significantly different from their modern understanding. The very term “ethnonym” (i.e. name of an ethnic group) needs to be applied with caution: in certain historical periods belonging to a certain denominational group served as an identification marker more important than

language, culture or ethnic origin. Thus, in many medieval sources groups or individuals, who could be classified as Armenian according to their language and ethnic origins, were referred to as “Georgians” or “Greeks”, if they belonged to Orthodox Church or as “Franks” if they belonged to Catholic Church. Accordingly, the identification of a certain part of territory and its populations with a certain larger group was often based on denomination rather than on ethnic and/or cultural markers. This perception is illustrated by a famous statement of a medieval Georgian author Giorgi Merchule, who defined Georgia as “the vast land, in which the church services are held in Georgian language”<sup>12</sup>.

Both in Armenian and Georgian historiographies it is possible to find many examples of how the essentialist perception of ethnicity may lead astray from an adequate representation of the historical reality, resulting in a simplified and inadequate interpretation of history. Certain historical facts are simply inconsistent with simplified essentialist interpretations of the phenomenon of ethnicity. It is interesting to look from this point of view at the research of Nikolay Marr with regard to the issue of Chalcedonite Armenians (i.e. Armenians who accepted the teachings of the Chalcedon church council), who, through their belonging to the Georgian Orthodox Church, eventually assimilated culturally and acquired Georgian identity<sup>13</sup>. Marr’s research was perceived as somewhat controversial by some Georgian historians, who saw in it a potential attempt to “rob” the Georgian history of some important historical figures by pointing to their non-Georgian origins. Interestingly, mainstream Armenian national historiography, instead of studying further the issues put forward by Marr, in general preferred not to focus excessively on the issue of Chalcedonite Armenians. The idea that large groups of ethnic Armenians did not belong to the Armenian Apostolic Church did not fit within the commonly accepted narrative of Armenian history, which tends to

---

<sup>12</sup> Цит. по **L. Giginishvili**. “Pre-reform history textbooks in Georgia: changing patterns and the issue of minorities in Georgian history” in *History Teaching in Georgia: Representation of Minorities in Georgian History Textbooks*, CIMERA, 2007, p. 18.

<sup>13</sup> **Н. Марр**. “Аркауи” – монгольское название христиан в связи с вопросом армянских халкидонитов. СПб, 1905.

underline the positive historical role of the Armenian Apostolic Church in the history of the Armenian people<sup>14</sup>. While it is possible to agree or disagree with hypotheses put forward by Marr's, it is obvious that the historical realities he studied can hardly be squeezed into the frames of constructions of modern nationalist historiography, which tries to project modern conceptions of national and/or ethnic identity into the past.

Another example, proving the difficulty of applying modern conceptions of ethnicity to historical realities, is the case of a feudal dynasty, which in Armenian historical literature is known as “the Zakaryans”, and in Georgian – as “the Mkhargrdzeli” (literally – “long-handed”)<sup>15</sup>. There is a lot of emotional significance attached to the issue because both in Armenian and Georgian national narratives the Zakaryan-Mkhargrdzeli play an important role. In the Georgian historical narrative they play an important role as the comrades-in-arms of the legendary Georgian queen Tamara at a time when the Georgian state reached the peak of its power. In the Armenian national narrative they play an extremely important role as the rulers of Eastern Armenia at the time of the country's last resurgence during the Middle Ages, which preceded the long “dark ages” that began with the Mongolian invasion. Even a slight glance at the historical sources shows that essentialist conceptions of ethnicity cannot adequately represent the historical realities of the time. It might be naïve to hope that Armenian and Georgian historians will be able to come to an ultimate agreement about the “Armenianness” or “Georgianness” of the Zakaryan-Mkhargrdzeli dynasty. Moreover, while the question is posed in this

---

<sup>14</sup> For a new critical approach to this narrative, particularly the issues of relations between Chalcedonite Armenians and the Armenian Apostolic Church is offered by **M. Sarkisyan**. “*Problems of Building a Constitutional State and the Armenian Apostolic Church*” in *Religion and Society*, N. 6, February 2009, Yerevan, p. 28-31. [in Armenian].

<sup>15</sup> According to the mainstream Georgian historical narrative the brothers Zakaryan-Mkhargrdzeli had Kurdish origins and initially belonged to the Armenian Church, but were “Georgianized” by the late 12<sup>th</sup> century. The Armenian historiography they are considered natives of Southern Armenia and their Armenian identity is considered unquestionable (History of the Armenian People. Vol. III, Academy of Sciences of Armenian SSR, Yerevan, 1976, p. 529 [in Armenian]).

way, it is not going to help us to understand better the history of Armenians and Georgians. However, both sides will probably agree sooner or later that, regardless of their ethnic origin, their denomination, or linguistic preferences, the heritage of the Zakaryan-Mkhargdzeli dynasty is an integral part of the heritage of both peoples.

## **Searching for a Way Out**

Some aspects of the debates about the history of Armenian-Georgian relations are rooted in a general approach to history that, with a certain degree of simplification, can be described as “positivist”. Perceptions of history in post-Soviet societies, including Georgia and Armenia are based on positivist understanding of history, which, on a global scale has long ago seized to be the dominant paradigm in historical science. In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the philosophy and methodology of positivism emerged, which considered “positive knowledge” or, in other words, the establishment of “objective realities” to be the main aim of social sciences. Correspondingly, when it came to history, this dominant approach stated that there is only one “historical truth”, and if certain rules of research are observed, it is possible to establish the “objective truth” once and for all. Since then, positivist approaches in social sciences have come under criticism of many different schools of thought and intellectual currents, from the neo-Kantians to post-modernism. Contemporary western historical science has abandoned the positivist conceptions of “historical truth” and “historical fact”. Research in the field of social sciences and humanities is often based on the acceptance of the reality that the sciences studying society cannot claim absolute “objectivity”. A social phenomenon can be interpreted from many different viewpoints, depending on the position of the researchers themselves. A social scientist, being a representative of a certain social community (nation, ethnic group, religious community, social class, etc.) shares certain values and perceptions, that can not be completely abandoned even if the researcher is willing to do so.

Contemporary historians consider that history does not only seek to establish certain facts of the past, but also offers interpretations of these facts, and any interpretation presupposes a degree of subjectivity. Of course, it does not mean

that we should abandon any attempts to spread light on the factual circumstances of the events of the past. And it does not mean that any kind of falsification of historical data can in any way be justified. However, we need to realize that even if all requirements of intellectually honest historical research are met, quite different interpretations of history can be offered on the basis of the same sources and the same facts.

These methodological principles, which underlie contemporary historical science globally, are manifested also in contemporary trends within the field of history teaching. On the basis of these principles the “multi-perspective” paradigm of teaching history has emerged<sup>16</sup>. The multi-perspective approach is based on the methodological considerations quoted above. It does not claim to represent an absolute “historical truth”. The essence of the multi-perspective approach is to give a person studying history an opportunity to look at the “historical truth” from different points of view.

There are already certain steps made both in Georgia and Armenia in the direction of multi-perspective teaching of history. An important step was made in Georgia, where the newly introduced history textbooks include certain elements of multi-perspective methodology. History of Georgia is integrated into world history, which is an important step towards overcoming the ethnocentrism of the traditional historical narrative<sup>17</sup>. There is certain progress obvious also in Armenia. Though teaching history in Armenian schools mostly follows the old scheme that divides the subject into “history of Armenia” and “world history”, in high school a subject “History of Armenia in the context of world history” has been taught for several years, which is also an important step toward adopting multi-perspective approach. Both Armenia and Georgia actively participate in regional programs initiated by the Council of Europe, which aim at promoting the multi-perspective approach to history teaching.

---

<sup>16</sup> **R. Stradling**, *Multiperspectivity in History Teaching: Guide for teachers*, Council of Europe Press, Strasbourg, 2003.

<sup>17</sup> *History Teaching in Georgia: Representation of Minorities in Georgian History Textbooks*, CIMERA, 2007; **Н. Чиковани, К. Какителашвили**. “Грузия: изображение других в учебниках истории ...”.

Clearly, the transformation of the discourse of national history is not an easy task. Both in Armenia and Georgia voices can be heard, which warn about the dangers that the new methodologies pose for “the national identity”. However, in my view, such concerns are exaggerated. Traditional historical narrative is not destroyed, but it is included into a certain regional and global context, which prevents it from being treated as “absolute truth”. In this way a constructive dialogue between societies that have differing perceptions of the past becomes possible. In other words, even if history falls short of becoming a force that brings peoples together (that might sound a little too utopian), at least it might stop being something that divides them so sharply.



# Azerbaijan

**Sevil Huseynova** - Azerbaijanis and Armenians in  
Georgia: Spaces of Coexistence

**Sergey Rumyantsev** - Beyond Enmity: Everyday  
Practices of Mutual Help in  
Situations of Conflict



## **Azerbaijanis and Armenians in Georgia: Spaces of Coexistence**

*“We were all good friends here”,  
Serdar-bey said, as if giving away a secret”*

Orhan Pamuk, “Snow”

In the situation of post-imperial “ethnic unmixing” (Rogers Brubaker’s term), which took place in the course of the Karabakh conflict, it has almost become *mauves ton* to talk about coexistence of Azerbaijanis and Armenians. Possible contacts between representatives of the two national communities after the events of 1988-1990 are usually viewed as “lack of patriotism”. The mass media (at least in Azerbaijan) in most cases represent these contacts as something unnatural and accidental. In the context of such perceptions, all relations and contacts, as my observations show, are reduced to stories about encounters in situations resulting from migrations, or, to use an expression that has recently become common, in the diaspora. According to this logic, all of us in the diaspora, including Armenians and Azerbaijanis, are “guests”, therefore existence of contacts in this context has a temporary and accidental nature.

Probably everyone living in this region is to an extent influenced by these discourses of almost complete ethnic unmixing. I have experienced that influence personally when I visited a region of Georgia situated near the borders of Armenia and Azerbaijan. In this small district, which constitutes a part of the region of Kvemo Kartli, even today one may find villages where representatives of different ethnic groups live side by side. History of their constant coexistence represents an impressive demonstration of a successful search for compromise. In some cases it is also a demonstration of experience of successfully realized collective civic contracts in a situation, when the so-called nation state does not obstruct the realization of these contracts.

In my view that experience needs to be viewed in the wider context of nationalist ideology and the idea of division of the world into nation-states. Of course, it is difficult to challenge Ernest Gellner’s thesis that “nationalism is

primarily a political principle that holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent.”<sup>1</sup> However, according to Gellner himself, this is only the ideal principle of the ideology of nationalism, which, fortunately, has been realized very rarely. In the case of the South Caucasus, another remark, made by Ernst Hobsbawm, according to which “nationalism requires too much belief in what is patently not so” seems more accurate, though this remark was made in a different context<sup>2</sup>. I would add that nationalism requires too much faith that its main political principle can be realized in practice in any state, which represents itself as a nation state.

In the context of everything said above, it is exactly the situation in post-Soviet Georgia, which in my view is the most interesting. However, before proceeding with the analysis of the situation in a small district in Georgia, I would like to stress that it is not the aim of this paper to produce another myth about an oasis of successful coexistence of different ethnic groups. The situation in some of the regions of Georgia is very complicated. “The integration of minorities <...> remains a problematic issue. The school policies or linguistic policies are quite messy and are still at an embryonic stage.”<sup>3</sup> However, the difficult situation, various conflicts that emerged at various times and for various reasons, and a degree of tension between representatives of different ethnic groups coexist with successful practices aimed at reduction of the tension and search for mutual compromise.

Current paper will examine the situation in two villages: Sadakhlo, where until a few years ago a well-known market was situated and a much less well-known village Tsofi (Tsopi), not far from Sadakhlo<sup>4</sup>. But before proceeding to

---

<sup>1</sup> Геллнер Э., *Нации и национализм*, М., «Прогресс», 1991, стр. 23

<sup>2</sup> Хобсбаум Э., *Нации и национализм после 1780 года*, СПб., Алетейя, 1998, стр. 24

<sup>3</sup> Серрано С., Радвани Ж., *Кан М. Постсоветские государства*. Грузия, М., Nota-Bene, 2008, p. 160

<sup>4</sup> The materials presented in the paper were collected during a research summer school that was organized in the region by the Center for Independent Social Research (CISR, St. Petersburg) and the Caucasus Recourse Research Center (CRRC) in 2006. The research team included specialists from Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia and Russia. Such composition of the team also helped to observe how the researchers themselves might affect the behaviour of informants.

the main issues, it would be interesting to look at some statistical data. According to the population censuses, the number of Azerbaijanis and Armenians in Georgia has declined insignificantly since the census, carried out in the USSR in 1989. According to the census of 2002, the first one to be carried out in independent Georgia, there were 284.8 thousand Azerbaijanis and 248.9 Armenians in Georgia. With the exception of Tbilisi, representatives of these ethnic groups very rarely come in touch in the places of compact inhabitation of each group.

However in the large village of Sadakhlo, situated on the automobile highway and railway linking Georgia and Armenia, in the immediate neighbourhood of border checkpoints, intensive contacts between Azerbaijanis and Armenians can be observed. In 2006 in Sadakhlo one could observe how a village community (i.e. a community, members of which earn their living in the field of agriculture) suddenly finds itself deeply involved in the field of trade. The existence of the Sadakhlo market lead to an almost complete elimination of agricultural activities. The trade flourished here due to the location of the market on the Georgian-Armenian border. The border is quite relative, and local inhabitants crossed it easily, therefore the contacts between inhabitants of two neighbouring villages, long-time neighbours, were never interrupted.

Unexpectedly for the local inhabitants, the closure of the market actualized the idea of a return to agriculture. However, the lengthy history of the market's existence changed practically all of the routine practices of the inhabitants of Sadakhlo, who have become so used to the profits from the market, that today they have little enthusiasm about returning to the previously common everyday work on the soil. However, while the trade may be the agent of progress, in the case of Sadakhlo it was unable to transform a big village into a small town. Therefore, even though agriculture has not been the main activity of the village inhabitants, I am going to speak about a rural community. I will be using the term "community" as it was used by the Bergers, i.e. social context in which humans build their everyday lives.

### ***“Under the eye of the Armenian mafia”***

This is, in general terms, the social context, in which everyday contacts between ethnic Azerbaijanis and Armenians have a constant nature. However, it is important to stress that work in this region provides rich material for thinking about how the researcher influences what is being said by the informant. Often stories that are told are peculiar versions of description of ethnic conflicts. These versions could have been heard for example in such spaces as the railway station, in which the trains going to Armenia are required to stop for quite lengthy time for inspection. A long time ago the station became a space of intensive trade between local Azerbaijanis and Armenians passing through. Besides, several Armenian families live close to the station, who, for various reasons, have settled in Sadakhlo. Here, in the social space formed by existence the railway station it is possible to witness that common ethnic stereotypes and grassroots xenophobia do not lead to open conflict. The benefit of trade contacts overweighs the widespread mutual dislike.

Often these narratives are framed in terms of conspiracy theories, influenced by various mass media. The difficult economic and social situation in the region can be described in the following way:

*“Everything happening here is not the fault of Georgians. Georgians don’t live here. It is the Armenians that want us out of here. They don’t let us live here. It is not Saakashvili’s fault, he is a good man. It’s all the people who surround him – the Armenian mafia”* (male, Azerbaijani, 45 years).

Such perceptions do not prevent Armenians and Azerbaijanis from meeting over a meal and drinking together, confessing to each other their warm feelings and everlasting friendship. This is quite an interesting situation, in which potential conflicts do not find an external actor, who would be ready to invest certain resources into this conflict. The conflicts remain on the level of grassroots xenophobia and conspiracy theories, which are commonly discussed between “our people” in the kitchens and do not influence the practices of trade and everyday friendly relations.

## ***“Armenians are better than Georgians, whether in friendship or in enmity”***

Sometimes, on the level of everyday stereotypes, perceptions of common problems may unite Armenians and Azerbaijanis. *“Armenians are better than Georgians, whether in friendship or in enmity. Georgians are hypocrites. An Armenian, if he is an enemy, is a real enemy, if he is a friend, then there is no better friend than him”* (male, Azerbaijani, 47 years old). Four locals who were present at this conversation nodded their heads sadly and quietly as a sign of agreement with the speaker. In Sadakhlo I have more than once heard such statements, repeated like some kind of magic chant,

It is also necessary to note that many inhabitants of Sadakhlo preferred not to talk about their contacts with Armenians when speaking to researchers from Azerbaijan. *“Here in Sadakhlo we have never had Armenians. They come from neighbouring villages to earn some money”* (female, Azerbaijani, 21 years old). Trade and business contacts with Armenians are in most cases perceived as something usual and are viewed as a positive sign that in spite of the closure of the market the links with old customers remain intact. *“We have connections with Armenians, who else can we communicate with here? Taking our goods to Marneuli is not profitable, and here it is close* (he pointed in the direction of Armenia, S.G.). *Either Armenians come to Sadakhlo themselves and take the goods or I take it to the border myself and there I hand it over to them”* (male, Azerbaijani, 38 years old).

Here is a conversation with a woman trading on the railway station (50 years old, Azerbaijani). Several people approached her and asked something in Russian. After they left she nodded her head in their direction and said *“They all Armenians...”*. Then came a long pause, she was waiting for my reaction. After there was no reaction from the interviewer she added *“What to do?! We have to...”* [do business with them, S.G.] To my question, whether problems arise she replied: *“No, what can they do to us?”* Against the background of similar statements different thoughts were also heard: *“Armenians are coming here from neighboring villages. They mainly do the dirty work. They stayed in my place not so long ago, they were from the village of Lambalu* (Bagratashen, Armenia, S.G.). *We have good relations with them”* (male, Azerbaijani, 60

years old). Or *“I have many friends among Armenians. I have also invited them to this wedding, it is a pity that they could not come today”* (male, Azerbaijani, 55 years old). Here is another statement: *“My friend is from Kirovakan (i.e. she is Armenian, S.G.), she recently came here and asked to lend her 300 \$. Of course, I gave her the money <> She will return it, what else will she do? (laughing, S.G.) <> We met each other at the market, she kept her stuff at my place, that is how we became close. Now she works in Turkey as a babysitter. I tell her ‘be careful, keep your honor’.”*

### ***What does the border conceal?***

A female inhabitant from Sadakhlo, who has a friend from Kirovakan says: *“I want to visit my friends in Bagratashen, they are all quite old. N. has fell ill, I need to visit her. Here, you can see the roof of her house (points with her hand in the direction of the Armenian side, S.G.) <> I cross the river very easily, there is a place there, where you don’t even need to swim. <> Nobody is going to detain me, everyone knows me here”* (female, Azerbaijani, 55 years old). Thus, apart from personal links and contacts with Armenians, on “this”, i.e. the Georgian side, everyday practices of inhabitants of Sadakhlo often include crossing of the border with Armenia. The border is represented in two different roles: formal border and informal border. The informal border goes through a small river Debed, which is not deep and in some places quite narrow, surrounded by houses on both sides. However, the crossing of the formal border can cause repressive measures for Azerbaijanis and even simply Georgian citizens. To my questions if Azerbaijanis go to Armenia most often the reply was strictly negative: *“Our people do not go to Armenia. What are we supposed to do there?”* However, during the conversation they confessed that there were also quite trivial causes for this: *“If you have an Armenian stamp in your passport everyone in Azerbaijan is going to call you a spy. Except for the traders, of course. They go there, they have two passports, with one they go to Armenia, with the other one to Azerbaijan”* (male, Azerbaijani, 45 years old).

Apparently everyday practices of local inhabitants include different strategies of behavior depending on ethnic identification of their interlocutor. Our



research team consisted of specialists from all the three South Caucasus republics and Russia. If you are from Azerbaijan i.e. “our official/political homeland”, then we “stand together with you”, if you are from Russia, we shall probably express sadness about the Soviet past and minimize the contacts with Georgians, and so on. It is useful to bring a couple of examples here. One of the respected local inhabitants, a *tamada*, during a feast, at which Armenian researchers were present spoke a lot about friendship with Armenians, drank many toasts to them and said a lot of warm words, including phrases such as “*there is no difference between us*”. However, when he was already quite drunk, suddenly he shifted into Azerbaijani and suggested to “*us*” (i.e. Azerbaijanis): “*Let’s drink to us and our religion*”. In another case an informant who was threatening Armenians with war for a long time (in their absence), abruptly changed his behavior when researchers from Armenia joined the conversation. He shifted from anger to a rational explanation of events and started an equally lengthy speech about the necessity of a constructive solution to painful problems: “*We have lived here as friends for ages and we have always solved our problems peacefully, as neighbors*”.

### ***“Our village is mixed: half-Armenian, half-Muslim”***

An especially interesting case is the village Tsopi, a territory where Armenians and Azerbaijanis live side by side. The phrase quoted above is how S. (female, 17 years, Armenian) has described her native village, where she was born and lived until she was 15, leading a difficult life that was unsuitable for a child of her age. Then fate (or rather the predictable and inescapable necessity to survive in rural poverty) threw her to the Sadakhlo market. Life trajectories of many inhabitants of the villages in that area are not extremely varied. Mobility (both in terms of geographic and social mobility) which directs inhabitants of the surrounding (and sometimes not quite distant) villages to Sadakhlo is often conditioned by the existence of a market on its territory. Here, I leave out of the scope of my attention the case of marriage, which can help a woman change her domicile without moving beyond the limits of tradition. S. has also been lucky enough to achieve that. It was from her that I first heard about the area of coexistence of Armenians and Azerbaijanis not far from Sadakhlo. The

fact of existence of such a village was definitely interesting for me, since I have been studying the processes of ethnic unmixing in rural communities of Armenia and Azerbaijan for some time. The very possibility of coexistence of Armenians and Azerbaijanis within one village seemed to me astonishing and intriguing at the same time.

Thus, Tsopi (the Georgian variant of Tsofi, pronounced as “Tsopi” by the locals) is situated in the hilly part of Kvemo Kartli, 2 kilometers away from the Armenian border, which, according to the local inhabitants, either passes through the slopes of the mountains that surround the village from three sides or coincides with the edge of the forest. On the outskirts of the village we noticed rural infrastructure: a trade center that was not functioning, and something that immediately attracted attention, standard two-storied block houses, situated compactly in the middle of the village. As we discovered later, in Soviet times the village was famous for its central part made of stone, built by “the Germans” [i.e. German prisoners of war] in the 50s as an industrial settlement. Currently, around 200 families live in the village, which were described in the following way by a former teacher of Georgian language (male, Azerbaijani, 81 years old): “*Here, mostly two nations are living – Armenians and Azerbaijanis*”. These ethnic markers, important from the point of view of everyday life do not carry any conflict potential in them. The space of the village is divided, albeit quite relatively into an Azerbaijani “mahla” (Azerbaijani quarter, S.G.), Armenian “mahla”, and the “village” proper, which consists of the above-mentioned standard block houses, a space where rigid ethnic segregation is non-existent. The cemeteries are also separate, which according to a local woman “*has been like this since times immemorial... this is a tradition*” (female, Azerbaijani, 75 years old). However, in spite of the “tradition” there is also a sacred place common for all the dwellers of the village – an Armenian church attended by all the village inhabitants in order to “*light candles and make wishes*” (female, Azerbaijani, 75 years old).

Unlike Sadakhlo and other Azerbaijani-populated villages, where information about relations between Armenians and Azerbaijanis had to be gathered bit by bit, here in Tsopi this topic usually came to the surface from the very first

phrases of the interview. *“Even though today the relations of Azerbaijan and Armenia are bad, we live well, we are friendly, we visit each other. We all gave each other our word: let Azerbaijan and Armenia do whatever they want we shall live here as brothers!”*. A woman living in the village says about her Armenian neighbors *“We live as one family, we celebrate our festivities together. They come to us, we go to them”* (female, Azerbaijani, 38 years old). The same attitude was demonstrated in the “Armenian part” of the village: *“Here life is very difficult (from the point of view of material well-being, S.G.), but we live here quietly, calmly”* (male, Armenian, about 50 years old). In spite of this, in the course of the interview the problem of Karabakh was inevitably articulated, albeit from a different aspect: *“I heard that in the neighboring villages the questions arose: who does the land belong to? And two people from our village, Armenians, had a quarrel with them. But in our village there has never been such a conversation. May be in their homes they talk about this, but with us - never”* (male, Azerbaijani, about 40 years old). This issue, as a result of a collective agreement, was “removed” from the public sphere of the village, though privately it is a matter of concern for each member of the community.

Apart from the “sacred place” there are also other, “non-sacred” public locations in the village – the secular club and school. The latter needs to be discussed in some detail. It has two sectors – Azerbaijani and Armenian, which are both located in the same building. Like other rural schools, which we have seen in the villages surrounding Sadakhlo, the school was a half-ruined building, for the restoration of which parents of the schoolchildren donate as much as each can afford every now and then. In the teachers’ room there was a sheet of paper with the schedule of school duty by the students, in which Azerbaijani and Armenian family names were put side by side, quite symbolically.

The influence of the media from neighboring Azerbaijan and Armenia is not yet big enough to lead to emergence of conflicts: *“My children watch TV and say ‘oh, these Armenians...’ I explain to them: you don’t need this, there is no need to tell them anything”* (female, Azerbaijani, 38 years old). Or *“In our village almost everyone has a satellite antenna. For example, my son, who is in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, once watched too much TV (Azerbaijani channels, S.G.) and said: ‘these Armenians...*

*they have done such bad things'. And I tell him 'We live on a Georgian soil, we have to live here together. It is better not to tell them anything'* (Azerbaijani, male, about 40 years old). I think it can be safely assumed that Armenian television presents its own version of the events to the Armenian villagers. This is the main influence from the outside world, where there is “knowledge” that Armenians and Azerbaijanis cannot live together. While school often participates in the production of stereotypes and “images of the enemy” through history textbooks, in this case that does not happen since the school program does not include the subject of history of their “own” nation-states.

As a conclusion, I would like to return to one of the stereotypes that are most common both on grassroots level and in the official discourse of Armenia and Azerbaijan, according to which states Armenian and Azerbaijani peoples cannot live side by side. I hope that many of those who are subject to the hypnotic influence of such myths will learn about the existence of villages like Tsopi, which is by far not the only existing remnant from the times when the lives of the two peoples were closely intertwined. In conclusion, returning to the context of nationalism, I would like to agree with another point made by Gellner: “obviously the human society is not well-suited for realization of projects that have been conceived in advance in the sphere of pure mind”<sup>5</sup>. One of such unsuitable projects, in my view, is the main principle of nationalism, which we discussed above. Everyday life of the dwellers of Sadakhlo, Tsopi and other villages of Georgia, where Armenians and Georgians have lived side by side for many years, demonstrates that even in complicated social settings, under the mighty ideological influence of the media, conflicts are not inevitable. On the contrary, from a more general point of view representatives of different national communities, including Armenians and Azerbaijanis, are destined to a co-existence as neighbors, as in the case of the villagers of Tsopi. It is necessary to pay attention to these spaces of coexistence and then probably there will be much more chances to make the perspective of peace closer to this region.

---

<sup>5</sup> Геллнер Э., *Условия свободы. Гражданское общество и его исторические соперники*, М., Московская школа политических исследований, 2004, p. 45

## **Beyond Enmity: Everyday Practices of Mutual Help in Situations of Conflict**

*“It is very rare that the categorical pronoun “everyone” is suitable”*

Umberto Eco

In one of his articles Rogers Brubaker, analyzing misconceptions in the study of nationalism, analyzed the so-called “theory of seething cauldron”, which he characterized as a “gloom-and-doom perspective”. In the context of this approach, which in his view presupposes a *caricatured* contrast between Western and Eastern Europe, the whole region is presented as a “as a seething cauldron of ethnic conflict, on the verge of boiling over into ethnic and nationalist violence, or, in another metaphorical idiom, as a tinderbox that a single careless spark could ignite into a catastrophic ethnonational inferno.” However, argues Brubaker, though “violence in the region - in the former Yugoslavia, in Transcaucasia and the North Caucasus, in parts of Soviet Central Asia – has indeed been appalling... the undifferentiated image of the region as a hotbed of ubiquitous, explosive, violent or at least potentially violent ethnic and national conflict is quite misleading<sup>1</sup>.

Taking into account the perceptive suggested by Brubaker, it is important to think about the role of the mass media in forming the perceptions of inevitability of a certain conflict. It is also necessary to think about the degree to which the formation of myths about “historical enmity” is influenced by research that is more often centred on studying societies in a state of conflict rather than those in a state of peaceful collaboration.

Arguably, the situation in which the themes of conflict have been dominant has begun to change. Thus Valery Tishkov writes: “Many academics preferred to study war, invasions, conflicts rather than relations of friendship and attachment or societies in state of peace. This approach has begun to change

---

<sup>1</sup> **Брубейкер Р.**, *Мифы и заблуждения в изучении национализма*, Ab Imperio, Казань, № 1, 2000, p. 161-162

only recently. Several projects are carried out by the Max Plank institute of social anthropology in Germany. These and other studies confirm my observation that state of peace and cooperation are a norm for inter-group and inter-personal relations based on ethnicity. For example, it is this state that a city like Sarajevo, a unique crossroad of many cultures and religions, has lived in for the most part of its history. It was the recent war in Yugoslavia that revitalized the myth about concealed eternal enmity between people of different religions and traditions in this region, by selecting the historical references relevant for this myth”<sup>2</sup>.

I suggest viewing this article as an attempt to select “historical references” of a somewhat different type. These “references” are ignored when myths about “eternal enmity” are constructed. However, in no way the collection of references, offered by this paper is aimed at creating a counter-myth of “eternal friendship”. The very discussion of unchanged over time relations of friendship or enmity that bind constantly homogenous ethnic groups with rigid boundaries, is definitely a procedure for production of ethno-historical myths.

On the contrary, I suggest to think about the fact that even in situations of brutal violence, which was not uncommon in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the context of relations between ethnic Armenians and Azerbaijanis, numerous cases of mutual support have taken place. This was mutual support on individual and family levels, as well as on the level of collective relations. Probably more often than we can imagine today, it was the peaceful cooperation that defined everyday relations between Azerbaijanis and Armenians.

I would dare to suggest that if social scientists had tried to view Armenian-Azerbaijani relations not only through the prism of conflict, but as sophisticated, ambivalent relations that sometimes included cases of peaceful cooperation, these two peoples of South Caucasus could have been a little closer to the solution of the latest conflict taking place in our days.

Finally, I would suggest viewing the materials presented in this paper in the context of a thesis put forward by Maurice Halbwachs who claimed that

---

<sup>2</sup> **ТИШКОВ В. А.**, *Реквием по этносу: исследования по социально-культурной антропологии*, М., Наука, 2003, p. 127

“individual recollections are a social phenomenon”<sup>3</sup>. Memories of mutual help and support in case of conflict are not unique cases but demonstrations of the social phenomenon of the widespread phenomenon of peaceful cooperation between Azerbaijanis and Armenians, as well as between other ethnic groups of region.

## **Rural Areas: Collective Mutual Help**

The first example of memories regarding events of early 20<sup>th</sup> century is related to collective recollections of inhabitants of an Azerbaijani village, previously situated in one of the northern regions of Armenia (in the Soviet years – Kalinino district<sup>4</sup>). In the course of recent conflict, the dwellers of this *sovkhos*, which was called Kizil-Shafag in the Soviet years (Azerbaijani for “red dawn”, the pre-Soviet name of the village was Djudja-kyand) were forced to relocate collectively to Azerbaijan. Almost two decades have passed after that relocation. However, until recently the history of Armenian-Azerbaijani relations for the members of this rural community started with the events that took place in early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is a story about how during the events of 1918 Andranik’s regiment<sup>5</sup> and Turkish troops passed through the village. The story of these events has been transferred from generation to generation by members of the rural community of Kizil-Shafag, who have passed away long time ago. This oral memory of the relationship between communities of two villages – the Azerbaijani Djudja-kand and the Armenian Shahnazar, which

---

<sup>3</sup> **Ассман Я.**, *Культурная память: Письмо, память о прошлом и политическая идентичность в высоких культурах древности*, М., Языки славянской культуры, 2004, p. 49

<sup>4</sup> Materials presented in this section of the article were collected during a research project supported by the South Caucasus Branch of the Heinrich Boell Foundation. Based on the findings of the research project a book was published: **Гусейнова С., Аюбян А., Румянцев С.**, Кызыл-Шафаг и Керкендж: *История обмена селами в ситуации карабахского конфликта*. Тбилиси, 2008.

<sup>5</sup> It is difficult to say whether the Armenian troops were in reality led by Andranik. However, this is a question which is not important for us. Recollections about the actions of Armenian and Turkish troops in this case is simply the background against which the events interesting for us have unfolded, events that include practices of collective mutual help between neighboring rural communities.

used to be neighbors, demonstrates that the system of inter-community collective agreements, based on mutual trust, had existed in the beginning of the previous century.

Already at that time respected representatives of one village (“the *aksakals*”), who had the authority to represent the wishes of all the community, were able to ask help from the members of the other rural community. “*This is Shahnazar, a big village with a population of eight thousand. They were also migrants. They came there (to the Kalinino district of the Lori marz of contemporary Armenia, S.G.) in 1823... They started to live there <> In (19)18 they (Andranik’s brigade) chased away the Turkish troops. From the Karakhach mountain pass he arrived to the Kalinino district. The Turkish troops were after him. They (Andranik’s brigade) came to one village and killed one man and his fiancée. After them the Turkish troops arrived. There is a village called Karagilya up there, from there you can see everything. They (Turkish troops) stayed there. Yes, the Turkish pasha... the commander... yes, he heard about it (the murder of two people).*” That is why, according to these recollections, the threat emerged that the Turkish troops would attack the Armenian village neighbouring to the Kizil-Shafag.

Villagers of Shahnazar, their *aksakals* came to us, to our village. Asked our *aksakals*... “You go, ask the Turkish troops soldiers not to come to our village, not to kill our population.” Three people, including my grandfather, the three *aksakals* [from the Azerbaijani village] went there [to the Turkish troops]. They met this Turkish pasha, asked him not to touch [the Armenians of the Shahnazar village] <> They all worked in our village, ploughed the soil, cut and stored the hay, cultivated potatoes. So, until recently they came, they worked, they helped our village<sup>6</sup>. They were very poor. Our elders went to the Turkish pasha asked not to touch them, because they had always helped us. But pasha was also smart... He told them to go... And bring representatives from them. There were 4-5 people. On the other day with our elders the *aksakals* [Armenians] also went there to the Turkish pasha. When they entered pasha received them... Pasha was sitting in one private house, they were

---

<sup>6</sup> This excerpt refers to relationships that existed before the beginning of the 1980s.



entering on their knees (!). Pasha ordered them and told: gavurlar [in Azerbaijani “infidels”], it means “those without faith, those who do not belong to any faith, gavur galxin ayaga [in Azerbaijani “stand up”], enter like men. I am listening to you. They were begging him, crying. He said: do not cry, do not beg. < If you are in good... relations with the neighbouring village, don’t be afraid (!), I won’t let any of the soldiers enter your village” (male, born in 1935).

This is how the recollections of how the inhabitants of the Azerbaijani village stepped in to protect their neighbours can sound today. This was support on the part of people who knew each other well. Inhabitants of the neighbouring Armenian village Shahnazar worked in the neighbouring Azerbaijani village for a long time. Close contacts in these conditions were quite natural, even though in most cases they proved to be vertical. In a difficult moment it was natural to answer the call for help coming from long-time neighbours rather than ignoring it.

When difficult times for Azerbaijanis arrived it was the time for the villagers of Shahnazar to support their neighbours

“Now in (19)88 (!)... That was in (19)18. [i.e. the previous events were history, and now events of 1988 are described] I sent our representatives, three people to Shahnazar.<They went there, said: do you remember what happened in (19)18, you still talk about this. Our elders defended you, they did not let the Turkish soldiers enter your village. Now you owe us! Well, and they too... There [in the Armenian village, author] by the end of the village, from where the road comes to us, there was... Oh...I forgot his name. They were two-three brothers. One day these... sagallylar [bearded people], that’s how we called dashnaks, gathered and came to this village, wanted to enter our [Azerbaijani] village to kill people. Those Armenians did not let it happen. They did not let it happen! That’s how it was” (male, born in 1935).

Thus, the experience of mutual support and cooperation had existed for a long time. Transmitted from one generation to another, the memory about certain events helped to construct a tradition of long-time neighborly relations. The world was not rigidly divided into enemies and friends along ethnic or confessional lines only. There were enemies, and some of them were

Armenians. But there were also Armenians, with whom it was possible to reach an agreement.

Everyday life was not always bright and sunny, but in everyday life it was always possible to make a deal. People like Andranik or the Turkish pasha came and went, people remained. They needed to find ways of co-existence and they were finding them.

He told them (Turkish soldiers, author) – no, we live with them in a very friendly way, don't touch them, they haven't done anything wrong to us. You are going to leave, that's what our grandfather Ali-kishi said, you are going to leave for your homeland. We (Azerbaijanis of the village Kizil-Shafag) will stay here. He was speaking figuratively – water flows, sand stays. You (Turkish soldiers) are the water. You will go back. We are the sand, we will stay here with them. Since then and until our relocation their elders were passing from generation to generation: Ali-kishi has done such a favor to us, otherwise the Turks would have killed us, and we need to live with the neighboring village in friendship and harmony (male, 69 years old).

Relationships of neighborhood or friendship have always been kept and no conflicts could destroy them for a long time. Conflicts were happening at different times and on different levels. It is possible to claim that to an extent some of these conflicts were ethnicized. The Soviet “friendship of peoples” was, in any case, limited by grassroots xenophobia. However, these conflicts were solved in one way or another. And what is important for us is that the conflicts were solved not only because of the existence of the common Soviet government, but also through constant contacts between Armenians and Azerbaijanis.

Ethnic borders in rural areas have often remained impenetrable, but the neighbors lived peacefully more often than not. *“Personally, I can say that we did OK, we lived properly”* (male, 75 years old). The stability of ethnic boundaries is clearly demonstrated in the small number of inter-ethnic marriages. *“In the city it could happen... But in our village only very rarely you could hear that some girl from some village decided to marry an Armenian. <> Because of the religion. We kept our religion”* (male, 54 years old). It is not our aim to define the markers of these boundaries. However,

religion, without a doubt, is not a reliable marker that defines the stability of ethnic boundaries. *No, with Russians it was good. Our boys brought wives from Russia. But in our village they never married Armenians. May be it happened in other villages, but not in our village*” (male, 54 years old).

The situation in the rural areas, however, was significantly different from the situation in the city. *“Then we came here (to Baku). Oh my God, Muslim men married Armenian women, Muslim women married Armenian men. In Baku... uh... thousands! But (the villagers of Kizil-Shafag) never had any relations with other nations. Men married Russian women. Though young women did not marry Russian men*” (female, 48 years old). Nevertheless, not only in the city, but also in the village these borders were not absolutely impenetrable. Long-time neighbourly relations lead to frequent contacts and even in rural areas, Armenian-Azerbaijani marriages happened, albeit very rarely,

No, I knew only one Azerbaijani woman, it was in the village of Shahnazar, there are two thousand households there. I worked there in autumn, operated an excavator machine. They said that this woman... She is Azerbaijani, married an Armenian. Many Azerbaijani men married Armenian women. But from Azerbaijani women she was the only one. I even told her: aren't you ashamed of marrying an Armenian. I told her. She said – you didn't take me, I had to do it (speaks Armenian). Then I was high-spirited, I was young (laughs) (male, 68 years old).

It would be appropriate to quote Frederic Bart's observation: “Examples of stable ethnic boundaries crossed by individuals and groups are much more common than one can assume reading ethnographic literature”<sup>7</sup>. In spite of the stability of ethnic boundaries friendly and neighbourly contacts in rural areas could have been quite intensive, while some routine conflicts took place much more rarely than peaceful contacts.

“Many celebrations were held together. There were such celebrations. For example, there were celebrations in the district. Armenians took part in the Novruz Bayram, and we took part in the Armenian celebrations. For example

---

<sup>7</sup> Этнические группы и социальные границы // под ред. Ф. Барта, М., Новое Издательство, 2006, стр. 26

in weddings, in funerals. Yeah, that's how it was. ◊ Yes, we were friendly. Yes, I myself had three-four Armenian friends. No, we had none (conflicts)"No, only during the latest years. It happened that you could go alone to a place, where there were only Armenians and no one would have ever told you something like "a Turk", etc (male, 54 years old).

As for conflicts, they more often emerged among teenagers and youngsters. Probably, after the genocide commemorations became public in Armenia.

"Since then...all the time... they were calling us Turks, etc. Even the teachers sometimes said that, when they were angry, for example, they would say 'you are a Turk' and hit us. There was a bus station there. We had a place near the bus station, where we met. We always met there to fight. In one of the fights they even hit me in my leg with a knife. ◊ Oh... there... everyone left covered with blood, heads were smashed with belts. Special wires were made, telephone wires were bound together and whips were made, for using in these fights (male, 46 years old).

Now this reality of constant fights between schoolchildren and students is significantly ethnicized and while analyzing these memories it is quite difficult to distinguish between the projection of the current conflict on the past and the grassroots nationalism, which, to an extent, could have determined the behavior of people in those times. However, conflict situations were possible to solve and there existed a significant potential of peaceful friendly and neighborly relations. There were more moments and situations in which people were friendly than situations when they fought each other; they more often visited each other than made whips from telephone wires. The same informant who recollected the cruel fights can recollect also a different type of relations.

Well, we had friends... Guys from Shahnazar served in the army with us. We often visited each other. They would come to see us. We prepared khangyal, for example, cooked. We went to see them. They have... This... Church. If you translate it, it is called Red Church. In Azerbaijani we said Kirmizi Kilsa. They kind of went there. They would make a wish: if the wish comes true, I would bring a sheep, slaughter it. Well, for example we had a guy who served with us, with my cousin. He came. It appears that his father told him to do that. He came, took us there. We arrived, made turns around that church, three turns

or something, then slaughtered that sheep, but then they were drinking alcohol (male, 46 years old)<sup>8</sup>.

Certain difference in customs not only did not become an obstacle for contacts, but, on the contrary, added a certain interest to them. And though:

“I can’t lie and say that they married our girls and we took their girls, no. Everything was separate. Azerbaijanis - with Azerbaijanis. (At the same time, author) I can say we lived with them like brothers... Us and them, we had, how was it called, “kavor”... “Kirva”, that’s it<sup>9</sup>. We had many kirva among them. When there was a wedding, we visited them, they visited us. No, no, we lived very well” (male, 72 years old).

Thus, these relations were different, both conflicting and peaceful. But the important thing is that there existed a state of constant, uninterrupted contacts. “It is necessary to differentiate between conflict and a hostile or antagonistic relationship”<sup>10</sup>, while a conflict that finds its quick and successful solution is also a necessary from of contact. Teenagers could fight with each other in one situation and be friends with each other in another one. In any case, these conflicts did not become a reason for a growing antagonism between all Azerbaijanis and Armenians. The search for solution to the conflicts helped to adjust the positions of the sides involved. Constant contacts helped to see in each other people, with whom you can either fight or make an agreement. The memory about how conflicts were solved and friendly/neighbourly relations were built has not created much interest among the social scientists who prefer to concentrate on unsolved conflicts.

### **City: Mutual Help on Individual/Family Level**

In the same year 1918 in Baku vicious ethnic clashes took the lives of about 20 thousand people, according to rough estimates<sup>11</sup>. Such losses for a city of about

---

<sup>8</sup> В отличие от азербайджанцев, которые жертвенное мясо со спиртным, как правило, не употребляют.

<sup>9</sup> Т. е. практики становятся «крестными».

<sup>10</sup> **Козер Л.**, *Функции социального конфликта*, М., Идея-Пресс, 2000, р. 59

<sup>11</sup> See, for ex. Swientochowski T. *Russia and Azerbaijan: A Borderland in Transition*, New-York, Columbia University Press, 1995, p. 65-67.

200 thousand inhabitants are comparable to those that took place in the context of the recent Karabakh conflict. However, even with regard to those horrible days certain recollections have been preserved, which contain stories of mutual help against the background of vicious strife.

Thus, a famous leader of the communist party of Azerbaijan Nariman Narimanov recalled about the hostilities between Bolsheviks and Musavatists in March 1918: “Finally, a deputation comes to me from the Muslims, asking me to stop the war, accepting their defeat. At the moment I am calling comrade Djaparidze. He promises to send deputies. At that time Dashnaks are attacking my flat. I am going into hiding. They take away my brother. In an hour comrade Shahumyan saves me from the Dashnaks, ‘defenders of Soviet power’. After that in Baku there was a horrible rampage of Dashnaks who went wild. As a result a huge number of Muslim women were taken prisoners by the Dashnaks, i.e. ‘defenders of the Soviet power’ <> But why did they have to continue this horrible story in the *uyezds*? That was the question the Soviet power of 1918 in Baku had to answer. All this was the reason why I insisted that for some time Armenian comrades should not be appointed to high posts”<sup>12</sup>.

Nariman Narimanov and his family, according to his own memoirs, was saved by Stepan Shahumyan. The memory of the vicious pogrom by the Dashnaks, who supported Bolsheviks, does not become a reason for enmity between party comrades who identified themselves with different national communities because. And the saving of the family of N. Narimanov during the tragic events of March 1918 is not an exceptional case. Thus, it is well-known that “Stepan Shahumyan, with precautions, transported the families of (not only, author) Nariman Narimanov (but also of) Meshadibek Azizbekov, and was hiding them from the Dashnaks for two weeks”<sup>13</sup>.

Mutual support was common also among those who belonged to the class antagonistic to the Bolsheviks. One of the daughters of Zeynalabdin Tagiev<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> **Нариманов Н.** *К истории нашей революции в окраинах*, Баку, типография АН Азерб. ССР, 1990, стр. 59-60

<sup>13</sup> **Сулейманов М.** *Дни минувшие...*, Баку, Азернешр, 1990, стр. 215

<sup>14</sup> A famous Baku millionaire and patron of arts and culture.

has the following recollections of those days: “when the shootout started an Armenian millionaire Melikov sent his son Georges Melikov to take us away. Georges hastened my father: ‘Hadji, everyone is so worried about you. My father has ordered: let them pack their things and come to our place. The car is waiting downstairs... Let’s go! I have already transported several families’. ◊ Georges Melikov saved 15 families of wealthy Muslims that night. He rushed under a hail of bullets through the streets of Baku, taking to his father’s house scared women, children and elders. They lived with the Melikovs until it was safe”<sup>15</sup>.

The writer Banin (Um-el Banu) also remembers the mutual help of those days. “At 4 AM they started knocking on our front door so hard that it seemed that the whole house would collapse, and together with it our hopes would collapse too. Here they are, the Dashnaks! They are going to kill us. My father took the revolver and went out of the room. ◊ And we were getting ready to die. But it turned out we were wrong. Some time later my father and Amina returned. Our Armenian neighbors, who lived next door, were with them. They suggested taking refuge in their house. It would be safer there. What could we do? ◊ The hosts met us and surrounded with care. At that moment it was worth a lot and was very touching”<sup>16</sup>.

Those friendly relations, described by Banin, continued for a long time. After in September 1918 Turkish and Azerbaijani troops entered Baku, it was already the city’s Armenians’ turn to experience a vicious pogrom. Banin, recollecting her family’s return to the city, tells that “in Baku the Turks were restoring the order. Almost everyday executions took place. Criminals and marauders were hanged. ◊ The order and calm were completely re-established in the city. Of course, the Turks who had arrived to the Caucasus did not hesitate to punish the Armenians. And again the common people became the victims of nationalists gone wild. Our Armenian neighbors, who hid us, in the days of pogroms, were not touched by anyone. We saw them and the meeting was very joyful.”<sup>17</sup> Unfortunately, very few participants of those

---

<sup>15</sup> Сулейманов М. стр. 214

<sup>16</sup> Банин (Ум-эль Бану), *Кавказские дни*, Баку, «Кавказ», 2006, стр. 98-99

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., стр. 117

events decided to put their recollections on paper. I think that otherwise we would have learned many stories of this kind.

## **Conclusion**

It may be the right time to remember that coexistence, cooperation and mutual help are a significant part of the history of Azerbaijani-Armenian relations. The current period of almost complete separation and many years of propaganda of images of “historical enemies” is an exception rather than the rule throughout the history of those relations. Currently, the activities of different mass media, social research and teaching at schools are not aiming at a discussion of inevitability of peace and neighborly existence. The reverse is true. It is appropriate to remember that “in the end, any historical knowledge depends on its social aims.”<sup>18</sup> And it might be useful to ask the question, which are the social aims of the historical knowledge that is produced in the South Caucasus, knowledge that practically excludes all references to mutual help and peaceful cooperation.

To paraphrase Pierre Nora, it is possible to suggest that current versions of the national histories are written from the viewpoint of what the future would be like, therefore that the future will present us the black and white perspective of permanent conflict. So, we should ask ourselves: is the conflict the gift that should be inherited by the future generations in the countries of the South Caucasus.

---

<sup>18</sup> **Томпсон П.** *Голос прошлого. Устная история*, М., Весь Мир, 2003, стр. 13



# **Georgia**

**Tamara Sikharulidze - From the History of**

**Azerbaijan Georgian**

**Relations**

**Liana Davlianidze - From the History of Armenian**

**Georgian Relations**



## **From the History of Azerbaijan-Georgian Relations**

Relations of the Caucasian countries, lasting during many centuries and rich with events, demonstrate a lot of examples of their heroic fight against numerous external conquerors. Azerbaijani, Armenians and Georgians jointly, side by side were defending their own and neighbors' lands.

One of the pages of the fight of Azeri and Georgian people against Turkmen state Kara-Koinlu under the command of Kara-Yusuf is reliably reflected in the number of Near-Eastern sources.

The last two decades of the XIV century in the history of the Transcaucasia (as well as Near-Eastern countries) are known as the period of numerous military campaigns of blood-thirsty hordes under the command of Tamerlane. In this connection, the prominent Georgian historian Niko Berdzenishvili wrote: "The most difficult for Georgia, as well as for the whole Transcaucasia, was the political consequences of Tamerlane's expedition. Three hundred year fight against "savage" nomads finally resulted into the defeat of Georgia and the whole Transcaucasia."<sup>1</sup>

Written source, the author of which is Sheref ad-din Yezidi, informs us that in 1393 Tamerlane assigned the throne of Hulagu-Khan to his elder son Miranshakh, as well as ulus<sup>2</sup>, owned by him in Iran. According to the words of Sheref-ad-din Yezidi: "the lands, passed into Miranskakh's ownership, covered territories from Baku's Derbent to Baghdad and from Hamadan to Rum."<sup>3</sup> Although in reality, the state of Ilkhans in Iran covered far more extensive lands. Soon Tamerlane took away from Miranshakh the countries,

---

<sup>1</sup> **N. Berdzenishvili**, *"Historical Significance of Unification of Georgia with Russia"*, Mnatobi, 1954, #6, p. 126 (in Georgian)

<sup>2</sup> Ulus – (Mong.) "state, people". "Ulus was the name of the state, established by Chingiz Khan, also, Uluses was the name of domains, allocated by Chingiz Khan for his sons, which turned into semi-independent states since the second half of the XIII century, nominally recognizing the power of the great Khan (i.e. Tamerlane). Georgian Soviet Encyclopedia, vol. X, p. 141, Tbilisi, 1986 (in Georgian)

<sup>3</sup> **Sheref ad-din Yezidi**, *Zafar-Namme*, vol I, Tehran, 1957, p. 557.

given earlier and gave them for governance to Miranshakh's son – Omar Mirza. Tamerlane left Aran, Mugan, Armenia and Georgia to Miranshakh himself.<sup>4</sup>

After Tamerlane's death, huge state, established by him in haste, rapidly disintegrated. Internecine wars among Tamerlane's descendants put an end to their power and stimulated liberation movement in the conquered countries. Despite serious devastation, caused by Tamerlane's hordes, competitive spirit of Transcaucasia people wasn't broken. They gained strength in military sense and started implementation of active policy against descendants of Tamerlane. As an example, Georgia refused its vassal status and, little by little, began to force out the enemy from the Transcaucasia.

The above mentioned historian Mirkhond informs that in the summer of 1405, when the governor of the West Iran, Tamerlane's grandson, Omar Mirza was having a good time and carousing, he was informed about the invasion of Georgian troops, which made incursions and forays in Nakhichevan and Ganja. It should specially mentioned that in Georgian historiography dominates the opinion, in accordance to which the main aim of the Georgian military forces was the defeat and plundering of Tamerlane's troops and not of Nakhichevan and Ganja population, as the freedom-loving Transcaucasia people were fighting just against the descendents of Tamerlane. The governor of Ardebil Bastam Jagirma failed to take the relevant measures against Georgian troops and was forced to hide in Shirvan. Omar Mirza didn't listen to the advices of emirs and sent Omar Taban, Tukel Barlas and other commanders against Georgian forces. Soon Omar Mirza received distressing news that his emirs were defeated, saving themselves by escaping and hiding in the outskirts of the town Marand. Despite the brilliant victory over the descendents of Tamerlane, Georgian warriors, nevertheless, left Nakhichevan and Ganja and returned to the fatherland. It was also confirmed by the fact that soon Shirvanshakh Ibrahim, who was the sovereign of independent feudal domain, and dreamed of unification of the whole Azerbaijan, came into

---

<sup>4</sup> **Mirkhond**, *Rouzat as-safa*, Bombay, 1845, vol.VI, p. 239.

possession of Ganja and Karabakh.<sup>5</sup> Some of Azerjanian emirs came to Ibrahim. The governor of Shaki – Sidi Akhmed also joined him. According to Mirkhond, the King of Georgia – Giorgi VII (1393-1407) also sent his ambassadors and promised to submit to Shirvanshakh. In the given case Mirkhond's words could be understood as follows: King Giorgi VII, on the one hand, recognized the rights of Shirvanshakh, who had just come into possession of the territories, possessed by Giorgi VII himself not long ago, and, on the other hand, he as though joined the alliance agreement with the governor of Shirvan and promised to help him in the case of need.<sup>6</sup> But soon political picture in Iran and Caucasus changed again. Repeatedly defeated, and then banished by Tamerlane – sultan Akhmed Jalair and his ally, leader of union of Turkmen Kara-Koinlu – Kara Yusuf returned from Egypt and began war with the heirs of Tamerlane. In 1408 Miranshakh died in this fight, but there was not unity among the allies, and, as a result, Akhmed Jalair died. In 1410 Turkmen state Kara Koinlu emerged. Its sovereign Kara Yusuf owned South Azerbaijan, and he distributed other regions to his sons.<sup>7</sup> Kara Yusuf planned to conquer Shirvan, where Sheikh Ibrahim reigned. The governor of Kara Koinlu demanded submission from Shirvanshakh several times. That's why Sheikh Ibrahim applied to his allies – Georgian King and sovereign of Shaki for help.

In the researches in the history of Azerbaijan and Georgia, due place is dedicated to the joint military actions of independent Transcaucasia kingdoms and principalities against Kara Yusuf.<sup>8</sup> In addition to the works of Matevos

---

<sup>5</sup> Shirvanshakh Ibrahim, who surrendered to Tamerlane at his first invasion, received independence, and was only obliged to mint coins and read khutba (sermon), glorifying Tamerlane's name.

<sup>6</sup> *Collection of Articles in the History of Azerbaijan*, vol. I, p. note 9 (editor's note); **A.A. Ali-Zade**, *Social and Economic and Political History of Azerbaijan in XIII-XIV cc.*, Baku, 1957, p. 394.

<sup>7</sup> *The state Kara-Koinlu included Azerbaijan to the South of the River Kura, Armenia, Kurdistan and Arabian Iraq*, see: **R. Kiknadze**, *The Issues of Source Studies of the History of Georgia*, 1992, p. 132 (in Georgian)

<sup>8</sup> **I. P. Petrushevsky**, *The Great Patriot Shirvanshakh Ibrahim*, Baku, 1942, pp. 33-36; **I. P. Petrushevsky**, *States of Azerbaijan in the XV c.*, pp. 160-164; ; *History of Azerbaijan*, I, Baku, 1958, p.p. 203-204; **J. Ibrahimov**, *Feudal States on the Territory of Azerbaijan in the XV c.*, Baku, 1962, p. 29;

Gandzasareli about joint military actions of Shirvani, Shaki and Georgia against Kara Koinlu, information have also survived in the works of Abu Arezak Samarkand, Mirkhond, Khondemir, Yakhia Kazvin, Sheref-Khan Bitlisi, Hasan Rumlu and Munejim-bashi.

On November 17, 1412 Kara Yusuf started from Tabriz and came up to Karabakh. He sent the ambassador to Shirvanshakh and again demanded to surrender without a fight. Sheikh Ibrahim, King of Georgia Konstantin I (1407-1412) and governor of Shaki – Sidi Akhmed unified their armies and refused to do so.<sup>9</sup>

The allies' army went to the river Kura and took position on its left bank. Unfortunately, exact number of allied army isn't specified in the sources. It's only known that King Konstantin I had two thousand select riders.<sup>10</sup> It should be supposed that Shirvanshakh had more warriors, as he was the main player in the mentioned conflict. Hasan Rumlu mentions that Sheikh Ibrahim collected numerous army, and, together with Konstantin I and the sovereign of Shaki, attacked Kara Yusuf.<sup>11</sup> But Kara Yusuf's forces exceeded the allies' forces. Besides, he enticed into his side the nomad aristocracy of the South Azerbaijan. Feudal army consisted just of their troops. So, despite wide support of Shirvanshakh by people, quantitative superiority on the battle field was on the side of Kara Yusuf.<sup>12</sup>

The army of Kara Yusuf took position on the right bank of the river Kura, opposite their enemies. During one night the emirs of Kara Yusuf crossed Kura

---

**R. Kiknadze**, *op.cit.*, p. 132; **D. Katsitadze**, *Georgian on the Verge of the XIV-XV cc.*, Tbilisi, 1975, p. 252; **K. Tabatadze**, *Fight of Georgian People Against Foreign Invaders on the Verge of the XIV-XV cc.*, Tbilisi, 1974, p. 220;

**I. Abuladze**, *Information of Matevos Gandzasareli about Georgian King Konstantine*, Tbilisi, 1940;

**Iv. Javakhishvili**, **N. Berdzenishvili**, **S. Janashia**, *History of Georgia*, Tbilisi, 1943, p. 248; **V. Kopaliani**, *From the Past of Relations of Caucasian People*, Tbilisi, 1962, p. 226.

<sup>9</sup> **V.A. Minorsky**, *A History of Sharvan and Derbent*, Cambridge, 1958, p. 131.

<sup>10</sup> **Mirkhond**, VI, p. 295; **Khondemir**, *Habib as-sar*, vol. III, Tehran, 1957, p. 603.

<sup>11</sup> **Hasan Rumlu**, *Akhsan at-tavarikh (Manuscript of the Public Library of Saint-Petersburg)*, Dorn's Catalogue, №287, 18 b.

<sup>12</sup> **I. P. Pertushevsky**, *The States of Azerbaijan in the XV c.*, p. 160.

and intruded into the camp of sleeping allies. Mirkhond informs that Shirvanians, being in weak moment, took to flight and only Georgians severely resisted. Viewing it, Kara Yusuf personally passed to the offensive against the desperately fighting Georgians. The sources provide description of how Georgians surrounded the sovereign of Kara-Koinlu, but as the powers were too unequal, Georgians were finally defeated.<sup>13</sup>

Other Persian historian Hasan Rumlu mentions that on seeing victorious army of Kara Yusuf, Shirvanshakh Ibrahim regretted his thoughtless behaviour, and Georgians, under the command of the King Konstantin I, went into combat with the enemy.<sup>14</sup> Kara Yusuf won. A lot of Georgian warriors died in the combat. Shirvanshakh together with his brothers and sons, as well as governor Sidi Akhmed and a lot of Azerbaijanian warriors were taken prisoners. King Konstantin I, together with the survived Georgian warriors, was also captured by the Turkmen.

As Shirvan army resisted weakly in that combat, Kara Yusuf ordered not to touch and cause any harm to Shirvanians. As for the captured Georgians, they were killed one and all.<sup>15</sup> King Konstantin I, together with other noble prisoners, was taken to mejlis of Kara Yusuf. Having noticed rebelliousness on Konstantin's face, Kara Yusuf and his son Fir Budak hacked him to death with their own hands. Abd ar-Rezak informs us that together with Konstantin, the Turkmen killed his brothers and three hundred Georgian aznaurs, i.e. noblemen.<sup>16</sup>

This battle took place in the second half of November, 1412. The winner – Kara Yusuf plundered the whole Shirvan and returned to Tabriz with huge loot. Despite the defeat of the allies, this battle was the clear example of resistance of Transcaucasia people against the common enemy.

---

<sup>13</sup> **Mirkhond**, VI, p. 295.

<sup>14</sup> **Mirkhond**, VI, p. 295.

<sup>15</sup> **Mirkhond**, VI, p. 215; Hasan Rumlu also mentions that, as Shirvanians fought inertly, Kara Jusuph showed mercy to them, and the captures Georgians were killed one and all, see Hasan Rumlu, the mentioned manuscript, 19 a.

<sup>16</sup> **Abd ar-Rezak Samarkand**, *New Persian Series*, №88, 204 b.

The second episode of Azeri-Georgian relations falls on 1770, when the battle of Georgians with Ottoman conquerors had taken place near Aspindza, South Georgia, on the right bank of the river Kura. Before we directly discuss the peripeteia of the battle itself, it's necessary to briefly describe the political picture in the Caucasus, against the background of which the events were developing during the battle near Aspindza.<sup>17</sup> During Ottoman-Russian war, the King Erekle II (1720-1798) offered Russian command to fight together for taking Akhaltsike, and thus liberate Meskheta (south province of Georgia). In March, 1770 Georgian and Russian armies unified. Russian troops in the quantity of 1200 warriors was headed by General Gottlieb Heinrich Totleben and Georgian troops in the quantity of 7000 warriors – by King Erekle II. Joint army moved towards Akhaltsikhe through Borjomi gorge. On April 14 they took the fortress Sadgeri, on April 17 – surrounded the fortress Atskuri. Here the King Erekle II demanded to directly attack Akhaltsikhe without wasting time and strength for taking of small garrison of Ottomans in Atskuri, which, above all, was located in hardly accessible place. The King believed that the location of Atskuri deep in the rear would solve the issue of this fortress automatically. But General Totleben considered it impossible to leave the armed fortress in the rear and began preparations for taking Atskuri.<sup>18</sup> Soon it became obvious that his plan of taking Atskuri wasn't correct. The Pasha of Akhaltsike took the advantage of this circumstance and sent supporting troops in the quantity of 2000 warriors to the fortress on April 18. On April 19 General Totleben and his troops unexpectedly withdraw the siege and returned back. Ottomans made use of it, came out of the fortress and attacked Georgian forces. By quick counter-attack, Erekle II threw back the assailants and passed to the offensive towards Aspindza. In order to cut the way to Georgian army, the Pasha of Akhaltsikhe sent 1500 additional warriors from Akhalkalaki and

---

<sup>17</sup> The toponyme “Aspindza” deserves special attention. The word “aspindza” penetrated into Georgian vocabulary from Persian and meant “hotel”, “rest station” located in big routes. Aspindza, as a toponyme, appears in Georgian written sources since the IX c. Ottomans conquered Aspindza at the end of the XVI c, and established their governance there. See: Georgian Soviet Encyclopedia, vol. I, Tbilisi, 1975, pp. 640-641.

<sup>18</sup> **G. Kikodze**, *Erekle the Second*, Tbilisi, 1941, p. 92.



from the fortress Khertvisi. Erekle II managed to defeat the troops and put them to flight.<sup>19</sup> Soon main body of the enemy forces appeared near Aspindza. On April 19 Erekle II knowingly let almost the half of Ottoman-Lezghin corps of 8000 to cross the river Kura by the narrow bridge before getting dark.<sup>20</sup> The greater part of Ottoman-Lezghins didn't have time to cross the bridge and planned to do it the next morning. Erekle II successfully took the advantage of this mistake of the enemy and, at night, sent small troop of the best warriors to Aspindza Bridge under the command of Agababa Eristavi, Svimon Mukhranbatoni and Khudia of Borchalo. In the dark of the night, this troop unexpectedly attacked the warriors, guarding the bridge and killed them all. Then they totally dismantled the bridge and threw boards into the river, and filed the  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the remainder supports. Thus, the way back was cut for the Ottomans and Lezghins who crossed the bridge; and their companions-in-arms, remained on the left bank of the river Kura, were deprived of possibility to help their brothers-in-arms, as, due to high water, it was impossible to cross the river. On April 20 Georgians attacked the enemy, who couldn't resist powerful attack and began retreating towards the bridge. The almost filed bridge broke and took away the lives of hundreds of Ottomans and Lezghins, and actually about 4.000 enemy warriors died on the battle field.

Thus, despite Totleben's treason, Erekle II won brilliantly. Azerbaijani Khudia of Borchalo greatly contributed to this victory. He was one of the commanders of the troop, which dismantled and then filed Aspindza bridge, risking his own life for the final victory. It should be mentioned that the near-border province Borchalo<sup>21</sup> was particularly loyal to Erekle II, as it permanently felt strong support and grace from Georgian King.

The next clear example of Azerbaijan-Georgian cooperation is connected with Krtsanisi battle, which represents one of the most tragic pages in the history of Georgia. This battle took place in September, 1795 between Erekle II and Shah

---

<sup>19</sup> V. Macharadze, *Aspindza Battle*, Tbilisi, 1957, p.67

<sup>20</sup> Georgian Soviet Encyclopedia, vol. I, Tbilisi, 1975, p. 641.

<sup>21</sup> Borchalo – historical region in Kvemo Kartli, Debedi Gorge. Since 1765 Erekle turned Borchalo into his “samouravo” – i.e. he exercised his governance there through his representative. Georgian Soviet Encyclopedia, vol. II, Tbilisi, 1977, p. 477.

of Persia Aga Mohammad Khan, leading the army of 35000. Erekle II expected help from Russians in accordance with Georgievsk Tract, signed by Russia and Georgia in 1783, and thus he didn't organized general call-up. Although, as usual, Russian didn't provide timely help and Erekle II managed to gather only 5000 warriors in haste. Despite the heroic resistance, Georgians were severely defeated: Tbilisi was knocked to smash, mercilessly looted and Persians captured several thousands of citizens. The King himself was saved by his grandson and hid in Aragvi Gorge together with 150 riders. Aga Mohammed Khan craved for capturing of the King of Georgia at any price and sent the troop of 8000 in pursuit under the command of Kalballa Khan<sup>22</sup>. Kalballa Khan divided the troop into two parts: he directed one part to the town Gori, and the other, under his personal command, headed towards Mtiuleti (North-Eastern mountainous region of Georgia) for personal capture of Erekle II. Kalballa Khan reached Zhinvali bridge and in its area unexpectedly came across small troop of Khevsurians and Pshavians,<sup>23</sup> who, with delay, went for participation in Krtsanisi battle. Azerbaijani Ali Sultan of Shamshadilo, devoted to Erekle II, and his ells<sup>24</sup>, fought with dignity together with Khevsurians and Pshavians against Kalballa Khan. Kalballa Khan suffered serious casualties and retreated in haste. Georgian troop and Ali Sultan captured a lot of Persians and took them to the King Erekle II. The defeat of Kalballa Khan puzzled Aga Mohammad Khan so much that he sent a man with the proposal of negotiations, which weren't held due to number of causes. In this case, like the previous one, the fact that Azerbaijani Ali Sultan of Shamshadilo with his ells fought against Persians without hesitation for the sake of Georgia.

The next example of Azerbaijani-Georgian relations falls on the period of the World War One, which resulted into vast political changes on the Planet.

---

<sup>22</sup> **G. Kikodze**, *Erekle the Second*, Tbilisi, 1941, p. 142; King Erekle, "Iveria", #52, 1891, *Essays on the History of Georgia*, vol. IV, Tbilisi, 197;, Georgian Soviet Encyclopedia, vol. VI, Tbilisi, 1983, pp. 46-47.

<sup>23</sup> Georgians, residents of the historical regions in the North-Eastern Georgia.

<sup>24</sup> Ells – Turk and Azeri – il, "Ell" means "tribe, people". They were cattle-breeder – nomadic settlers in Kakheti and Kvemo Kartli in XVI-XIX cc. Georgian Soviet Encyclopedia, vol. IV, Tbilisi, 1977, p. 124.

These changes, naturally, touched the Caucasus on the whole and Transcaucasia in particular. Among a lot of problems the principal – peaceful co-existence in Caucasian region – was clearly outstanding. The leaders of the Transcaucasia countries understood it very well and made tremendous efforts for realization of this idea. Unfortunately, rough and violent interference of Bolshevik Russia buried the dear dream of unity for long. But special attention should be paid to the official documents, permeated with the desire of intergovernmental cooperation in the sphere of political independence for the sake of common well-being of the Transcaucasia. In this regard, the document, drawn up by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, dated October 27, 1918 is extremely interesting. The addressee of the mentioned document is the diplomatic representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan in Georgia. Before offering the complete text of this document to the reader, we consider it necessary to add, that on November 10, 1918 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia invited the representatives of Azerbaijan, Armenia and North Caucasian Highlanders to peaceful conference for consideration of principal issues raised in the document dated by October 27, 1918.<sup>25</sup>

### **Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Democratic Republic of Georgia**

Copy of the address of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, October 27, 1918, # 1501, to the Representative of Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan in the Government of Georgia.

The World War comes to an end, and there is no doubt that, in the nearest future, moment will come, when the World Congress will decide the fate of nations on the in general, and the fate of those separated from Russian Empire in particular. The nations of the Transcaucasia and Caucasus must be prepared to appear before this Congress in friendly manner, jointly and severally, as only under this condition their voices, as the voices of small nations and newly formed states, can carry weight and significance. Considering our numerous negotiations with you on this issue, we believe that moment has come for the

---

<sup>25</sup> **K. Tsertsvadze, M. Bakhtadze**, *Georgia and the United Caucasus (archival documents 1918-1921)*, Tbilisi, 2000, pp. 7-9.

states of the Transcaucasia and Caucasus - having being imbued with the spirit of mutual trust and readiness to come to rescue each other, recognizing mutual independence – to start practical implementation of united, mutually supported appearance on the future World Congress.

For this purpose the Government of the Republic of Georgia offers the governments of the Republics of Azerbaijan and Armenia, as well as the government of the union of Highland nations of the North Caucasus, to meet on the Conference in Tbilisi on November 10 of the current year (1918) at 12 o'clock in the premises of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (9, Ermolovskaia Street), assigning to the Conference two representatives with the relevant legal authorities.

Please inform us about your response in timely manner.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs”

We also consider it necessary to familiarize the readers with the Protocol dated *November 10, 1918*.

## **Protocol of the Meeting of Transcaucasia Conference**

*November 10, 1918*

Tiflis

The meeting was opened at 12.20 in the afternoon by the representative of the Government of Georgia N. N. Zhordania.

Participants of the meeting:

- 1) From Georgian Government – N. N. Zhordania (due to illness of the assigned delegates E. P. Gegechkori and N. Ramishvili);
- 2) From Azeri Government – Diplomatic Representative in Georgia Jafarov and Doctor Vekilov;
- 3) From Highland government – the Minister of Internal Affairs Pshemakho Kotsev and the Minister of Finance Vasan Nirey Jaberi.”

## **From the History of Armenian-Georgian Relations**

Well-known Georgian historian and archbishop of Ruisi Leonti Mroveli, who lived and worked in the XI c., considered Caucasian nations: Albanians, Armenians, Georgians and others, as ethnic groups of common origin<sup>1</sup>. Doctrine, by which Leonti Mroveli was guided (in the Christian literature of that time opinion, that these or those nations were the offsprings of the sons of Biblical Noah – Shem, Ham or Japheth, was dominating), can't withstand any scientific criticism at present. But the main thing is that Leonti Mroveli allocated just local, the oldest Caucasian nations as a separate group and stressed their common origin<sup>2</sup>.

Without doubt, Leonti Mroveli, his followers and king's court, partonizing the historian, were creating similar doctrine, the main purpose of which was the unification of the Caucasian nations against common external enemy, the phenomenon of which, unfortunately, was almost permanently present in the history of the Caucasus. In our opinion, the doctrine of Leonti Mroveli is actual and viable at present too. So, the below provided essay about Armenian-Georgian, as well as Azerbaijanian-Georgian relations, is the direct reminder for the present and future generation of how to build international relations, today and tomorrow, in a beneficial and unique region like South Caucasus.

External conquerors kept on the implementation of the principle – “divide and rule” – in regard to the Caucasus, or did their best to intensify opposition between Caucasian kingdoms and principalities, rulers and nations. Perfectly understanding the malignancy of such policy, Armenians and Georgians kept on trying to unify against the common enemy. Otherwise it would be difficult – and in some cases even impossible - for them to rebuff the hordes of conquerors. There was one more important factor, for the sake of which Caucasian nations had to oppose the common enemy, namely, Islamic aggression, jointly – they were Christians. Georgians were considered

---

<sup>1</sup> **Kartlis Tskhovreba** (“Life of Kartli”), vol. I, Tbilisi, 1955, pp. 3-4 (in Georgian).

<sup>2</sup> **A. Abdaladze**, *Relations among Political Formations of the Transcaucasus*, Publishing House “Metsniereba”, Tbilisi, 1988, p.3. (in Georgian).

chalcedonites and Armenians – monophysites (it often caused serious difficulties between them), but, nevertheless, they understood great importance of Christian faith, as common stronghold of fight against “people of different faith”. Materials, confirming this thought, could be found in great quantity in Armenian, as well as Georgian sources. For instance, in accordance with “Matiane Kartlisa” (“Chronicles of Kartli”), the King of Georgia Bagrat III and the King of Armenia Gagik I jointly opposed the Emir of Gyanja – Fadlon<sup>3</sup>, who, as the source specifies, “was the enemy of all Christians”.

Joint fight of Caucasian nations was clearly evidenced against Arab commander Bug Turk: seizes hostages from Mtiuls (Highlanders) – 300 persons – and tried to penetrate into Ossetia and reached Tskhavati. And Abulabaz, Eristav of Armenians and Guaram, the son of Ashot wrote to Mtiuls not to let them in... God helped: snow fell, they blocked their way and attacked. With the God’s help they won, and numerous Saracens, (i.e. Arabs) died<sup>4</sup>.” It’s interesting that Abulabaz, mentioned in the “Matiane Kartlisa”, the same as Smbat Sparapet was the ruler of Armenia, and afterwards he was captured by Bug Turk. Smbat was put to death in terrible way in the city of Samara, as he refused to convert into Islam, so he was given the title of confessor.

Caucasian nations fought against merciless emirs of the state of Sajevids by joint forces, side by side. Examples of it are well preserved in the works of the well-known Armenian historian of IX-X c.c. Ioan Draskhanakerteli “History of Armenia”. The Emir of Sajevids Apshin repeatedly attacked the King of Armenia Smbat I (890-914). In number of cases, being unable to resist properly, Smbat found reliable refuge in the country of the “King of Georgia” Adarnase. According to the words of Ioan Draskhanakerteli, Smbat, being persecuted by the Emir Apshin, “made up a small unit of troops in haste and quickly moved to the fortified area in Tao, which was ruled by his friend

---

<sup>3</sup> **Kartlis Tskhovreba** (“*Life of Kartli*”), vol. I, Tbilisi, 1955, p. 280.  
<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 256.

Adarnase”. When Apshin “saw that Adarnase didn’t betray the King Smbat, like he didn’t three times, Apshin returned to the capital Dvin empty-handed <sup>5</sup>.”

Written sources inform us that Byzantine Caesar generously endowed Georgian King David Kurapatat with several regions (including Gark and Apakunk <sup>6</sup>, near which the town Manaskert was located), for the support, provided by David in the fight against the rebelled Barda Skliaros. At that time the town Manaskert was seized from Byzantium by Emir of Diarbekir, and Davil Kurapatat, actually asked Caesar’s permission to take this town. In 990 Emir Bazi died and Marvan became the Emir of Diarbekir. During his governance, King David organized campaign to Manaskert and took the town. In the first place he exiled all Muslims and settled there a lot of Georgians and Armenians and subordinated the town to his governance.

In accordance with Armenian historian Asogik, seizure of Manaskert by David Kurapatat caused great indignation among the Muslim World and they demanded to return the town, and in the case of refusal – to declare war. But King David didn’t plan to cede Manaskert to them <sup>7</sup>. The Emir of the South Azerbaijan Mamlan Mohammad, the representative of the dynasty of Ravadids, gathered numerous army and headed towards Manaskert. As Ravadids created threat for Armenian kingdoms, Bagrat II – the King of Georgia, the King of Anis-Shirak Gagik and the King of Vanand (Kars) Abbas supported David against Mamlan. David Kurapatat and his allies made camp in the area of Bagrevand, in the town Valashkert (Vagarshakert). The enemy didn’t dare to engage into the battle, but destroyed several Armenian regions of Bagravand while retreating.

In 997 – 998 David Kurapatat and his Armenian allies had two more battles with neighboring emirates. In 997 they intended to take Khlat, but this

---

<sup>5</sup> **Ioan Draskhanakerteli**, *History of Armenia*, published by E. Tsagareishvili, Tbilisi, 1965, pp. 90-91, also 81-82 (in Georgian).

<sup>6</sup> **V. Kopaliani**, *Political Relations Between Georgia and Byzantium in 970-1070*, Tbilisi, 1969, pp. 38, 42-45 (in Georgian).

<sup>7</sup> **V. Kopaliani** “*From the History of Relations of Caucasian Nations*”, Tbilisi, 1962, p. 266 (in Georgian).

campaign ended without any result, and in 998 Georgian-Armenian Army totally defeated Mamlan and his allies<sup>8</sup>.

During the reign of David Kurapatat (second half of the X c., died in 1001) Georgian and Armenians fought jointly against common enemies and this unity was described in the best way by the above mentioned Armenian historian Asogik: “the man, who was the calmest of all Kings, reigning in those times. He was the cause of general calmness and revival among Armenians and Georgians”.

In the last third of the X c. the dynasty of Shadadids seized power and chose the city Gandza (Ganja) as place of their residence, bordering with Georgia and Armenia and soon after the state of Sharadids was established<sup>9</sup>. Emirs of Ganja often attacked neighboring Armenian and Georgian lands, so the display of understanding and courage, demonstrated by the King of Georgia Bagrat II (975-1014) and the King of Ani-Shiraki Gagik I (989-1020) in the fight against the Emir of Ganja Fadlon wasn't surprising. Emirate of Shadadids kept on creating problems to Armenians and Georgian in subsequent periods too. In “Kartlis Tskhovreba” message is provided, in accordance to which military campaign against Fadlon was initiated by the King of Georgia Bagrat IV (1027 – 1072) who had just come to reign. “Fadlon behaved in a disgusting way, and derogated the dignity of all rulers of this Kingdom, i.e. Georgia. And as early as in Bagrat's childhood, all the King's army was gathered; Liparit and Ivane, the son of Abaz, came; Kvirike the Great, the King of Ranians and Kakhეთians, the King of Armenia David and Emir of Tbilisi Jafar came; and made Fadlon run away and totally defeated his army; took possession of numerous plunder and treasures”<sup>10</sup>. The King of Armenia David, ally of Bagrat IV, mentioned in the source, was the sovereign of Armenian Kingdom Tashir-Dzogaret David Landless (989-1046). This circumstance deserves special attention, as there was obvious opposition between the kings of unified Georgia and the kings of Tashir-Dzogaret. Disregarding the circumstance, that Georgian monarchs set

---

<sup>8</sup> *Essays on the History of Georgia*, vol. II, p. 483.

<sup>9</sup> **P. Topuria**, *Political Units in the South Transcaucasus in XI-XII cc.*, Tbilisi, 1975, pp. 186-187 (in Georgian).

<sup>10</sup> **Kartlis Tskhovreba**, vol. I, p. 296.



the objective to force out the kings of Tashir-Dzogaret from Kvemo (Lower) Kartli, as the source shows, the army of Bagrat IV and the King of Tashir-Dzogaret David the Landless used to fight side by side against the emir of Ganja Fadlon. This fact directly indicates to the fact that Armenians and Georgians used to put their mutual pretensions aside against the common enemy and establish good neighboring relations, thus demonstrating political maturity in the name of establishment of general security in the Transcaucasus. Special place in Armenian-Georgian relations is occupied by the historical fact, which occurred in 1609. But to better understand the significance of the mentioned event, it's necessary to briefly touch historical developments of the beginning of the XVII c.

At the beginning of the XVII c. Ottomans renewed invasions in Samtskhe-Saatabago (South-West province of Georgia, bordering with Ottoman Empire) and, after bloody battles, subdued this strategically important region. Even after submission, Georgians of Samtskhe-Saatabago desperately resisted to the enemy and managed to take the town Akhaltsikhe forcedly. Nevertheless, Ottomans soon returned Akhaltsikhe and began to prepare for invasion in Kartli. In June, 1609, the enemy actually penetrated into Kartli with the army consisting of many thousands, additionally strengthened by 2000 Crimean Tatars, known for their brutality and merciless looting. The King of Kartli Luarsab II (1606 – 1615) was in the fortress Tskhireti with his small troop at that time. The battle between Luarsab II and Ottomans took place in the outskirts of the village Niabi<sup>11</sup>. Georgian troop, headed by Giorgi Saakadze and Zaza Tsitsishvili, totally defeated the cruel enemy, who retreated, heading against the flow of the river Kura, towards the city Gori. They decided to plunder this rich city, but, fortunately, one resident of Gori, Armenian priest (in Armenian – *tertera*) noticed approaching of the enemy and immediately dismantled the bridge.<sup>12</sup> Having failed to realize their intention, the Ottomans continued their way along the flow of the river Kura, looting and capturing local population. Their goal was to deliver the prisoner Georgians and loot to

---

<sup>11</sup> *Essays on the History of Georgia*, vol. IV, 1974.

<sup>12</sup> **Joseph Tbileli**, *Didmouraviani*, edited by *Giorgi Leonidze*, Tbilisi, 1939, p. 8 (in Georgian).

Akhaltsikhe. But Georgian warriors under the command of Giorgi Saakadze and Zaza Tsitsishvili cut their way, mercilessly killed the major part of Ottomans and Crimean Tatars near the village Tashiskari.

In January 2009 weekly newspaper “Asaval-Dasavali” published the article of Georgian historian Gubaz Sanikidze, which revealed new aspect of the above mentioned heroic deed of Armenian priest, who saved Gori from inevitable devastation. According to the words of Mr. Sanikidze, the family name of “this great patriot of Georgia” was Saakashvili.<sup>13</sup> Most likely, he was Saakian. As it often used to happen, many Armenians, living in Georgia, adopted Georgian ending for their family name.<sup>14</sup>

Clear example of Armenian-Georgian unity against the common enemy is presented in the work of the prominent Armenian historian of the late Middle Ages Esay Hasan Jalalyants.<sup>15</sup> Before directly going to the fact of Armenian-Georgian cooperation itself, we consider it necessary to note, that the historian Jalalyants belonged to the noble Armenian feudal family of Hasan Jalalyantss, who owned Lower Khachen region in mountainous Karabakh. In 1240 Hasan Jalalyantss built a monastery on the left bank of the river Gandzasar, on the hill, and since then, they were at the head of secular and spiritual life there. In the Lower Khachen, Gandzasar Monastery become the residence of Agavnian bishops, or, as they were called, Gandzasar Catholicoses since 1511. Esay Hasan Jalalyants himself was ordained as Catholicos and retained it till the end of his life, i.e. 1728. Having obtained fundamental education, he successfully combined ecclesiastic activities with the political activities. His dearest dream was the restoration of Armenian state system with the help of coreligionist Russian. So Esay Hasan Jalalyants established close contacts with the prominent representatives of Armenian liberation movement – Israel Ori and Vardapet Minas Tigranyan. With their help he tried to attract the attention of

---

<sup>13</sup> **G. Sanikidze**, “400 Years aAgo Priest Tevdore Died Heroically”, Newspaper “Asaval-Dasavali” #3 (748), January 19-25, 2009, p. 15.

<sup>14</sup> For example, **Arakelashvili, Terterashvili, Galustashvili**, etc.

<sup>15</sup> **Esay Hasan Jalalyants**, *Brief History of the Country Agvan*, prepared for publication, translated and commented by K. K. Kutsia, Publishing House “Metsniereba”, Tbilisi, 1977 (in Georgian).

the Tsar's government not only to problems of Transcaucasia but also to Shirvan-Karabakh.

In 1711 Esay Hasan Jalalyants together with Israel Ori went to Russia to meet the Emperor of the Russia Peter I in person, but due to Israel Ori's death he was compelled to return home from Astrakhan. Although he didn't manage to reach Petersburg, in his letters' sent to the Peter I, he urged "the ruler of Moscow" to act in Caspian region against the Iranian Safavids. One of his letter reads: "and we, on our behalf, with all meliks, nobles and ramiks, are ready and waiting for your arrival"<sup>16</sup>. Besides, Catholicos of Gandzasar promised the Russian Emperor that personally he and "people, devoted" to him were ready to provide substantial assistance to the Russian army.<sup>17</sup>

Catholicos of Gandzasar understood very well that achievement of his political objectives required establishment of close contacts with the King of Kartli – Vakhtang VI, whom he personally knew. On May 28, 1722 Esay Hasan Jalalyants arrived to Tbilisi and met Vakhtang VI. Catholicos of Gandzasar stayed in Tbilisi for several months to discuss the details of joint military action together with Russians against Iran. Vakhtang VI took special interest in organizations of Armenian troops in the signags of Karabakh. When the Catholicos of Gandzasar returned to Karabakh, he took several experienced Georgian commanders of the king of Georgia for preparation of Armenian army. Armenian historian Leo wrote: "Vakhtang not only showed promise to Armenian leaders of the liberation movement, but provided invaluable assistance in formation of Armenian army not only through advisers, but through army commanders." And the leader of Akhpat – Minas Vardapet Fervazyan wrote: "God sent to our Christians mighty Georgian king, who gathered the oppressed and broken up Armenian people, strengthened their spirit with his prudence and talent... The idea of Armenian-Georgian military alliance was a splendid event".

On June 15, 1772 the Emperor Peter I declared the manifesto about beginning of the South Campaign. Russian troops started out towards Astrakhan-Terek.

---

<sup>16</sup> **G. Ezov**, *Relation of the Peter the Great with Armenian Nation*, SPB. 1898, p. 204.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 317-318.

From Terek they headed towards Derbent. During the same period, Georgian-Armenian army of 40.000 started out towards Ganja. There the army of Karabakh signags of 12.000 joined them. United Georgian-Armenian forces waited impatiently for the appearance of Russians. The author of “Brief History of the Country of Agvan” describes the meeting of Georgian-Armenian army with the Army from Agvan in a very touching manner: “both sides met each other with great joy, and in accordance with tradition before the battle, they solemnly saluted, prancing on the specially decorated horses. Guns fired a lot, so that even the sun was overshadowed for a while. Then everybody hurried and approached Vakhtang’s camp. The King was delighted on seeing such bravado of our army. He sent the messenger and invited us to his place. Then he appointed young commanders (4 yuzbashes and meliks) and applied with encouraging words: “From now on, don’t be afraid of anything and anybody. Behave as is fit to your mightiness. The time has come for the salvation of Christians”. The next morning he presented khalats (robes) to all army commanders. He treated them so friendly because he loved Armenians very much.”

But three months passed and the Russians didn’t appear. At last, they received information, that after the seizure of Derbent Peter I stopped military actions and returned to Astrakhan. Some historians, e.g. V. P. Listsov, explained the suspension by Peter I of military campaign by destruction of two squadrons of Russian navy, in the result of which the land force lost not only artillery, but also the necessary provisions; by frequent illness of soldiers due to unusual climate, weakness of horses, lack of potable water. Persian campaign proved to be far more difficult than the Russian Emperor anticipated and it required more serious preparation. But, in our opinion, the pivotal reason of suspension of the campaign was the movement of Turk military forces towards the South Caucasus and Caspian Sea. Thus, Georgian-Armenian joint campaign against the Iranian Safavids ended without any result due to failure of Russian factor. The dream of the King Vakhtang VI to free his country from Safavids didn’t come true. The idea of the Cathalicos Esay Hasan Jalalyants about restoration of independence of Armenian state wasn’t realized either. This misfortune

affected him so much that the Catholics of Gandzasar gradually withdrew from political activities.

After 1723 Esay Hasan Jalalians wrote the most valuable historical work “Brief History of the Country of Agvan”. Central position in the work is occupied by description of political relations between Iran and North Azerbaijan and, certainly, Ganja campaign under the leadership of Vakhtang VI. Besides, four of the six chapters are the primary sources and thus reliably reflect political and economic situation existing between Iran and Transcaucasus in the first quarter of the XVIII c.

One more interesting episode is connected with the name of Joseph Emin in the sphere of Armenian-Georgian relations. Joseph Emin (1726-1809) was one of the leaders of Armenian liberation movement<sup>17</sup>. He lived an astonishingly interesting life, full of adventures and events. Joseph Emin was born in the town Hammadan in Iran, at the end of rule of Safavid dynasty. As chaos and distemper reigned in the country, in 1744 he went to his father in Calcutta and got actively involved in the father’s business. In 1751-1759 he lived in Great Britain, studying artillery and the science of fortification. As a lieutenant, he participated in military actions of England against France.

In 1759 Emin left for Armenia, where he tried to organize the rebellion of Armenians against Turks. In 1761 he conducted negotiations with Russian government in Petersburg about support of liberation movement of Armenian people. In 1763 Joseph Emin tried to involve Georgian King Erekle II into the war against Turkey. Though, earlier, in 1758 Emin wrote to the King of Georgia: “I heard your name in India, and learned about your victories in England.” In his memoires he described Erekle II: “Erekle is not a tall man. His swarthy face often obtains greenish, sometimes yellowish hue; he has a good complexion, it’s obvious that he is strong spiritually and physically. Conversation with him was also pleasant and instructive, like conversation with well-educated English gentleman. He is deprived of all kinds of haughtiness, arrogance and ambiguity, so characteristic for other Asian rulers. He demonstrated great insight and never boasted. His voice was melodious

---

<sup>18</sup> A. R. Ioannisyan, Yerevan, 1945.

like angelic... Once King Erekle, together with the priest Ter-Philip, invited me to the palace in Telavi. Talking with me, Erekle said: "Since the two brother nations – Georgians and Armenians – moved away from each other due to religious dogmata, they were left alone and found themselves under the yoke of infidels; it's necessary for them to rejoin (and, to better express his idea, he held his hands together), otherwise nor Georgians neither Armenians will draw up any noble plan". The conversation about the desired unity of Armenians and Georgias lasted from nine p.m. to three a.m.

Joseph Emin's political program provided for liberation of Armenians directly with the help of Erekle II; further, Georgian-Armenian federal state was to be established under Russian protectorate for the sake of defense from external enemies. Erekle II, basically, well adopted Emin's ideas, but due to unfavorable external and internal political situation in his Kingdom – Kartl-Kakheti, considered it impossible to realize them. It should be noted that Armenian Catholicos Simeon didn't support Joseph Emin. Puzzled by such developments, Emin headed to Karabakh to Gulistanian Melik Joseph, whom he also called to rebel against Turks. Here he had to participate in the battle with the army of Mohammed Khan, defending Getashten. Since 1770 up to his last day Joseph Emin lived in Calcutta. He told the story of his life in his autobiography, written in English and published in London in 1792 under the title: "The Life and Adventures of Joseph Emin an Armenian Written in English by Himself".

Tragedy, which stroke Tbilisi and the whole Georgia in 1795 in the result of invasion of Mohammad Khan, which brought devastation, destruction, hopelessness and great human grief, didn't leave anybody indifferent. Multi-national population of Tbilisi responded to this deplorable event their way. Investigating this topic, special attention was attracted by the work of Armenian writer Serob, contemporary of Krtsanisi battle. The composition itself is accompanied by the will, which clarifies that Serob wrote his work in March, 1796, year after the horror seeded by Mohammad Khan<sup>19</sup>.

---

<sup>19</sup> **V. S. Nalbandyan**, *Tbilisi in Ancient Armenian Literature (From Middle Ages to the End of the XVIII c.)*, Publishing House "Sabchota Sakartvelo", Tbilisi, 1959, pp. 161-163 (in Georgian).

Historical work of Serob has great significance, firstly, because it is the primary source, which reliably describes the details of the battle itself and its outcomes. Here is the fragment from Serob's work: "they were cutting throats to monks and nuns, killing like lambs, captured and sold some of them. They poured kerosene over some of priests and put them on fire. They cut off the heads of common citizens and got 30 tumans (monetary unit) for each; burnt the others with hot-red iron and other instruments of torture; took away young boys and girls for their lust." Serob didn't miss the fact that Mohammad Khan behaved like a beast not only towards Christians, but towards Muslims living in Tbilisi.

According to various historical information it becomes obvious that in that period of misfortune Armenians fought bravely and protected Tbilisi side by side with Georgians. Among the defenders of the city Serob points out Armenian artillerist "Prime Major" Gabriel, who died a death of braves, defending Tbilisi and Georgian land. There is this passage: "there stayed Armenian "Prime Major" Gabriel with cannon, from which he diligently fired towards the enemies of the Christ's cross, for the sake of his glorification and love towards his Lord. He (i. e. Gabriel) died there and departed for the other world to receive a joyous brabion (i. e. the palm of victory). Georgian "Second Major" died the same way an hour ago".

This is the clear example of how Armenian "Prime Major" and Georgia "Second Major" fought together, defending their native city Tbilisi.

Well-known Georgian poet and literary critic Joseph Grishashvili begins his article "Gabriel Sundukyants and Georgian Society" with the following phrase: "friendship of Georgian and Armenian people has long history". And then quotes the words of genius Ilya Chavchavadze: "we all know well that weakness of the earlier Georgia began from the unlucky day, when Armenia – our former South fortress - was defeated... While Armenia was there, Tatars' hordes had to cross Armenia first to reach Georgia. That's why our kings and nobles did their best to help Armenians, when they had difficult times"<sup>20</sup>. This historical friendship was being strengthened in the XIX c. by prominent

---

<sup>20</sup> I. Grishashvili, *Literary Essays*, Tbilisi, 1952, p. 220 (in Georgian).

persons like Ilya Chavchavadze, Akaki Tsereteli, Rafiel Eristavi, Grigol Orbeliani, Gabriel Sundukyants, Ovanes Tumanyan, Gevork Bashinjagyan, etc. In the present essay we will speak about the most talented Armenian writer, dramatist and public figure Gabriel Sundukyants (1825-1912), who was born in Tbilisi and dedicated all his life to the dramatic art.

Gabriel Sundukyants began his literary activities quite late, as he was in a public service in the Chancellery of the Governor-General in Tbilisi (he served up to the rank of General of the State). Before that he graduated from historical-philological faculty in Saint-Petersburg. He was 45, when he wrote brilliant play “Pepo”. The staging had a great resonance in Georgia and Armenia as well as abroad. Newspaper “Droeba” wrote in 1874: ““Pepo” is now staged in Istanbul already. Maybe Georgians will also see this comedy on the stages of Georgian theatres”. And really, “Pepo” was staged on October 21, 1874 not in Tbilisi but in Kutaisi. A year later it was staged in Tbilisi. Action in the play takes place in Tbilisi, so the hero Pepo was easily understandable and close to Tbilisians. Gabriel Sundukyants mainly wrote in Tbilisi dialect of Armenian language, which contained a lot of Georgian words and phrases, and folklore material. It conditioned originality of the language of Armenian Dramatist. It came to the attempt of translation of the text of “Pepo” from Armenian to Armenian, as not all Armenian understood Sundukyants’s city dialect.

Gabriel Sundukyants substantially contributed to the revival of Georgian theatre together with other figures. It’s extremely interesting to familiarize with the fragments of the address of congratulation in honor of 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Armenian dramatist, delivered by the prominent Georgian public figure Kote Kipiani:

“Dear Gabriel!

History of Georgian theatre experienced two bitter periods of its existence. The first one relates to 1850-ies, when unforgettable Prince Giorgi Eristavi, the founder of Georgian theatre, came to our society and created dramatics, which brought a great success. The second period is related to the name of Zurab Antonov, on the plays of which Georgian theater of that period was breathing.



Afterwards everything began to die out. Due to various reasons, Georgian theatre was closed and the time, which doesn't spare anybody, displaced these people from public field, and as for Georgian theatre, it moved to in-existence for more than 25 years.

You appeared – and time has changed for Georgian theatre. After 25 years of spoor, Georgian theatre began to wake up... Personages in your plays are our co-citizens, whom we meet at every step but weren't paying any attention to, until you revive their images on the stage and thus opened our eyes to the surrounding world... Thanks to your works, the whole galaxy of actors and actresses appeared in theatrical life, and your plays revealed new talents, whom we didn't know earlier... Allow me, your grateful student, to publicly hug and kiss you – the unforgettable leader and teacher<sup>21</sup> ”.

Georgian press actively covered activities of Gabriel Sundukyants, who was becoming more and more popular dramatist every day. Newspaper “Kvali” wrote in 1901: “Plays by Sundukyants reunited two neighboring nations on the basis of art”.

Gabriel Sundukyants loved Georgia and Georgians very much. When, on the jubilee of the poet Rafiel Eristavi the toast-master delivered toast in the address of Armenian dramatist, he answered: “I don't deserve personal toast, as all toasts today belong to the person, whose jubilee is celebrated. But I'd like to say that we, Armenians, born in Georgia, are brought up by Georgian land, and we'll always share misfortunes and joys of Georgia”.

Friendship of Akaki Tsereteli with Gabriel Sundukyants should be specially mentioned. Citizens often saw them walking, linking arms with one another and talking about various topics. It's interesting that Akaki Tsereteli played roles in the plays of the Armenian dramatist and it warmed up the interest towards the creative work of Sundukyants. But the main thing is that Akaki Tsereteli dedicated three poems to Gabriel Sundukyants, in which he wholly expressed his feelings and relations towards his friend. Unfortunately, only one

---

<sup>21</sup> State Museum of Yerevan. Department of the Writer's Fund. For the first time this letter was published by the well-known Armenologist, Professor Leon Meliksetbeg in the newspaper “Literaturnaya Gruzia”, 1940, #15.

of the three poems was translated into Russian by the poet Alexander Abasheli in 1910.

Well-known Georgian poetess and translator Lela Samniashvili translated in English one of them:

### ***To G. N. Sundukyants***

*You are Armenian and I am Georgian,  
But brothers are we together bred;  
The sons of the same surrounding mountains,  
Sons of the same precious land!*

*The arrogant Caucasus, Caucasus great  
Has magnified your gracious heart,  
And this vicinity aflowered,  
In all your passions is being felt.*

*The gamut of tunes of stormy thoughts,  
Is in your writings abundantly woven,  
Immortality you won and gained,  
Has brought you to the heights of heaven!*

*The feelings, strivings of the Georgian people  
I join with yearning of my grateful heart,  
To express my adoration, greatest man,  
My elder brother and my senior friend.*

Dramatist Gabriel Sundukyants died on March 16, 1912. Eight months before his death he wrote his will and sent it to the editors of the newspaper “Mshak<sup>22</sup>” with the request to publish it after his death. This will, like all his activities, represents the example of high nobility, human modesty, tender love towards mankind and his roots. Here is the final part of the will:

"Farewell all,  
Farewell my Dear Sophio-jan, (wife)  
Farewell, my dear children,

---

<sup>22</sup> Armenian literary-political newspaper “Mshak” was published in Tbilisi in 1872-1920 years; The newspaper was founded by Grigol Artsruni.

Farewell, my dear friends,  
Farewell, dear peoples, whatever your nationality, origin and faith is,  
Farewell, my dear city Tbilisi.  
Farewell, my dear and venerable people, God grant you find your  
fatherland.  
Love towards all is buried deep in my heart, which I take with me.  
Farewell.”

Akaki Tsereteli wrote wonderful poem in the memory of his friend, under the name: “On the Day of Burial of Gabriel Sundukyants”, thus once more honoring blessed memory of the great citizen of Tbilisi and prominent figure of dramatic art.

Special place among Armenian art workers is occupied by Ovanes Tumanyan (1869 – 1923), writer and public figure. He got primary education in his native village Dsegi, Lore district. Then he studied at four-year school in Jalalogly (now Stepanavan) and Nerses seminary in Tbilisi (but he couldn't finish the latter due to financial problems). Zealous for education, he got seriously engaged in self-education. Since 1886 Ovanes Tumanyan appeared on the writers' field. He was many-sided author: wrote verses, poems, stories, fables, ballades. His works reflect social-psychological conflicts characteristic for Armenian reality, traditions and ways of life, past and future of Armenian nation. To his pen belong well-known poems “Maro” (1887), “Anush” (1890), “Taking of the Fortress Tmogvi” (1902), “David Sasunts” (1902). And the story “Gikor” (1895) is considered the best example of Armenian prose. By his nature, Ovanes Tumanyan was an optimist writer. He strongly believed in the bright future of his fatherland, as well as in friendship and brotherhood of Armenian and Georgian nations. He dedicated number of verses to this topic, e.g. “Reconciliation” (1893), “Oh, Georgia” (1916), “To the Poets of Georgia” (1919), etc. His works are translated to many languages of the world. Number of poems were translated into Georgian by Joseph Grishashvili in 1924 under the title “Ovanes Tumanyan. Selected Works.” In our opinion, it will be interesting for the reader to familiarize with the brilliant poem by Ovanes Tumanyan, in equally brilliant translation of Georgian translator Nana Bukhradze dedicated to Georgian poets.

## ***To the Poets of Georgia***

*O Shota! The fire of your lines  
Still glows today!  
The untempered wrath of time  
Has failed to slash that spirit of yours.*

*Your gracious lyre still thunders  
Under a new hand,  
The din of new songs rings  
Throughout Mother Georgia's land.*

*O my gallant friends,  
Have my kind regards and respect!  
Of brotherly songs from Ararat  
I bear you tidings to be heard.*

*Upon the boundaries of the past -  
The sunshine is seen of coming days!  
Let us all sing to her as one,  
The hymns of triumph!*

*May this song be blessed,  
May it resound far enough -  
To muffle the voice of evil  
In all parts of the world.*

*Let the sons of the Caucasus  
Descend from the height  
And at our lyre's call  
Partake in a multilingual feast!*

*Hey, brother and buddy, sister and mother,  
Assemble all – the old and the young  
To hail this new day  
With the sweet kiamancha in hand!*

*O dear, tears were excessive,  
For everybody to learn one lesson:  
Evil, from now on,  
Is to stop roaming on earth!*

*Don't complain, you know-all man,  
A wish should not flourish in heaven!  
We are people, we live and we believe  
Life is that what it is.*

*To the lyre of good Shota  
A song we shall sing,  
His sole message makes it clear for all:  
"The praiseworthy shall be given their dues."*

*The country thunders with tunes,  
The songs exceed all bounds,  
The songs are heard numerous  
All honoring his behest!*

*I do welcome you, my new friends,  
The passed away are rendered with my bows and respect.  
Of the fraternal song from Ararat  
I bear the tidings to be heard.*

*April 16, 1919*



# **Armenia**

**David Petrosyan – Armenia Now:**

**Inside and Outside**





## **Armenia Now: Inside and Outside**

The present situation in Armenia is perceived as critical in several areas: internal policy, foreign policy and economic area. I attempt to analyse different aspects of the crisis, with an emphasis on its political component.

2008 was a year of severe political crisis for Armenia, which culminated on March 1. On that day, 10 people (eight civilians, a policeman and a soldier) died as a result of a crackdown on the opposition by law enforcement agencies and bodyguards of oligarchs (more than 900 bodyguards participated, according to the opposition's information). The government, as a matter of fact, meddled with the investigation into that malicious crime, so the opposition was blamed. Based on no evidence except the testimony given by policemen, dozens of criminal cases were initiated, the most illustrious of which was so-called 'case of seven' that was taken to the court in late 2008. In that case, former minister of foreign affairs Alexander Arzumanyan, who coordinated the electoral campaign of Levon Ter-Petrosian, as well as three members of the parliament were involved as co-defendants. The High Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe Tomas Hammarberg called the actions of the authorities 'political vendetta'. By June 2009, there still remained more than 50 political prisoners in Armenia, although the authorities promised in writing to comply with the demands of PACE resolutions 1609, 1620 and 1643 and to release the prisoners.

The real investigation into the March 1 events was done until early May 2009 by the fact-finding group, which worked secretly. The fact-finding group, unlike the parliamentary provisional commission for investigation, had been formed by the demand of Tomas Hammarberg and kept the parity. The group had five members – two from the government, two from the opposition (parliamentary and non-systemic) and a representative of the Ombudsman's office. However, on June 6, 2009, President Serzh Sargsyan dissolved the fact-finding group. That was done when the group presented its first report to the parliamentary provisional commission; the report was also published by the opposition media. According to the report, investigators from the police and

prosecutor's office seriously violated the law a number of times during the investigation into the death of police major Hamlet Tadevosyan that occurred on March 1. The fact-finding group came to a conclusion that the policeman was killed by the explosion of a grenade that he kept in his hands, and that there was no grenade thrown by the demonstrators. That conclusion contradicts the official version, according to which the demonstrators used firearms and explosives. Probably, the president made the decision about dissolution of the fact-finding group because the group's further findings could be totally against the authorities' interests.

We consider that Armenia is in the midst of a deep political crisis, and the May 31 elections of Yerevan municipal council prove our suggestion. The crisis is an outcome of the regime created by Robert Kocharyan and Serzh Sargsyan during the last 11 years. The regime's ineffectiveness, corruption, imitations in the internal and foreign policies resulted in a deep social frustration. And after the fraudulent presidential elections on February 19, 2008, and the bloody crackdown against the peaceful demonstrators on March 1, 2008, tension has grown sharply.

Between June 16 and October 17, 2008, the opposition held a number of meetings and marches in Yerevan, with around 50,000 participants, in spite of the authorities' ban on mass gatherings. The opposition formed the Armenian National Congress (ANC), in which 18 political parties – from left to right, including nationalists – have united. The ANC does not have clear geopolitical preferences, as there are both theoretically pro-Western and theoretically pro-Russian parties among its members. Several dozens of NGOs joined the ANC as well. The ANC is supported not only by political parties and NGOs but also by citizens who have direct ANC membership not being members of any party and aim to a regime change. As the ANC lacks a clear geopolitical orientation, it is not anti-Russian. This could be the reason why the West is not interested in the ANC and does not support it. In this respect, the Armenian opposition is different from the opposition movements in Georgia and Ukraine in 2003-2004.

On October 17, 2008, the opposition held its last rally in 2008. Opposition stopped mass events for four and half months by its own initiative, based on

the assumption that its systemic pressure on President Sargsyan could be used by foreign, mainly Western, players as an additional factor for weakening Armenia's position in the negotiations on the Nagorno-Karabakh issue. At the same time, President Sargsyan was given time for fulfilling of the opposition's and international community's demands to free political prisoners.

Starting from the spring 2008, internal processes in the ruling regime resulted in an interesting and somehow absurd re-grouping of forces in the internal politics. Before mid-2007, a rigid centralised governance system headed by President Kocharyan controlled all important spheres – political, economic, energy production, the media, cultural life, etc.; during the recent one and half year, the situation has changed. Not only has the second centre of power headed by the incumbent President, Serzh Sargsyan, been formed; also forming of the third centre headed by the National Assembly Speaker Hovik Abrahamyan and leader of the second largest parliamentary party Bargavach Hayastan (Prosperous Armenia) Gagik Tsarukyan began. By our estimation, the structural shape of the third centre began to appear in November 2008. Before that, Abrahamyan and Tsarukyan had had several consultation rounds with representatives of the Russian political elite. It is also important that in April 2009 a traditionalist party – Armenian Revolutionary Federation Dashnaktsutyun (ARFD) – left the ruling coalition, mainly because of disagreement with the president's foreign policy, particularly the issues in connection with the 'roadmap' for Armenian-Turkish relations.

During 15 months of President Sargsyan's office term it has become visible that his regime is a consistent heir of Kocharyan's regime (although the latter avoided open demonstrations of its connection with the criminals), and is based on:

- taking over the great majority of country's material and financial resources by a small part of the society (by different estimations, around 40 or 50 families belonging to criminal and oligarchic structures);
- agreements on the spheres of influence: division of state offices, parliament seats, control of cash flow in different branches of economy, control over some territories ('feuds'), and so forth.

The ruling regime has been hindering the few attempts by representatives of the Diaspora to convince President Sargsyan that continued imprisonment of opposition activists damages his image as the president. One of Sargsyan's main problems is his inability to provide comfortable conditions for the oligarchs who composed the core of the Republican Party, secured its victory during the 2007 parliamentary elections and Sargsyan's victory during the 2008 presidential elections. At this moment, Sargsyan and his administration are not able:

- to keep working the scheme of political and economic quotas, i.e. stable functioning of the regime's internal regulation, which was formed and successfully exploited under President Kocharyan;
- to secure the oligarchs' economic and political interests. The oligarchs until recently considered the state authority as their own, but now their level of autonomy has declined. It is possible that Sargsyan and his family think about creating such conditions that there would be only one oligarch in the country – the president himself.

On March 1, 2009, the ANC resumed mass protests and declared its intention to participate in elections of the municipal council of Yerevan, which would then elect the mayor. The ANC list was led by Armenia's first president Levon Ter-Petrosyan. The municipal elections of May 31 may be characterised as the most fraudulent elections in Armenia. There was also widespread violence. Usage of weapons and threats to use firearms during the entire electoral process by some of the participants may already be seen as a component of the elections. Beating of journalists has also become a component of the electoral process. Besides, for the first time forged ballots have been used.

Not just the intensity of fraud but also the level of forgery techniques used by its organisers and perpetrators is stunning. Falsifications were made by a number of state institutions – from the Pensions Fund to the Ministry of Defence. It is noticeable that those obliged by the law to prevent electoral fraud participated in it most actively. This is true, for instance, in case of electoral committees of different levels dominated by the President's supporters representing the Republican Party, the Orinats Yerkir (Country of Laws) Party and the courts.

Remarkably, falsifications often took place in the presence of Western diplomats and also after receiving a letter from the US Secretary of State Hillary R. Clinton. In her letter, Mrs. Clinton clearly connected the municipal elections in Yerevan with Armenia's leaders' commitment to democracy. Such an approach is understandable, because the fraud during the 2008 presidential elections and the bloodshed on March 1, 2008, were seen in connection with President Kocharyan. Therefore, President Sargsyan was given an opportunity to show his devotion to democracy. Unfortunately, that opportunity has been lost.

According to the official results, the municipal council of Yerevan is composed of 33 representatives of the Republican Party, which received 47.39% of votes; 18 representatives of the Bargavach Hayastan (Prosperous Armenia) Party with 22.71%; 14 representatives of the ANC with 17.41%. Orinats Yerkir (Country of Laws) Party with 5.22% of votes, ARFD with 4.65%, the People's Party with 2.14% and the Workers' Socialist Party of Armenia with 0.49 did not pass the 7% threshold.

The most respected part of the opposition – the ANC – adopted a more radical stance after the elections. The ANC refused further dialogue with President Sargsyan (before that, releasing the political prisoners and holding democratic municipal elections had been set as preconditions for dialogue); it was declared that the ANC did not recognise Sargsyan as legitimate president and would not accept his signature under treaties on settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and normalisation of Armenian-Turkish relations; the ANC refused to accept the mandates assigned to it in the municipal council of Yerevan.

In general, the political outcomes of municipal elections in Yerevan may be summarised as follows:

1. Yet another “cleaning” of the political arena occurred, with de facto liquidation of the Orinats Yerkir (Country of Laws) Party as a significant political force. From the moment when the final results of municipal elections were affirmed, Arthur Baghdasaryan's position within the regime should not be considered stable.
2. The position of the Bargavach Hayastan (Prosperous Armenia) Party became less stable. On one side, the election results may be interpreted as diminishing of influence of one of the centres of power, Robert Kocharyan, who was the ‘godfather’ of the Bargavach Hayastan Party and has been co-

owner of the most of Gagik Tsarukyan's business enterprises. On the other side, the elections emphasised Gagik Tsarukyan's and Hovik Abrahamyan's quest for more independence. Ostensibly, President Sargsyan has consolidated his position within the regime after the elections and may not need such allies or minor partners as Bargavach Hayastan, Orinats Yerkir and ARFD in the near future. We do not rule out the possibility that Bargavach Hayastan may become a kind of buffer between the regime and the opposition.

3. It has been declared that Armenia's former president Kocharyan's candidacy is considered for the post of manager of a Russian company, the AFK Sistema. On the surface that seems like if Kocharyan is moving away from politics. If he really moves to Moscow, the regime will be more consolidated under President Sargsyan. Such a development may be favoured by the Kremlin. It is possible that the decision to move Kocharyan to the reserve has been made in Moscow because his presence in Armenia hindered the regime's consolidation. Besides, Kocharyan, with his hawkish stance on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict resolution, is not a favourable person for the OSCE Minsk Group mediators.

4. The ARFD has been moving towards an open opposition stance. Party's representatives in the Central Electoral Commission refused to sign the final results of municipal elections. It seems that within the party there could be a tendency for a partial rotation of leadership, with a demand to dissociate the party from President Sargsyan, especially his foreign policy.

5. This may seem a paradox but the Republican Party's official victory at the municipal elections in Yerevan created new opportunities not for the victor but for members of the United National Liberal Party, potential recruits for President Sargsyan. That party is connected with former Prime Minister Armen Sargsyan who lives in London and has been acting as a 'consigliere' for the president's staff, government and parliament of Armenia; now he will also get access to the mayor's office of Yerevan.

6. President Sargsyan's formal victory at the municipal elections in Yerevan, as a matter of fact, left him with fewer possibilities for manoeuvre at the negotiations on the Nagorno-Karabakh issue and on Armenian-Turkish relations, as his policies were formally accepted by the voters. Therefore, Sargsyan became more susceptible for pressure by the OSCE Minsk Group mediators and at the negotiations with Ankara.

7. Although the ANC formally lost the municipal elections, it had an opportunity to test its structure in action, and despite its formal defeat, ANC's structures demonstrated their serious potential. At time of the next elections, which may be extraordinary, ANC will have ready to act structures in Yerevan and may improve its standing in the regions as well.

8. The fraudulent municipal elections in Yerevan and President Sargsyan's refusal to declare an amnesty have been used knowledgeably by the ANC,

which refused further dialogue with the authorities (releasing the political prisoners and holding democratic municipal elections had been set as preconditions for dialogue), refused to accept the mandates assigned to it in the municipal council of Yerevan and took a more radical stance, for the first time demanding resignation of the president.

9. Presently, President Sargsyan organises a show – public appeals in favour of an amnesty. In essence, that is a response, and not very well-considered one, to the opposition's actions.

10. The parliamentary opposition party Zharangutyun (Heritage) proposed the ANC and ARFD to act together against the authorities. In our opinion, an alliance of these three political forces is improbable, as they have serious disagreements on a number of important issues in foreign and internal policy. However, they may cooperate on some issues; there is already some cooperation between the ANC and Zharangutyun as they have fewer disagreements than ANC and ARFD.

In general, if we summarise the internal political situation, it may also be said that:

- to some extent, the internal political situation lets to call Armenia ‘country of three presidents’ (Levon Ter-Petrosyan, Robert Kocharyan and Serzh Sargsyan);

- all main foreign players (US, EU and Russia) are now interested in existence of a regime with dubious legitimacy in Armenia, which may be susceptible to their pressure with regard to the Nagorno-Karabakh issue and Armenian-Turkish relations. This is one of the main reasons for the Council of Europe not to impose sanctions on Armenia although the demands set by the resolutions of the Parliamentary Assembly have not been met. However, this kind of attitude is not constant, and the foreign players may change their approach;

- The internal political crisis may seem not really deep from the outside, but it may explode at any moment under influence of several factors: foreign ones, like the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict resolution process and Armenian-Turkish relations, as well as socioeconomic factors.

With regard to that, let us attempt to understand the main aspects of foreign policy factors that influence the internal political situation in Armenia. First of all, the subject matters are Nagorno-Karabakh conflict resolution and normalisation of Armenian-Turkish relations. Just before the 100th day after

his inauguration, in late June 2008, President Sargsyan, who at that time was in Moscow, unexpectedly offered his Turkish counterpart Abdullah Gul to visit the football game between Armenian and Turkish national teams in Yerevan on September 6. Sargsyan declared that he was ready to discuss even the most difficult problems with Turkish leaders and even said about the possibility to form a joint commission of historians. By that, Sargsyan indirectly questioned the issue of 1915 Armenian genocide in the Ottoman Empire. Establishing of a commission of historians is, in fact, Ankara's demand. However, Sargsyan was criticised sharply by the opposition and by the Diaspora and the proposal about formation of a commission of historians was cancelled. At least, in his article published in the Wall Street Journal on July 9, 2008, 'We are ready to dialogue with Turkey', Sargsyan did not mention joint commission of historians.

In general, public opinion in Armenia about the initiative to invite President Gul was positive, as it was considered that dialogue was better than confrontation. Seemingly, the beginning of 'football diplomacy' marked the changes in Russia's and Turkey's policies towards the South Caucasus. At this stage, Turkey's plan to oust Russia from the region and to create a buffer between itself and a powerful country – a potential threat, was transformed into a partnership plan based on joint trade and energy interests. Of course, maximum weakening and limitation of opportunities for Russia and Iran remains in the perspective strategic plans of Ankara. However, Russia's actions during the recent crisis in Georgia compelled Turkey to slow down; Turkey even proposed the Platform for Stability and Cooperation for the Caucasus based on the 3+2 formula (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Russia and Turkey).

As a matter of fact, the proposal for the Platform for Stability and Cooperation for the Caucasus, obviously, will not be realised, but it is actual at the time of conflict and it sets an appropriate positive background for a decrease of the level of tension. Let me remind that according to the proposal, regional countries would participate in a joint framework for solution of the regional security issues, without the NATO and the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO). In this case, the main question is: will project participants be obliged to freeze their membership or abandon their aspirations



for membership in political-military blocs? We consider that Turkey will not agree to leave the NATO in favour of some structure the fate of which is still unclear. The same may be said about Russia and Armenia; the latter will not leave the CSTO in favour of some organisation that is still unclear, while the Nagorno-Karabakh issue is not solved. Therefore, Turkey's initiative is stillborn. It was rather a situation-based attempt to shape the region where the NATO and CSTO compete.

One of the reasons for making that proposal is Turkey's intention to participate in further 'reshaping' of the region, so it may become, along with Russia, a regional power, while Iran would be left behind. Assuming such a role, Turkey would play a more important role in relations with the USA and could try to control the transportation of oil and natural gas from Azerbaijan and Central Asia to Europe. Ankara's diplomatic activities before, during and after President Gul's visit to Yerevan have made clear an important condition: Turkey is willing to get a status of de facto mediator in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. In order to realise its ambitions Ankara proposed the Platform for Stability and Cooperation for the Caucasus based on the 3+2 formula. That political initiative, in fact, is a good disguise for a kind of 'shuttle diplomacy' between Baku and Yerevan on the Nagorno-Karabakh issue.

Turkey's involvement as a moderator has been officially supported by France, and representative of the US Department of State Matthew Bryza supported President Sargsyan, referring to him as 'popularly elected president'. So, the possibility of a deal – concessions in exchange for recognition of legitimacy – is visible now. However, the time frame for implementing the concessions from Armenian side in relations with Turkey and on the Nagorno-Karabakh issue remains rather limited. Both the outgoing American administration and EU hoped that it would be possible to move fast, as they understood that Armenia's president has very little opportunity for manoeuvre. It is possible that the quandary in the negotiation process within the OSCE Minsk Group before November 2008 quite satisfied American and European intermediaries, but in reality the quandary is a result of Russia's rather strong influence in Armenia and, especially, in Nagorno-Karabakh. As a matter of fact, last autumn, when Armenia agreed to negotiate with Azerbaijan via different

intermediaries outside the OSCE Minsk Group framework, the perspective for further functioning of the OSCE Minsk Group were quite dubious. It is significant that new format was initiated by Turkey. However, already in winter 2008 negotiations within the OSCE Minsk Group framework were resumed.

After President Gul's visit to Azerbaijan and his statements made during the visit, as well as the trilateral meeting of ministers of foreign affairs of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Turkey during the UN General Assembly in late 2008, it became clear: Turkey's stance on the Nagorno-Karabakh issue did not change and, naturally, it was pro-Azerbaijani.

When Russia lost its control over Georgia's territory, Moscow needed:

- to obtain an overland access to the Middle East via territory of Azerbaijan and Iran;
- to overcome the isolation of the strategic components of Armenia's economy controlled by Russian state monopolies (first of all, the energy sector, communications and the railway) and of the 102nd military base.

For a solution, Moscow decided to develop a partnership with Ankara, as it had been 90 years ago. In Armenia, there is an opinion that Ankara moved towards Moscow because of several reasons, including:

- likely troubles concerning energy security;
- mutual economic gains;
- unwillingness to let the Western players, especially the United States, to gain too much influence in the South Caucasus and the Black Sea region;
- securing the interests of Turkey's strategic partner, Azerbaijan.

Serzh Sargsyan hoped that it might be possible to advance Armenian-Turkish relations but Ankara did not agree to that. On the other side, it is clear that at the moment, there is no readiness in Armenia to make concessions on the Nagorno-Karabakh issue for the sake of normalisation of Armenian-Turkish relations. It may be remembered that after the meeting of Sargsyan and Gul, trilateral ministerial meetings and a bilateral meeting initiated by the OSCE Minsk Group were organised in the USA. These meetings showed that there

was not, and could not be, any progress in the process of normalisation. It is obvious that Turkey:

- will not agree for a mutual agenda with Armenia without progress on the Nagorno-Karabakh issue. Besides, Turkey and some parts of its expert community demonstrate that they are not interested in a quick solution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

- will not open its border with Armenia without consent of its main partners in the US and EU. Russia may agree only if President Sargsyan agrees to the Russian plan for solution of the Nagorno-Karabakh issue.

At the same time, Americans influence the situation also via Ankara, as Turkey plays a double game in the region, acting both as Russia's partner concerning the latter's interests in the South Caucasus and America's partner. Actually, the partnership with Russia is situation-based (by such means Turkey attempts to tie Russia up by a non-sustainable political project in order to provide some additional time for Azerbaijan after Russia's military victory over Georgia), while partnership with the USA is long-term, although not trouble-free.

Obviously, the 'football diplomacy' is quite useful for either Turkey or official Yerevan. Ankara shows to Brussels its readiness to solve its problems with Armenia by means of negotiations and demands a continuation of the paused negotiations about Turkey's accession to the EU. As for President Sargsyan, the negotiations with Turkey present his main trump, by means of which he hopes to get external legitimacy in the West.

We consider that in general, presently there are no principal changes in the attitude of Turkey's ruling elite towards Armenia and the Armenian issue as such. There is no reason to talk about reassessment of Turkey's policies. However, we consider that the initiative of Armenian president was useful and, most importantly, properly timed. Armenia was the first to demonstrate good will, in spite of difficult relationship between two countries. Several media paid too much attention to an action of some Turkish intellectuals, who initiated collection of signatures under an apology to Armenians. It should be remembered that the apology was offered for ethnic cleansing, not genocide,

and that the state was not involved. However, that could be the beginning of a long and difficult process that may change Turkish society as well as the nature of Armenian-Turkish relations.

Armenian-Turkish dialogue that began in October 2008 by the visit of Turkey's president Abdullah Gul to Yerevan was continued by the common declaration published on April 22, 2009, which was mediated by the Swiss – but in fact, by the Americans. In that document it was clearly stated that an agreement about a 'roadmap' had been reached. The official sources, either Turkish or Armenian, did not reveal the content. However, the text consisting of five clauses was published in Turkish newspapers, Sabah and Hürriyet. It provides that:

- Armenia will recognise the Treaty of Kars concluded by Turkey and Soviet Russia in 1921, so Armenia will abandon any territorial claims to Turkey;
- diplomatic relations will be established;
- Turkey will open the border between two countries;
- a joint commission of historians with participation of experts from third countries will be established, with a mission to prepare a common interpretation of the historical problems between Armenia and Turkey;
- the 'roadmap' must be ratified by the parliament of Turkey.

By our estimation, that is just the draft of 'roadmap'; final text has not been negotiated yet, that is why it has not been published. We also suppose that the available text is not full. The draft may contain other clauses as well.

We suppose that Armenian authorities, under pressure from Washington, had to accept the preconditions set by Turkey – historians' commission and recognition of the Treaty of Kars. Predictably, that action was criticised not only by the political opposition – Armenian National Congress and Zharangutyun Party, but also, first and foremost, by the Diaspora. Besides, ARFD left the ruling coalition.

Later on, the negotiations came to a halt because Ankara publicly demanded that progress on the Nagorno-Karabakh issue should be reached before Armenian-Turkish relations are normalised. Besides, we consider that the real intermediary in the negotiations between Armenia and Turkey – Washington –

made a significant mistake: in political planning, such notions as normalisation and reconciliation were mixed.

When we use the term ‘normalisation’, we mean establishing diplomatic relations between Armenia and Turkey and opening of the border and possibility for transportation, nothing more. ‘Reconciliation’, in its turn, means recognition of the genocide that occurred in the Ottoman Empire during World War I, as well as further negotiations on different issues that need to be settled for real reconciliation between two peoples.

The mentioned draft roadmap contains notions connected with both normalisation and reconciliation. We believe such notions should be separated, otherwise positive development and moving forward may be very complicated. Besides, in the process of normalisation of relations official Yerevan may act without regard to the opinion of the Diaspora, but reconciliation is impossible without consultations with Diaspora representatives and their participation in the negotiations. The problem is that representatives of the Diaspora, mainly those living in Western countries and in the Middle East, are descendants of genocide survivors. If official Yerevan neglects their opinion, the situation may explode in Armenia and in the Diaspora alike.

Concerning the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict resolution process, official Yerevan expresses its agreement to continue negotiations on the basis of ‘Madrid principles’, which are known only to very few persons in Armenia. However, statements made by diplomats make it clear that the ‘Madrid principles’ are based on the people’s right for self-determination, the principle of territorial integrity and abstaining from use of force. We consider that in a mid-term perspective there is little probability of settling the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, with regard to signing and implementation of several legally binding, and not just declarative, documents, especially if Stepanakert’s representatives do not participate in the process. We suggest paying attention to the following important issues:

- a) After the Russo-Georgian war in 2008, such an important geopolitical frontier as Batumi-Baku route remained free of Russian control. Part of another important frontier, the Tbilisi-Tebriz route, goes through the zone of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. If the latter zone is taken under control by means of deployment of peacekeeping forces, the main geopolitical rivals –

Russia on one side, USA with partners on the other side – will de facto control the Tbilisi-Tebriz route. If Russian peacekeepers are deployed, Russia may continue its struggle for control over the South Caucasus. But if Western peacekeeping forces are deployed, Russia will be gradually forced out of the region. By our estimation, presently there is a balance of forces and capabilities of Moscow, Washington and Brussels. Presence of Armenian forces in the conflict zone may at this moment be interpreted as a kind of compromise between main geopolitical competitors.

b) The situation in the conflict zone and around it reflects the balance of force between Baku on one side, and Yerevan and Stepanakert – on the other side. It should be noted that military budget itself does not mean an overwhelming advantage of one of the sides. Azerbaijan has to spend a part of its military budget on containing other potential threats – on the border with Iran and for keeping a navy in the Caspian Sea. Azerbaijan's navy cannot constitute a threat for Nagorno-Karabakh. At the same time, Armenia neutralised the threat from Turkey with Russian help. So, Armenian forces are concentrated on the Eastern direction – against Azerbaijan. It should also be noted that Armenian forces in Nagorno-Karabakh have built a fortification system. Leaving that fortification would violate the balance of force between conflicting parties and, in Armenian side's opinion, it cannot be balanced by an international peacekeeping force, especially because the conflicting parties have a priori disbelief in different hypothetical peacekeepers.

c) The entire philosophy of either Western, or Russian policy towards conflict resolution relies on pressure applied on the Armenian side and weakening of its position at the negotiations, because it follows the logic that Armenian side must make concessions, i.e. withdraw from the 'security zone'. However, even if Armenian side agrees or pretends to agree for concessions, it cannot comply with the demands because of several important reasons, particularly, the unclear future status of Nagorno-Karabakh, unsatisfactory level of international security guarantees and Baku's expressed unwillingness to make any concessions in the future. Baku's hawkish attitude provokes the mentioned pressure applied to Yerevan from outside, but on the other side, Baku's approach is a result of Western and Russian policy of applying pressure to Armenia.

d) OSCE Minsk Group is a balanced political tool for main foreign players, which lets them to control the process. In our opinion, real progress of the negotiations would be possible only if a new system of balances on this and other issues is created. Such a system would be as complicated as the present one. Balance is needed not only between the conflicting parties – Baku, Yerevan and Stepanakert; each of the conflicting parties needs an internal balance. In addition, a new balance system needs to be formed in the countries that share borders with the South Caucasus – Russia, Turkey and Iran, as well as in Washington and Brussels; all the mentioned players

need balance between them as well. Long time may be needed to form such a system of balances. Some key elements of such a system are presently outside the region and are connected with important global processes.

e) In the present situation, intermediaries do very little for establishing even a minimal level of mutual confidence between the conflicting parties. We think that in this situation it would be right if the co-chairs adopted a tactic of 'little steps'. For instance, an agreement about strengthening the cease-fire regime between Azerbaijan, Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh could be implemented. We consider that such an action would contribute to strengthening of confidence in the military sphere.

At present the intermediaries prefer the tactic of applying pressure on Armenian leadership. However, it seems that President Sargsyan tends to continue using the methods of his predecessor Robert Kocharyan, that is, to move between the main external players and postponing any decision-making.

During his press conference in Yerevan on June 9, 2009, recently appointed US Assistant Secretary of State Philip Gordon let know, unequivocally, that the negotiations on the Nagorno-Karabakh issue and normalisation of Armenian-Turkish relations cannot go on forever. So, it seems that there is a certain schedule for resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in Washington. Following this logic, it may be supposed that at some point it will be decided to make some changes, probably, to change the main negotiator from Armenia. Despite our pessimism according the possibility of reaching a solution on the basis of 'Madrid principles', we cannot rule out the possibility of covert deals between the main regional players, so the president of Armenia, suffering from low level of legitimacy, may be forced to sign a legally binding agreement on Nagorno-Karabakh conflict settlement.





# **Azerbaijan**

**Rauf Rajabov - Azerbaijan: From Financial**

**Security towards regional Priorities**

**in Foreign Policy**



## **Azerbaijan: From Financial Security towards Regional Priorities in Foreign Policy**

*People's need for security comes second after the primary physiological needs. Authority's ability to provide security distinguishes one type of state from another.*

Abraham Maslow, American scientist

### **Violence against individuals**

Economic security of the Republic of Azerbaijan includes, first, the ability of its institutions to guarantee stability of economic development; second, to support reliability of the financial system and the main financial and economic parameters; third, to neutralise the effect of global financial crises and deliberate actions of global players (states, multinational oil companies, interstate groups, etc.), as well as non-transparent clans and corporations on the country's economic and socio-political system. The failures of European, American and Asian financial giants resulted in serious troubles for both developed and developing states, including Azerbaijan.

In the first quarter of 2009, the State Statistical Committee of Azerbaijan published results of a study titled Violence against Individuals, which covered a survey made in 18,000 households throughout the country. The number of survey participants reached 46,829. Fifty-five percent of respondents aged 14 or older (63% – in cities, 33% – in the countryside) stated that violence exists in our society. Of those, 71.4% consider financial problems as a cause for violence, and 11.2% think housing conditions are the cause. Surveys made in the regions of Azerbaijan show that people are dissatisfied by low living standards, by work of local governments and corrupt officials. Such conclusion has been made by the Centre for Regional Development, which analysed the replies of inhabitants of the regions, with exception of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic. Head of the Centre for Regional Development Chingiz Ismayilov noted that the centre's goal had been to assess the effectiveness of execution of the state programme of socioeconomic development of the regions in 2004-2008 and comparison of the results with the government's

report. In Ismayilov's opinion, although Azerbaijan macroeconomic indicators have been growing, the gap between the quality of life in Baku and in the regions has been growing as well. In 2007, 25 billion manats (AZN) were invested in Baku, while the rest of country received less than five billion. Inhabitants of the regions were asked 12 questions. To the question about how their lives changed in the recent years, 1% said that life improved significantly, 12% said that life improved, 53% said that their condition worsened, and 34% said that the situation did not change. To the question whether salaries were enough for keeping a family, 7% said yes, 36% said more or less, and 57% stated that there was not enough money.

The priority issues for the government of Azerbaijan are:

- Frozen savings from the Soviet period;
- Financial war in the 'Karabakh triangle';
- Families' and communities' financial security (as employers are not bound by any guarantees);
- The value of manat (AZN) compared with dollars, euros and Russian rubles (i.e. the process of reproduction of national product);
- Inflation correlation: state – regions – citizens;
- Taxation mechanism: taxpayers – taxes – state budget;
- 'Grey' and 'black' financial mechanisms (i.e. new legislation in the sphere of struggle against money laundering).

An economically effective state is a state that protects its national interests and guarantees economic security under conditions of unlimited international competition. In Azerbaijan, the doctrine for financial security is not publicised and its performance is not discussed. Milli Meclis (the parliament) has not yet defined the tasks of the national strategy for financial security, therefore, financial security threats are not identified and criteria for financially safe state of economy are not formulated. One thing is beyond doubt: in a long-term perspective, it is impossible to solve internal and external problems effectively without financial security.

## **The Commonwealth of Independent States**

The post-Soviet area, where official Baku has a traditional standing and Europe, where Azerbaijan's oil is sold, are priorities for Azerbaijan's foreign policy.

Distinguished American political scientist Zbigniew Brzezinski expressed his views towards integration within the CIS. In his opinion, the free trade agreement for the post-Soviet area could, potentially, bring economic benefits for all participants. However, a closer economic integration would result in fewer opportunities for every CIS member for closer relations with the EU and, moreover, with the NATO. If Moscow's goal is to create a common geopolitical area, that is an attempt to limit sovereignty of the republics.

The Kremlin aspires to keep the post-Soviet countries under its geopolitical influence by means of political, military and economic tools. That is why Azerbaijan's government's strategic approach must include orientation towards national and regional interests. Azerbaijan's government needs to define its geopolitical and economic interests, as well as means for following those interests. For instance, how should we protect the rights of Azerbaijanis in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and the interests of Azerbaijani businesses in those countries? It is not a secret that our standing in Europe and Asia is considerably weaker. How Azerbaijan may be integrated with Europe without such quantity and quality of economic ties that we have with the CIS countries? Besides, Azerbaijan is a landlocked state that only exports raw materials and transports them via its territory.

Because of the global financial crisis, Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan initiated creation of a customs union with common tariffs, effective from January 1, 2010, and informed the World Trade Organisation about quitting individual negotiations for joining the WTO and their intention to join it as a customs union. That development may not leave official Baku indifferent, as the structure of national economies of Azerbaijan, Russia and Kazakhstan is rather similar. At the same time, the declaration concerning EU's Eastern Partnership programme and the Southern corridor is also a priority for Azerbaijan. The Eastern Partnership programme will give momentum to further development of relations between Azerbaijan and the EU, as Azerbaijan's president Ilham

Aliyev noted in his address to the EU summit. While speaking about the country's development in political, economic and other spheres, about democratic reforms, President Aliyev noted that reforms will facilitate further movement of Azerbaijan towards the European family. From the point of view of European politicians, Eastern Partnership must not lead to re-establishment of division into blocs, neither it constitutes a struggle for spheres of influence – there must be pragmatic cooperation of equal partners in such spheres as trade, economic security and promotion of human rights.

In this situation Azerbaijan may increase or minimise the level of risk. The question is, what stance shall we adopt with respect to integration into the European and post-Soviet areas? Establishment of a free trade zone within the framework of the Eastern Partnership would let Azerbaijan to diversify economic relations. However, there is a problem because Baku does not have an agreement with Brussels, like one with Moscow, about minimisation of the risks for the national economy.

A self-sufficient society is not being assimilated during the integration process – it gets transformed and adopts the best parts of the mankind's heritage. But here a question may be asked: to what degree is Azerbaijan integrated as a country? On one side, 16% of our territory is occupied. On the other side, Azerbaijan's regions are not integrated enough as a single society. For instance, 93% of the country's industrial plants are concentrated in Baku and Sumgayit. Who obstructs normal management of social development, beginning from arbitrary increase of prices for consumer goods, ending with search for a solution for the 'Karabakh triangle'? But Azerbaijan's internal integration is just the first stage of the general integration process. The next stage is regional – within the South Caucasus, and only afterwards European integration may follow!

## **The Source of Conflict**

The ambiguous legal status of the Caspian Sea is a real source for a potential armed conflict. Before World War II, the USSR and Iran signed two treaties that divided the Caspian Sea between two countries that acquired equal opportunities for navigation and fishing. However, at that time no one

supposed that the main treasure of the Caspian Sea would be not its water but the seabed. The problem came up when the Caspian Sea had to be divided between five states. The only document that divided the seabed into zones belonging to different states was an instruction of the Ministry of Oil Industry of the USSR issued in the 1970s. According to that instruction, the Caspian seabed was divided into zones of responsibility and, for the purpose of exploration, each zone was assigned to the Ministries of Geology of the Russian Socialist Federative Republic, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. The contemporary division of seabed into national sectors is in accordance with that Soviet document. Kazakhstan controls 30% of the seabed, Azerbaijan – more than 19%, Russia – 18.7%, Turkmenistan – more than 18%, and Iran – 14.3%. Iran wishes to increase its share up to 20% with parts of Azerbaijan's and Turkmenistan's sectors.

Russia also considers the Caspian basin as its zone of influence and opposes growing American involvement. Before the US-led coalition's anti-terrorist operation in Iraq, official Tehran violated Azerbaijan's airborne and maritime borders repeatedly. And very recently, after the visit of Israeli President Shimon Peres to Baku in June 2009, Iran expressed its discontent (no comment!).

## **A Difficult Choice**

Azerbaijan's relations with Russia, Kazakhstan, Iran and Turkmenistan may not be assessed without connection with the geopolitical processes and country's development in energy and transport sectors. The geopolitical meaning of the Caspian Sea was best explained by the former US Defence Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger. He noted that if Russia succeeded in domination of the Caspian basin, that would be a more important victory than the West's success in NATO's eastward enlargement.

Being involved in large-scale operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the United States also act pragmatically and establish mutually beneficial ties with potential allies in the Caspian region for advancement of American global strategy. The main reasons for American presence in the Caspian region are region's strategic importance as a transport corridor between Europe and

Central Asia, the ongoing war on terror and region's richness in energy resources (the Caspian basin contains 3-4% of global oil supply and 4-6% of natural gas supply).

Azerbaijan gradually transforms into an important US ally in the Caspian region and bilateral military cooperation develops steadily. However, both Washington and Baku avoid publicity of the military activities in the Caspian Sea. For instance, the Americans planned a programme of intensive military cooperation, the Caspian Guard, which is a joint US-Azerbaijani monitoring initiative launched in 2003 for fighting the trafficking in illicit drugs, terrorism and trade in weapons of mass destruction. The Caspian Sea is already monitored from the territory of Azerbaijan. Russia does that by means of the radar in Gabala, and the US deployed two mobile radars in north and south of Azerbaijan. The United States help to update the vessels of Azerbaijan's navy. In order to prepare for struggle against any terrorist activity aimed to the oil and gas pipelines, the US provided training for Azerbaijani army and supplied it with some equipment. Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey organise the Eternity military exercises aimed to training for protection of the pipelines annually. Every year, Azerbaijani army officers are invited to participate in exercises in Turkey: Mehmetcik, Deniz Aslani, Deniz Yulduzu, Deniz Gurdu and Karadeniz Ortaklik. However, Baku acts pragmatically and follows a policy of diversification in relations with the US and Russia in the sphere of military and technical cooperation.

Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan agreed to participate in the air corridor proposed by Washington for delivery of military supplies to Afghanistan (via Ukraine - Black Sea - Georgia - Azerbaijan - Caspian Sea - Turkmenistan). Russia and Kazakhstan will provide a corridor for delivery of non-military shipments. However, Russia is not going to be just an observer while the US continues to expand its presence in the Caspian region. Tehran's cooperation with Russia in military and technical spheres goes deeper. Iran has continuously been declaring its wish that no military units of non-regional states should be deployed in the Caspian Sea basin, and has begun to expand its navy.

Can we suggest that in the near future Russia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Iran will reach a common standing on the status of Caspian



Sea and regional security, as Russia, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan have already got a common approach towards the issue? And to what extent are regional countries ready to choose their roles in case if the developments turn into a military scenario? Indeed, not all regional countries have finally decided who would be their strategic partners.

A reliable overland transportation route via Azerbaijan would permit Russia to transport armaments and equipment to Iran without setting off the American radars that monitor the Caspian Sea. And possible escalation of the tensions between Iran and Israel would result in a sharp increase of military exports from Russia to Iran. However, the Kremlin's intentions have been impeded by the recent incidents concerning Russian cargo on the Azerbaijani-Iranian border. The naval route's importance will grow significantly. And the American radars will register any supplies transported to Iran by the sea.

Russian military analysts compare the US-Azerbaijani military cooperation with the US-Georgian Train and Equip Program. They are worried that the US-Azerbaijani military cooperation may leave Russia without any leverage over Azerbaijan. The Kremlin attempts to keep its status in the region by means of the Caspian flotilla, as well as by the hypothetical Moscow-Yerevan-Tehran axis.

Iran's nuclear programme brought about a new geopolitical and strategic situation for the countries of the South Caucasian and Caspian region, as the risk of using weapons of mass destruction in regional conflicts has increased. The regional countries have two options for protection from military interventions: the 'nuclear umbrella' provided by the great powers or full demilitarisation of the Caspian region. The latter would be more preferable.

The situation with Iran's nuclear programme concerns Azerbaijan and other countries of the Caspian region. Azerbaijan shares a border with Iran, our cultures are very close, and bilateral economic relations have been developing during the recent years. Israel may attack strategic targets in Iran, including the plants that enrich uranium and produce plutonium. Near 20,000 potential targets in Iran may be considered strategic. In case of a pre-emptive attack against Iran, migration will become a serious problem, as more than 30 million ethnic Azeris live in Iran. Radioactivity and likely pollution of the Caspian Sea and surroundings present another potentially grave threat. Destruction of the

ecosystem may be aggravated by an increased threat of seismic activity in the Caucasus region. On the other side, if after a pre-emptive attack the regime in Iran is not changed, subversive activities in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Lebanon and Israel will be intensified. Such a chain reaction may result in unpredictable developments. Taking that into account, Israel should not launch a pre-emptive attack against Iran; but such an attack is still possible, as Israel feels the imminent threat because Iran moves closer to having nuclear weapons. This is understood in Tehran as well. That is why Iran's clerical regime attempts to build a 'dirty' bomb within very short time, possibly one or two years, hoping that it would defer a military action. And if the tension between Iran and Israel reaches its culmination, the South Caucasian states will be obliged to decide about their attitudes towards Iran, paying attention to two points: first, an Israeli attack on Iran will have direct consequences for the South Caucasus and Central Asia; second, if Iran becomes a nuclear power, the region and the entire world will face very serious threats and challenges.

As Azerbaijan has an unsolved territorial conflict, it is especially vulnerable in case of possible growth of tension in the Caspian region. No one may prohibit Azerbaijan from making military cooperation agreements with any country. In this respect, only national and regional interests of Azerbaijan should matter.

Azerbaijan needs to state its strategic priorities in foreign policy, so its neighbours and partners would not have certain illusions. Interests are not to be discussed – favourable conditions for fulfilling them should be offered. Therefore, the United States, EU and Russia have to respect the security concerns of every country in the Caspian region and South Caucasus. It must not be forgotten that a war in Iran may ignite the Caspian region and Caucasus, and the regional countries will have to fight the fire. Conflicts can be solved not by a number of cruisers and destroyers, but by rule of law and state leaders' reason and willpower. Unfortunately, none of the countries of the Caspian region has made a claim to the international structures in order to begin a search for possible solution of problems in accordance with the international law.

So, in the future Baku must liaise with a military and political structure that will guarantee its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Foreign military units

will have to be deployed in Azerbaijan. But such a move must be done based on strategic need. All foreign military units must be deployed only temporarily and must work towards development of Azerbaijan's army, as a guarantor of country's security.

## **Caucasus – A Region of Stability and Cooperation**

All countries of the region welcome the idea about formation of a comprehensive system of regional security in the South Caucasus, but there are some reservations. The issue is how and with what parameters such a system may be formed?

The idea to form such a security system has been lobbied during the recent years by American politicians. Former US Secretary of State Zbigniew Brzezinski spoke in favour of a Stability Pact for the Caucasus. In his book *The Choice: Global Domination or Global Leadership*, published in 2004, Brzezinski notes that by the first decade of the 21st century it became clear that a Stability Pact for the Caucasus, like one that was adopted for South Eastern Europe, would be indispensable. So, if there could be a chance for getting support from Russia, taking into account its interest in coordination with the US-led alliance and the expansion of Russia's economic and political ties with Turkey, stabilisation of the Caucasus could – and should – be considered also the NATO's obligation. Already at that time, Brzezinski noted that the process of NATO's expansion into the post-Soviet area would result in a more intensive Turkish-Armenian and Armenian-Azerbaijani dialogue. We can, in fact, see that now.

Turkey's strategic interests emerge, first of all, from the intention to keep its territorial integrity, as well as to bring back Turkey's status as a regional power. Ankara's main problem is Barzani's regime, which is the main source of separatism in Turkey. In Northern Iraq a kind of a prototype Kurdish state exists, about which Kurds of Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria have been dreaming. This reality is understood by the governments of Iran, Iraq and Syria, so they support Turkey on the issue of military solution of the Kurdish problem. That is why Turkey has been attempting to stop the terrorist attacks from the

territory of Iraq. The United States support Ankara, as such support is rooted in the American vision of Iraq and of the entire region.

Turkey's political, economic and religious elites do understand that even if Ankara manages to solve the Kurdish problem and the Northern Cyprus issue, the impediments for Turkey's accession to the EU will not be overcome. France and several other European countries are not going to let Turkey to become a full EU member now or in the future. Many people are afraid of strengthening of the Turkish-Moslem factor in Europe. And by voting in favour of Prime Minister Recep Teyyip Erdogan, Turkish society chose its priorities, i.e. active movement towards Caucasus and Central Asia. That suggests a need for active participation in creation of a regional security system. It would mean stability and cooperation. Essentially, Erdogan's initiative about creation of a Platform for Stability and Cooperation for the Caucasus was a revival of an old, quite forgotten, idea; the only difference is that the format suggested by Turkey excludes Iran at this moment.

Azerbaijani society views Turkish-Armenian negotiations from the point of view of Azerbaijani-Turkish relations, and that is quite natural. However, I would ask everyone to accept the *fait accompli*: strategic partners – Azerbaijan and Turkey – are involved in really informal cooperation. That is proved by several large-scale economic projects that have been successfully realised or are in progress. It is another story that every independent country has its priorities, and such priorities may sometimes match the priorities of another country, and sometimes – may not. Existence of such a factor does not mean that sovereign foreign policy of any of the partners will harm the other one. Turkish government is following the principle set by Kemal Ataturk, who said that peace within Turkey and around it would be needed.

Nowadays, when Yerevan's officials say they are ready to make some steps towards Ankara – to discard the demand about recognition of the 1915 genocide, the territorial demands on Turkey, and so on, Erdogan's initiative brings us to the following conclusions:

- The fundamental approach to reconciliation between Turkey and Armenia has been adopted. Turkey demonstrated to the international community that it

is a predictable and consistent country that can solve its problems without involvement of other countries;

- The improvement of Armenian-Turkish relations lets to continue the development of Erdogan's initiative for establishing a Platform for Stability and Cooperation for the Caucasus. Obviously, Armenia's participation is essential, so that initiative will not remain hanging in the air.

- Some local and international experts are concerned because the alliance proposed by Erdogan does not include the great powers. However, globalisation suggests regional cooperation as well, so, in my opinion, Iran is a country that is missing from the picture (of course, for the perspective, when the issue of its nuclear programme will be solved).

- Another important consequence of the Armenian-Turkish dialogue was that partly because of it Armenia adopted a pragmatic approach and did not recognise independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

- The Nagorno-Karabakh problem is also discussed by Turkey with Armenia in a very constructive mood. Ankara has once again showed that, as a strategic partner of Baku, it does not let down an ally for a short-term gain; unfortunately, there have been a number of such accusations in Turkish and Azerbaijani media.

In this respect, a question may be asked: to what extent are the regional countries prepared to apply political and economic tools in the framework of mutually gainful cooperation? The Kremlin declared that Moscow would not keep any contacts with 'Mikheil Saakashvili's regime', and Georgian government, reasonably, declared that there could not be any cooperation with Moscow until Russian troops leave the Caucasus. Azerbaijan's position is that until the Nagorno-Karabakh problem is solved, Azerbaijan cannot participate in the same platform with Armenia.

But even if we hypothesise that all the mentioned troubles are solved, there is another issue as well. Turkey is a NATO member, while Russia and Armenia participate in the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO). If disagreements between NATO and CSTO remain, it will have negative consequences for the Platform for Stability and Cooperation for the Caucasus. But, taking into account the improvement of Russo-Turkish relations, I can see

the ideal realisation of the Platform idea only if its participants leave the political-military blocs to which they belong. That is, Turkey would have to leave the NATO, and Russia and Armenia would leave the CSTO. If that happened, the argument about Georgia's accession to the NATO would become irrelevant, and Iran would receive guarantees that there would be no NATO military bases in Turkey, Georgia or Azerbaijan and would have to stop its nuclear programme, with the exception of peaceful usage of nuclear energy under observation by the IAEA, USA and EU. That would also be practical for Russia as well, since there would be no more tension on its southern borders and in the Northern Caucasus. If all that is not done, the Turkish initiative will turn into years of talks, meetings, conferences and seminars.

It is vital to establish a joint security system for the Caucasus, in which all regional states would be principal participants. All participants to the platform should remember that its most important characteristic is its realistic approach – towards international situation, towards goals being set, towards assessment of one's capabilities. The platform should also include a mechanism for its practical realisation. Without any doubt, regional countries should be obliged to contribute to the integration process and to support sovereignty and territorial integrity of each country of the Caucasus. The region needs a predictable, pragmatic approach that would be based not on illusions but on real capabilities of all states and on their true national and regional interests. As Baku, Tbilisi and Yerevan are on the crossroads of interests of the West and the East, any choice of priorities in foreign policy has always included, and will be including the danger of unilateral decision. Only by means of consistent and stable multidirectional approach with constant attention to the entire complex of geopolitical, economic and cultural ties and relations with other states and peoples we may see the harmonious integration of our countries into the global community.

What should be the main priorities for realisation of the platform? The events of late 2008 and early 2009 have shown, obviously, that their roots require a dynamic development of regional geopolitics. The idea of a Platform for Stability and Cooperation for the Caucasus, in my opinion, must be based on the following values: mutual reliability, interdependence and mutual profitability.

Overcoming political instability in the Caucasus should be followed by transforming six Caucasian countries – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran, Russia and Turkey – into friendly countries, when each of them would take into account interests of the others and would not build its foreign policy on demonstration of antagonism. Existing disagreement between the Caucasian countries must be solved only by peaceful means, at the negotiation table.

I want to believe that the South Caucasian countries will adhere to the law of progressive development on both national and regional levels. If we take into account that the energy sources, control over their transportation and advantageous geopolitical positions lead to bloody conflicts, it seems practical to aim for full demilitarisation of the ‘wider non-allied Caucasus’ region, as well as the Caspian and Black Sea regions. It would be reasonable if the countries of the Caspian region initiated a full elimination of military naval forces and prohibition of any military actions in the Caspian Sea, including military exercises. In the Caspian Sea should only be border guards of five countries and forces for protection of the oil wells and fishery.

All participants of a security system for the Caucasus should understand that the main element of such a system is its realistic worldview, realistic goals, realistic assessment of own capabilities. What values should be the cornerstone for construction of a security system for the Caucasus? We must recall the eternal values of Nasimi and Rumi, Shota Rustaveli and Chavchavadze, Sayat Nova and Tumanyan. On that basis mutually advantageous economic relations will be restored and conditions for establishing the Platform for Stability and Cooperation for the Caucasus will be created.





# Georgia

**Vakhtang Kolbaya - Georgia Now: The Situation**

**after the Russo-Georgian War**



## **Georgia Now: The Situation after the Russo-Georgian War**

### **Russo-Georgian relations and solution of the Abkhazian and South Ossetian conflicts**

In recent 20 years, Russia's relations with the South Caucasian states have been complicated. The antipathy towards former 'big brother' becomes more and more obvious. Something similar happened in 1917-1920, when the demise of the Russian Empire was marked with difficult relations with the new states in the South Caucasus. Then, the reason was the doctrine of the White movement in the South of Russia, led by General Anton Denikin. As Denikin wrote, "we could not endorse the secession of Russia's remote provinces and, as a result, new states denied us their active support". Consequently, Georgia's authorities viewed Denikin's army as a chauvinistic reactionary force aiming to destroy the achievements of the Russian revolution.

As a matter of fact, Russia had always considered the Caucasus, particularly the South Caucasus, as its sphere of influence and always applied a 'divide and rule' policy. The White movement, even when it was on the brink, kept its expansionist aspirations concerning the Caucasus. That was expressed also in one of Denikin's latest letters to the British, who supported the White movement. Denikin noted that:

1. Russia would rise and sweep away all the secessionist forces, but would give autonomy to the remote provinces;
2. Russia would throw out all intruders from her lands;
3. Russia would re-establish her spheres of influence in the neighbour countries.

In the concluding part of his letter, Denikin stated one of his key ideas: "The struggle for Russia's happiness is not compatible with her dismemberment."<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> **Quoted in Alexander Puchenkov**, "*Как Грузия захватила Сочи: Белый Юг и Закавказье в годы Гражданской войны (1918-1920)*" [How Georgia Seized Sochi: The White South and Transcaucasus during the Civil War (1918-1920)].

In September 1918, at negotiations between representatives of the Volunteers' Army and Georgian delegation, the dispute about control over the Sochi district, then a part of Georgia, was especially hard. Georgia's minister of foreign affairs Gegechkori took a firm position and stated that the Volunteers' Army was a 'private structure' not authorised to represent Russia's interests, therefore the Sochi district would remain with Georgia.

Now the international community faces this new fait accompli: in August 2008, Russia invaded a neighbour state, annexed parts of its territory and installed a partial military occupation. Russia attempts to establish a new geopolitical order. Russia invalidated its numerous declarations about recognition of the territorial integrity of Georgia. This fact resulted in more negative reaction of the international community than the war itself. Russia violated the main principles of international law, the basic values and international stability, thus the civilised world rejected Russia's recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which was only supported by the leaders of HAMAS and Nicaragua.

Everyone knows that great powers have their geopolitical interests in any region. But all states except Russia solve their issues by means of involvement of the regional countries. Russia still cannot abandon the outdated methods of convincing its neighbours; the events of August 2008, followed by recognition of two secessionist republics by Russia even contrary to Russia's own interests, prove this. Now there is no doubt that Russia attempts to return to the past and throws away the democratic attire that it used to wear for the short period of Yeltsin's rule.

Russian invasion of Georgia and Moscow's decision to keep military presence on Georgian territory violated the cease-fire agreement facilitated by France. It challenged Russia's own reasoning about respect to the international law and principle of territorial integrity. So, recognition of independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia is hardly a positive factor for Russia itself. Quite the contrary, it has only complicated the situation. First, Russia set a time bomb under its own territorial integrity. Second, the recognition of independence does not mean anything, at least for South Ossetia. How can an Ossetian enclave live separately in an environment connected to Georgia –

economically, culturally and historically? Such independence is not sustainable (Abkhazia's issue is somehow different, but the problem remains). Third, from now on Georgia's political life will be centred on return of the territories. Every politician will have to prove a determination to reunite the country. Therefore, the staunchest adversaries of Russia will be favoured, and that does not match with interests of both countries.

It has been 15 years since the beginning of conflict in Abkhazia, although it had had its roots much earlier. It seems that during the recent years all possible negotiation frameworks were tried: direct bilateral negotiations, multilateral negotiations with different intermediaries, including involvement of 'friend states' and the UN Secretary General. UN has adopted more than 40 resolutions concerning the Abkhazian issue. Russian peacekeeping forces deployed on the so-called border along the Inguri River were rotated several times, personal representatives of UN Secretary General in the zone of conflict and UN military observers were changed, but nothing that matters for conflict resolution has changed and there has been no progress on the issue of Georgian refugees. The Georgian side invoked territorial integrity as one of the main principles of international law, and insisted that only after return of the refugees it would be possible to discuss any compromise about Abkhazia's possible political status. The Abkhazian side appealed to the nation's right for self-determination. The conflict resolution process was in a quandary.

As a result of a UN Security Council meeting in April 2008, USA, United Kingdom, Germany and France adopted a joint communiqué, in which they expressed their concern because of Russia's actions in unrecognised republics. One of the concerns was Russia's decision to withdraw from the regime of economic sanctions against Abkhazia and South Ossetia and to promote official relations between Russian government structures and separatists. Russian troops were deployed in Abkhazia under the pretext of restoration of the railway track. Russia called that action 'humanitarian aid'. Russia's ministry of foreign affairs ordered its territorial divisions in Krasnodar region and North Ossetia to perform consular duties for 'Russian citizens' living in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and opened diplomatic representations in Sukhumi without Georgia's agreement, i.e. with violation of international law.

Such actions had been preceded by Russia's unprecedented hostility against Georgia, beginning from the embargo on imports of Georgian agricultural products and mineral water, ending with such an inhuman action as repressions against ethnic Georgians living in Russia, including expulsion of Georgian children from schools. The situation had been aggravated by tough statements of Georgia's president Mikheil Saakashvili, who made it clear that Georgia would not continue its previous policy of adapting to its neighbour. Shortly before the war in August, Saakashvili stated that a warning should be sent to Russia that it had been enough and the rules had to change: the Soviet empire did not exist anymore, and Georgia was not a rebellious province trying to secede from the central government – it had to be respected as an independent and free country. Georgia had made several attempts to get rid of Russian peacekeepers. During a meeting of the NATO Council in Brussels in April 2008, the issue of peacekeeping in Abkhazia and South Ossetia was discussed. In turn, Russia increased the number of its troops in contradiction to the mandate of Collective Peacekeeping Forces and other agreements within the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Immediately after declaration of independence of Kosovo, Russia made its next step – lifted the economic sanctions against Abkhazia. On March 6, 2008, Russian ministry of foreign affairs declared that Russia would not adhere to the decision of the heads of CIS states of January 19, 1996, "About the measures for resolution of the conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia" anymore. So, Moscow formally refuted the prohibition on any state-level contacts with Abkhazia in trade, economic, financial, transport and communications, or other spheres (in fact, not all clauses had been respected before as well). By its actions Russia prepared to punish Georgia. Russia's government had promptly granted citizenship to tens of thousands of inhabitants of Abkhazia under a simplified procedure. Georgian delegation to the 11th session of OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Berlin, in July 2002, was the first to voice a protest against Russia's unlawful actions. Delegations of 53 countries, all members except Russia, supported Georgia's position.

It is noticeable that in both Washington and Brussels there are politicians who openly say that Russia's aggressive policy must be tolerated not just because

of Iran, North Korea and Afghanistan but because of Russia's importance as a supplier of energy resources. Thus, in late 2008 and early 2009 the judgement about Russia's actions has changed. As Europe, especially in winter, is practically a hostage of Russian pipelines, several European countries have been lobbying purposefully for resuming the EU-Russia negotiations, and Russia, in turn, lowers the gas price for Europe. The experts suggest, however, that resuming the negotiations about the EU-Russia agreement, paused after the Russo-Georgian war, does not mean that Europe abandons the basic principles of international law – there are just tactical movements of countries of 'Old Europe'.

In Georgia there is an opinion that after formation of Barack Obama's administration, the United States will pay more attention to human rights and development of democratic governance in new democracies, while relying not on one politician or political group but on social demand. So, after an administration change in Washington, the attitude to Georgia may remain the same; we consider that the official visit of US Vice President Joe Biden to Georgia on July 22 and 23, 2009 proved it. It is obvious that new US administration will have to make serious efforts for weakening of Russia's 'concerns'. In an interview to CNN, Russia's Prime Minister Vladimir Putin openly blamed the United States for 'aggression' and pursuing its political interests during the conflict in South Ossetia (as German political scientist Alexander Rahr noted, Putin statement resembled a second Munich speech). After Putin's statement, the conflict went beyond attempts to find who had started the war. In Europe even countries friendly to Russia were alarmed by Russian president's statement about the possibility to deploy ballistic missiles in Kaliningrad region.

Meanwhile, Russia launches another military exercise in the Caucasus, and even in spite of US President's visit to Moscow, Russia's *siloviki* may launch another war in order to dispose of Mikheil Saakashvili. For participation in the exercise, 8500 Russian troops, 200 tanks, 450 AMVs and 250 cannons will be transferred to the Caucasus region. Official Tbilisi claims that some of the forces will join several thousand Russian troops deployed on Georgian territories now controlled by separatists. It may be noted that Barack Obama

visited Moscow between July 6 and 8, 2009, during his worldwide tour that also included participation in a G-8 summit in Italy. The hopes that relations between the USA and Russia could become more positive after Obama's visit have not been met, as immediately afterwards Russian president went to South Ossetia. Of course, it was important that during the meeting in Moscow USA and Russia agreed to continue working towards nuclear disarmament, about the fight against terrorism and about the ways of overcoming the global financial crisis. However, Russia's unscrupulous and dangerous actions in the Caucasus only damage its image and reputation, and block the 'reset' of relations with the United States.

At the same time, the EU believes that Russia wants to improve relations with the United States and will abstain from war. In early December 2008, an international commission under the aegis of EU started the official investigation of the August war. The commission's goal is to find about the causes of the conflict. A report must be submitted to the European Council by July 31, 2009. In June 2009, Georgian president Mikheil Saakashvili gave several interviews to foreign media, stating that not an investigation could claim that he had acted improperly. The president noted that South Ossetia belongs to Georgia, and though some fools might claim that Georgia acted without taking into account the possibility of Russian invasion, the only thing he regretted was that Georgians had not prepared earlier.

Now, when the combat is over (I hope so), is it that important who started the war? We are in this situation now. What next?

Presently, the main problem is political, and the central issue is recognition of Abkhazia's and South Ossetia's independence by Russia. Either in Georgia or in the West there have been many references to the historical analogies, and examples have been quoted to prove that a long process is ahead. If Russia itself does not face the threat of disintegration, it is hard to suppose that it may revoke its recognition of independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Therefore, the mindset of Abkhazians is important. What future does Abkhazia have? The events of August also showed that Georgia's ambitions for joining the European family could have been quashed; the war did not solve the issue of territorial integrity of Georgia but, very probably, it may have taken



Abkhazia from the Abkhazians: recognition of independence by Russia increased the probability of Abkhazia's merger with the Russian Federation. Because of a number of objective reasons such a development would mean suicide for the statehood of Abkhazia. Existence of the Abkhazians as an ethnic group may be threatened as well.

Georgia needs to produce ideas for conflict resolution with respect to dignity or, more precisely, aspirations of all sides. It should be admitted that, unfortunately, a large part of our society has not achieved a new understanding of the causes and consequences of conflict in Abkhazia, and does not look for new approaches to resolution. Presently, few people ask: why during the post-war period peacemaking initiatives did not result in any significant progress? Quite the contrary, the conflicting sides have moved away from each other more than immediately after the war. It may have happened because the goal of the Georgian society concerning resolution of the conflict in Abkhazia is not based on productive concepts; it aims to restore territorial integrity by means of pressure (economic, ideological, political, etc.) on the Abkhazians. Hatred and distrust reign on both sides, although there was a little hope to find other solutions. Such hope will not return for many years. Now it is being admitted, even if by few people, that the main issue is reconciliation between Georgian and Abkhaz peoples, and that should be a solution of the problems dividing us. Looking for a solution of that issue should define the strategy and tactics of our peacemaking efforts.

While all kinds of discussion and arguing go on, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon ordered to terminate the activities of UN mission in Georgia from June 16, 2009 (the mission involved 483 persons, of those 136 military observers, 20 UN policemen, 115 international and 210 local employees). The mandate of UN observers in Georgia expired on June 15, and prolongation was not possible: Russian delegation vetoed the Security Council resolution concerning extension of the UN mandate. The draft resolution proposed by Germany, United Kingdom, France, Croatia, Austria, Turkey and USA mentioned the territorial integrity of Georgia. That was unacceptable for Russia after its recognition of independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in

August 2008. UN Secretary General could just express his hope that in absence of the UN mission peace and stability in the region would be kept.

## **Georgian-Armenian and Georgian-Azerbaijani relations**

Georgian-Armenian relations have been so interweaved that our peoples, literally, feel each other's breath. So, it is not surprising that the August war gave a new momentum to the old geopolitical interests and showed how fragile regional security is. Georgian society waited for the reaction of official Yerevan to Russia's recognition of independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia with special interest, remembering about Armenia's strategic partnership with Russia and Kremlin's pressure on Yerevan. It may be noted that Armenian president Serzh Sargsyan's statement that despite of serious disagreements with Georgia, Armenia managed to avoid any action that might be considered a hostile act, was accepted pragmatically in Georgia. Some Georgian observers even voiced an opinion that Yerevan would be going to change its foreign policy orientation – from East to West – and should be supported. At the same time, any occasion was used to criticise the Kremlin for new provocations in Samtskhe-Javakheti region, with the aim of destabilising that region inhabited by ethnic Armenians.

It should be noted that the Samtskhe-Javakheti issue, together with speculations about possible federalisation of Georgia, became one of favourite topics of Russian media. Recently one of Russian papers noted that “in Javakheti and Borchaly (Georgian region inhabited by ethnic Azerbaijanis) nothing is easy. Javakheti is one of the most backward regions not only in Georgia but in entire region. In Borchaly, influential smuggler gangs conflict with Georgian special police units . . . Ajaria, already morally and psychologically suppressed after return under Georgian control, will next summer experience an economic decline as well. Citizens of Armenia who were taking their rest at the seaside escaped from there in August”. Authors of such publications understand that Javakheti and Borchaly are connected to each other. An outbreak in one of those regions would certainly provoke serious incidents in the other, with unavoidable influence on Armenia and Azerbaijan. That is why stability and security in those Georgian regions is now

supported by Yerevan and Baku. It is a serious challenge for Georgia's neighbours, themselves being involved in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Obviously, the problems of regional stability that begin in Georgia need a comprehensive solution.

That issue was not forgotten also during the confrontation between Georgian authorities and opposition in spring 2009. For instance, chairman of Javakhk Union (an ethnic Armenian organisation) Shirak Torosyan said that the congress of Javakhk Union adopted a resolution, according to which the administrative territorial division of Georgia was considered federal, and Armenian-populated districts were included in one region. Concerning the political confrontation in Georgia, Torosyan underlined that although the Armenian population was disappointed by the authorities it did not expect any improvement from the opposition as well. The Samtskhe-Javakheti issue is critical in Armenia, too. An expert of Ararat Centre of Strategic Research Armen Harutyunyan noted: "Let me remind that the essence of 'Javakhk issue' is that the authorities of independent Georgia have been consistently applying a policy aimed to gradual expulsion of Armenians from Javakhk. To achieve that, Armenian population is being discriminated in different aspects of social life. Because of that policy and difficult socioeconomic situation, Armenian population emigrates, and if the trend continues, the region may share the fate of Nakhijevan".

In this situation, I consider the decision of Georgian government to build a hydroelectric power plant in Samtskhe-Javakheti very positive. The construction of plant capable to produce 78 MWt of electricity should begin in summer 2009; it will be located in Hertvis village (Aspindza district), on River Parvana. Construction works by the Turkish company Georgian Urban Energy will last for four years, 100 million dollars will be invested. The construction works will let to create about 2000 jobs, which is very important for Akhaltsikhe, Aspindza and Ninotsminda, where unemployment level is very high. We think that Georgian-Armenian friendship may be strengthened by integration of Georgia's Armenian community into political and social life. To overcome the language difficulties in regions populated by minorities, it is needed to launch a programme for intensive study of Georgian language.

Moving closer to each other may also be stimulated by more intensive economic, commercial and financial cooperation, as well as by a policy of mutual investments. Armenia has large supplies of basalt, as well as rose-coloured tuff popular among Georgian builders. Fruits, meat products, cheese and fish imported from Armenia are well-reputed in Georgia because of their quality and become more and more popular. Georgia, in turn, exports citrus fruits and sunflower. Armenia may also become a market for Georgian wine, mineral water, and so on. Recently, on June 7, 2009, Armenia's minister of foreign affairs Eduard Nalbandyan visited Tbilisi and participated in opening ceremony of a monument to an extraordinary Armenian poet and musician Sayat-Nova, created by sculptor Giorgi Japaridze. Sayat-Nova was the artistic name of Harutyun Sayadyan (1712-1795), who was born in Tbilisi and was a much respected master of lyrical poetry, known to entire Caucasus region.

On June 24, 2009, President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili was in Armenia with an official visit. Regional security and economic issues were discussed, as well as the issue of communication routes via Georgia, including the possibility of opening of Verkhniy Lars checkpoint on Russo-Georgian border. Georgian president stated that the border crossing procedure between Armenia and Georgia should be simplified to stimulate development of tourism. Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan said that mutual respect and cooperation of neighbour states may become a basis for regional security, and that Armenia was interested in development of bilateral relations with Georgia, particularly in culture, sport and education. For that matter, it has been planned to organise annual Armenian-Georgian sport contests and school Olympics, the first of which could take place already in autumn 2009.

It is important to note the protests that Georgian president faced in Yerevan. Organisers of that action handed him a memorandum about the need to recognise Armenian as an official language in Samtskhe-Javakheti, demand for an amendment to the Constitution of Georgia that would provide for regional autonomy, opening of a joint Armenian-Georgian university and defining the legal status of Armenian Church in Georgia. After that action, Armenian president emphasised that large Armenian community in Georgia is a link between two countries, and that Armenian side welcomes the actions of

Georgian authorities for improvement of social conditions of the Armenian population of Samtskhe-Javakheti.

It should be noted that in Azerbaijan the developments in Georgia are followed as well, and that is quite natural, as natural is that Armenian-Georgian relations are monitored. Because of that, the reports of some Russian and Armenian media that, allegedly, Azerbaijan grants citizenship and passports to ethnic Azerbaijanis living in Georgia were met with fury. The sources of that information speculated about the intention behind Azerbaijan's actions: "Ankara and Baku have an intention to apply more pressure on Georgia in order to promote 'federalisation' of the country. Turkey and Azerbaijan intend to demand restoration of real autonomy for Ajaria, granting of a special status to the Azerbaijani minority in Kvemo-Kartly (Borchaly), and repatriation of the Meskhetian Turks to Georgia. Before the war in South Ossetia, Ankara and Baku considered Mikheil Saakashvili's government the only guarantor of reliability of such communications, crucially important for either Turkey or Azerbaijan, as Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan and Baku-Supsa pipelines, and the planned railway link Baku-Tbilisi-Kars. Now Turks and Azerbaijanis understood that they need to control Tbilisi. Autonomies and diaspora communities loyal to Turkey and Azerbaijan will become leverages for such control. There will be no another war but national autonomies may take the control over pipelines in Georgia."

Despite the mentioned allegations, in all surveys within expert community and among citizens of Georgia, Azerbaijan is mentioned first of friendly states. It is a fact that there are no serious problems in relations between Georgia and Azerbaijan; moreover, Azerbaijan is a strategic partner for Georgia. There are old problems in both countries, in the regions with Azerbaijani and Georgian minority. Such long-term problems always exist where there are different religious or cultural values. Main characteristic in relations between civilised peoples is not total elimination of such problems but finding appropriate solutions. There is a perspective for achieving positive solution, and both sides want to reach it.

Quite often, neighbouring states have difficulties in finding a common ground. In this respect, Georgia is lucky. Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan have got to be together, as it matches the interests of all three countries. We have got a long

history of relations and huge experience of communication. The Armenian community in Georgia is influential, and there is also a large number of Azerbaijanis in our country, and in Azerbaijan there is a Georgian community. Many can be done to expand the relations between our three countries.

## **Oil and natural gas projects in the South Caucasus region**

Oil and natural gas remain an important element of politics, leverage for solution of some problems. Thus, significant players having such leverage use it constantly. The actions of Kremlin, which in the recent three years resulted in interruption of gas supplies to Europe via Ukraine and Belarus, stimulated many European leaders to make promises about reduction of the dependence on Russian gas supply. Because of that, putting new wells into operation and construction of a new pipeline from the Central Asia (circumventing Russia) is a priority for entire Europe. Participants of the Energy Summit in Baku in November 2008 – Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Estonia, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, USA and the European Commission – declared their approval to the projects aiming to diversification of oil and gas supplies and means of transportation, which help to connect the huge supplies available in the Caspian region with European and world markets, contribute significantly to further regional cooperation, provide better conditions for competition and for fulfilment of mutual interests of countries that produce, transport and consume energy resources. A declaration about construction project was also signed by representatives of Georgia, Azerbaijan, Turkey and Egypt. At the EU summit in Prague in May 2009, EU and Turkey reached an agreement about their intention to build a segment of Nabucco pipeline on Turkish territory. And on July 13, 2009, countries participating to Nabucco project signed an intergovernmental agreement in Ankara. That document was signed by heads of governments of Turkey, Austria and Hungary and by ministers of energy of Bulgaria and Romania; the ceremony was attended by ministers from 20 countries, US special envoy on energy issues in Eurasia Richard Morningstar, European Commissioner for energy Andris Piebalgs; Azerbaijan was represented by minister of industry and energy Natiq Aliyev. The intergovernmental agreement on Nabucco project implies supplying natural gas from the Caspian Sea region to

Europe, while Russian territory will be circumvented. Construction works should begin in 2011, and beginning of transportation of gas is planned for 2014. The maximum capacity of pipeline will be 31 billion cubic metres per year. Signing of the intergovernmental agreement will be followed by the 'open season' process, when gas producing countries will propose what amounts of gas they suggest to supply so the capacity may be used in full. It is noticeable that even before signing of the agreement in Ankara Turkmenistan declared its intention to participate, and after signing of the agreement Serbia, Russia's ally, expressed its wish to participate as well.

### **The political situation in Georgia**

Beginning from April 9, 2009, Georgian opposition organised mass protests, demanding President Saakashvili to resign. The president refuses such demands and states that his departure is exactly what Russians want. The opposition parties demand that Saakashvili resigns and extraordinary elections are organised, but they have not reached any success. Saakashvili, who came to power after the Rose Revolution in 2003, stayed in place. Former minister of foreign affairs Salome Zurabishvili admits that peaceful protests have no more potential to change the situation. It should however be noted that on the first days of mass protests, between 45,000 and 70,000 people gathered on Rustaveli Avenue. The police responded in rather harsh manner. For instance, Victor Dolidze, Georgia's former envoy to OSCE, defined the police actions as 'political terrorism'. Dolidze moved to the opposition, as did Nino Burjanadze, Salome Zurabishvili, former Prime Minister Zurab Nougaideli and Georgia's former representative to the UN Irakli Alasania. Dolidze notes that the war and 270,000 refugees, with nobody willing to take responsibility, paralyse the country.

In response to his opponents, Georgian president says that Georgian system of governance is the most democratic in the region. President claims that difficult reforms helped to end corruption, and that mafia bosses have been imprisoned or exiled to Russia. He also states that relations with Russia are the only problematic issue in international policy. Concerning domestic policy, the president is more worried about the opposition in parliament than the street protests. He stated that he would not give pleasure to Russia by his departure:

he has 60% approval rate and international support, while some European governments have only 20% approval rate, so there is no need for extraordinary elections. One of president's opponents, Levan Gachechiladze, says sarcastically that Saakashvili lives in another world: "There are two Georgias – one in his head, another where real people live". However, Georgian opposition leaders had only one demand since the beginning – resignation of President Saakashvili – and denied all offers to discuss anything else. Now the opposition protests go on but the 'regime' does not show any signs of 'going apart'; it seems that opposition leaders do not know what to do now, because they cannot protest ad infinitum or until the presidential elections in 2013, and there is no another way to change the government. Seemingly, the opposition decided to take a time out, regroup and adopt a new tactic for a new attack in autumn 2009.

In conclusion, I would note that some observers have an opinion that Moscow's real goal was to punish Georgia for aspirations to join the NATO, and to take revenge from the West for Kosovo's secession from Serbia that was not approved by Russia. It seems that Russia's aggression against Georgia threatened the West's priorities in such regions as South Caucasus and Central Asia – democratisation and securing alternative sources of energy and ways of transportation. Indeed, Russia's actions resulted in damage to the energy infrastructure of the region and the means of transportation. Because of Russo-Georgian relations, the Euro-Atlantic interests in the South Caucasus have also been threatened, so the West should interfere in the process to prevent further escalation of the crisis.



## About the authors

**Haykaz Hovhannisyan** is Professor of the Yerevan State University. Author of monographs and more than 50 papers on recent Armenian history and Russo-Armenian relations.

**Mikayel Zolyan** holds a Master's degree from the Central European University (Budapest) and PhD in History. His main scientific interests include studies of nationalism, ethnicity and ethno-political conflicts, with particular respect to correlation between historical memory and national identity.

**David Petrosyan** has been a political analyst of Noyan Tapan information agency since 1991. Author of more than 1000 papers, articles, reports, commentaries, reviews and policy briefs published in Armenia, France, Germany, United Kingdom, USA and C.I.S. countries. Co-author of the book 'Armenia, Europe, Asia: Corridors and Crossroads' (Yerevan, 2001) and national editor of 'Journalists at War in Karabakh' (Moscow, 2002). Received the main prize of the national contest in 2001 in the nomination Political Analysis and Commentary for the paper titled Armenians and Chechens: The Past and Present. His spheres of interest are Armenia's foreign policy, the unrecognised states, ethno-religious issues, elections and formation of civil society in Armenia, etc.

**Sevil Huseynova** is a lawyer and sociologist, currently working on her dissertation at the Institute of Philosophy, Sociology and Law of Azerbaijan's National Academy of Sciences. She is the consultant of Heinrich Boell Foundation in Azerbaijan and a fellow of independent research group Novator. Her scientific interests include urban sociology, the phenomena of local and ethnic identities and sociology of everyday customary events.

**Sergey Rumyantsev** holds a PhD in Sociology. He works at the Institute of Philosophy, Sociology and Law of Azerbaijan's National Academy of Sciences. Dr. Rumyantsev is the head of independent research group Novator. His scientific interests include nationalism, the phenomenon of ethnicity-based borders, migration processes and ethnic diasporas.

**Rauf Rajabov** is a political scientist, editor-in-chief of information and analysis agency 3rd View. Ambassador for Peace. Author of more than 400 analytical papers on geopolitics, regional security, energy security, European integration and education.

**Tamara Sikharulidze** holds a PhD in History. She is professor of Caucasus Studies. Author of the monograph on History of Georgian-Adigean Relations. Co-author of Essays on History of Peoples of Caucasian Mountains. Author of more than 30 scientific publications.

**Liana Davlianidze** holds a PhD in History. She is professor of Armenian Studies with expertise in ancient Armenian language. Author of three monographs: Mkhitar Gosh's Cronicles of Caucasian Albania, Movses Kalankatuatsi's History of the Land of Albanians, and Mkhitar Ayrivanetsi's Chronographic History (all translated from Armenian, with preface, commentary and index). Author of more than 50 scientific publications. She used to teach at the Chair of Georgian History of the Tbilisi Technical University.

**Vakhtang Kolbaya** is head of the Analytical Centre on Turkish-Georgian relations of the South Caucasus Institute for Regional Security. Member of the Caucasus Dialogue Council, former Vice Chairman of Georgian Parliament (1995-2004). Author of books and other publications on Georgian-Abkhazian conflict, participant of joint Georgian-Abkhazian projects.

**Stepan Grigoryan** is a political scientist, chairman of the board of the Analytical Centre on Globalisation and Regional Cooperation. Holds a PhD in Physics and Mathematics. He was a member of the Armenian Parliament in 1990-1995. Has a diplomatic rank of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary. Author of more than 500 papers, reports, commentaries, reviews and policy briefs on conflict management, regional security, cooperation and reconciliation in the South Caucasus, globalisation, civil society development in Armenia, etc.

# Positive Examples of Coexistence from the History of Peoples and States of the South Caucasus



«ANTARES» Publishing House  
Yerevan–0009, Mashtots ave. 50a/1  
Tel.՝ +(374 10) 58 10 59, 56 15 26  
Tel./Fax՝ +(374 10) 58 76 69  
**antares@antares.am**  
**www.antares.am**