

POLITICAL TRANSITION AND ETHNIC
REVIVAL IN ARMENIA AND AZERBAIJAN:
THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT
(1987-1994)

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This article aims to examine how the Armenian and Azerbaijani communities came into violent conflict as the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) went into terminal decline from the mid-1980s.

The article is divided into two sections. Section I analyses ethnic mobilization and the emergence of the Karabakh nationalist movement in Soviet Armenia and among the Armenian majority in the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO) in Soviet Azerbaijan from 1987 to 1991. The impact of the democratization policies of Mikhail Gorbachev, the leader of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), on the 'ethnic revival' in Nagorno-Karabakh, Moscow's management of the Karabakh conflict, the organization of the Azerbaijani nationalist movement, and the escalation of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict from 1989 to 1991 are also discussed in this section.

Section II examines the open warfare and escalation of hostilities in Nagorno-Karabakh. It analyses key military and diplomatic developments from 1991 to 1994 and offers a historical examination of how various peace initiatives were introduced as the conflict threatened regional and international peace. This section also discusses the intentions of the neighboring states of Turkey, Iran and the newly emergent Russian Federation (as the main successor state of the former USSR). All three powers tried to intervene in the Transcaucasian region to prevent the escalation of the fighting that threatened their domestic stability. Moreover, Section II introduces the early mediatory efforts of the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and the United Nations (UN) Security Council resolutions trying to halt military escalation and bring the warring parties to the negotiation table. The article ends with the analysis of the Russian brokered cease-fire in May 1994, which holds to the time of writing.

**SECTION I:
ETHNIC MOBILIZATION AND
THE EMERGENCE OF THE KARABAKH MOVEMENT
(1987-1991)**

POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION AND ETHNIC REVIVAL

The Nagorno-Karabakh issue, i.e. the desire of the oblast's Armenian majority to be part of Soviet Armenia, had reappeared almost every time when there was a political change in Moscow. After the end of Leonid Brezhnev's 'era of stagnation' (1964-1982) and the ascendancy of Gorbachev in 1985, Armenian activists saw new opportunities to press for the unification of Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia.¹ Though more sympathetic towards improving the situation of the non-Russian nationalities within the Soviet Union,² Gorbachev repeated the mistake of his immediate predecessors by considering that "the nationalities question inherited from the past has been successfully solved in the USSR."³

Gorbachev introduced the policies of *perestroika* (economic restructuring) and *glasnost* (openness), thereby preparing space for long-latent cultural, territorial and even secessionist demands. Following the general trend of Soviet nationalities, the Karabakh Armenians organized themselves to pursue cultural freedom and attain political independence from the dominant titular nationality in Soviet Azerbaijan.⁴ In the Transcaucasus and elsewhere, Gorbachev's reformist policies were transformed into the ethnic politics of "national self-determination and democratization."⁵ This provided opportunities for nationalist mobilization amongst the already antagonistic Armenian and Azerbaijani communities. This antagonism had first emerged during inter-ethnic clashes at the time of the First Russian Revolution of 1905-07 and had continued during the Soviet period. Armenian nationalists claimed the territories of Nagorno-Karabakh and the Nakhichevan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic within the boundaries of Soviet Azerbaijan. In return, the Azerbaijanis laid claim to the territory of Zangezur in Soviet Armenia.

At the early stages of the evolution of the Karabakh conflict, the gradual ethnic mobilization of the Armenians could be perceived in the context of Gorbachev's reformist policies and the political rehabilitation of previous Armenian ethno-cultural demands. Agitation for the reconsideration of the status of Nagorno-Karabakh persisted both in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh throughout 1987. In Soviet Armenia nationalist intellectuals, scientists, high-ranking army officers and others signed petitions or sent thousands of individual letters to Moscow and the Communist leadership in

the republic. For example, Suren Aivazian, an Armenian Communist Party member, addressed a letter to Gorbachev on 5 March, 1987 calling for the attachment of Karabakh and Nakhichevan to Armenia.⁶

In Nagorno-Karabakh a similar campaign was underway at the grass-roots level. Nationalist intellectuals wrote petitions and gathered signatures. Workers' collectives passed resolutions calling for unification with Armenia. Leaflets were distributed to inform the public about the progress in the negotiations that the Nagorno-Karabakh delegations were conducting in Moscow.⁷ The pace of agitation quickened after forty deputies of the NKAO soviet (the oblast's legislature) added their signatures in 1987 to a petition that had already been signed by 80,000 people, including 31,000 from Nagorno-Karabakh. The deputies were backing efforts to make the oblast soviet convene for a special session on the Karabakh question.⁸

The above-mentioned tactics played a decisive role in the nationalist mobilization of the Karabakh Armenians. Armenian nationalists in Armenia and in Nagorno-Karabakh initially called for a peaceful unification process with Armenia, and this encouraged hundreds and, after a few weeks, thousands of people to support them.

In September 1987 Zori Balayan, the Karabakh-born Armenia correspondent of the prestigious *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, the official mouthpiece of the Soviet Writers' Union, also raised the question of Karabakh, asking: "Must we remain silent?"⁹ Furthermore, in November 1987, Abel Aghanbegian, the personal economic advisor to Gorbachev, during a visit to Paris, declared:

I would like to hear that Karabakh has been returned to Armenia. As an economist, I think there are greater links with Armenia than with Azerbaijan. I have made a proposal along these lines, and I hope that the problems will be resolved in the context of Perestroika and democracy.¹⁰

Statements in support of *perestroika* made by distinguished Armenian personalities other than those mentioned above led Armenian activists to reason that Gorbachev was sympathetic to their demands,¹¹ especially at a time when Haidar Aliiev, the only Azerbaijani member of the CPSU Politburo, was removed from office in 1987. Aliiev had been a strong opponent to Armenian territorial claims in Azerbaijan, and Armenians hence interpreted his removal as a signal that the Karabakh dispute could now be resolved in their favor.¹²

From November 1987 to February 1988 three separate Armenian delegations from Nagorno-Karabakh visited Moscow lobbying for the transfer of the oblast from Azerbaijan to Armenia. They based their arguments on 'linguistic self-determination,' which meant that if 'Nakhichevan was administered by Azerbaijan, then Karabakh should be ruled from Erevan.'¹³ These delegations were given scant attention by the Soviet leadership. However, when a fourth delegation visited Moscow in January 1988, it managed to meet with Petr Demichev, a candidate-member of the Politburo, and returned to Karabakh with relative optimism.¹⁴

Hence, it can be assumed that the mobilization for the reconsideration of the Nagorno-Karabakh question had, in addition to its primordial character, some instrumental connotations as well. According to the instrumentalist approach of ethnic mobilization, utilitarian logic can be traced to group behavior. Hence, ethnic identification can be utilized as a basis of group political mobilization or of claims for certain resources (such as territory) if such identification brings strategic advantages.¹⁵ The primordial character of the movement to unify Karabakh with Armenia was evident in the shared belief among the Armenians in both Karabakh and Soviet Armenia that they both belonged to the same nation and, hence, the conviction that joining Karabakh and Soviet Armenia under a single government was natural. The instrumental character of the movement was mostly due to the changing political circumstances in the USSR. Armenians in both Karabakh and Soviet Armenia revealed attachments to their ethnic identity and determined their actions in accordance with the new circumstances to get socio-political and economic advantages. However, the instrumental nature of the group behavior of the Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia relied much on mutual trust, because without a unified position it would be difficult for them to achieve social and political goals. True, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict had been there since 1923, when NKAO's autonomous status within Soviet Azerbaijan had been formalized, and the concept of the 'primordial homeland' was in the Armenian nationalist imagination. The social change introduced by Gorbachev, however, became 'the motor' and provided the space that drove the 'logic of collective identification' of the Armenians, who raised their cultural and territorial demands through the petitions addressed to Moscow.

The Diaspora Armenians were also being mobilized to support Karabakh's unification campaign with Soviet Armenia. The Armenian branch of the Soviet secret police, the KGB, was closely monitoring not only the local unification campaign but also what was being planned abroad. In a secret report dated 26 January, 1988 Marius A. Yuzbashian, the chief of

the Armenian KGB, informed the Central Committee of the Armenian Communist Party that an organization called Council of Armenian Intellectuals had been established in Los Angeles on 25 November, 1987. It planned to support the re-unification of Karabakh and Nakhichevan with Soviet Armenia.¹⁶ The Armenian KGB would later try to at least paralyze and disperse the local peaceful demonstrations in order to prevent the emergence of a strong and united Armenian nationalist movement opposed to Communism.

The first Azerbaijani response to Armenian cultural and political demands which was brought to Gorbachev's attention came from the intelligentsia. In response to Aghanbegian's Paris speech, the poet Bahtiyar Vahabzade and the historian Suleiman Aliyarov published an "Open Letter" in the periodical of the Writer's Union of Azerbaijan, refuting Armenian claims to Karabakh. They claimed that Karabakh had been "historic Azerbaijani territory," and its people were the "ancestors of Azerbaijani Turks." Vahabzade and Aliyarov criticized Armenian attempts to alter the border arrangement of 1923 because that could mean creating a republic with a "pure national composition," an idea that contradicts, they argued, socialist principles.¹⁷ Karabakh Armenians were also criticized for their perception of rule by some other nationality as "oppression."¹⁸ Vahabzade and Aliyarov concluded their "Open Letter" stating:

Are the Armenians really scattered according to our desires? Let exalted God give them strength and skill that they can go and unite themselves at their destination. But let them not covet that which others have, not strive to deprive us of what we have, and not be notorious by defaming our name.¹⁹

In 1987 the various attempts to openly mobilize the population of Armenia to support the Karabakh Armenians were confined to a handful of intellectuals with nationalistic inclinations. Rallies concentrating on the environmental issue in Soviet Armenia were still deemed more significant. The Armenian environmental movement that emerged in the mid-1980s initially foreshadowed the political activism of the Karabakh movement. In reality, however, many of the activists were often the same; the movement was environmental in form but national in content. By raising the consequences of industrial pollution, the activists criticized government policy. In September and October 1987 they organized demonstrations in Yerevan and Kirovakan against nuclear pollution and chemical plants. For example, in an environmental rally the demonstrators raised overhead

banners declaring: "We want healthy children!" and "Shut down Nairit [a chemical plant in Yerevan – O.G.] so the Armenian people will survive!" Moreover, leaflets were distributed during one of those rallies inviting the demonstrators for a gathering to discuss the Karabakh question near the Armenian Communist Party headquarters.²⁰ However, the local Communist authorities were initially successful in their attempts to prohibit public gatherings. They feared that environmental rallies could be easily transformed into political ones.²¹

At this stage of the Armenian environmental movement, the nationalist intellectuals interested in the Nagorno-Karabakh problem often restricted their public demands to issues related to the 'cultural self determination' of Karabakh Armenians. The ultimate aim of these intellectuals was, however, the readjustment of borders and the annexation of Karabakh to Soviet Armenia, through peaceful means if possible. Hence, it can be argued that the environmental movement also aimed to achieve Karabakh's secession and independence from Azerbaijan. Initially, the mobilization campaign of the nationalist activists did not amount to a political opposition directed against the Communist authorities in Armenia, despite the fact that the Communists did not fraternize with the nationalists in support of their demands. However, when the environmentalist movement gradually intensified and took an overtly nationalist character, the same intellectuals now organized themselves into a political opposition against the ruling Communist Party.

The local Communist authorities suppressed various attempts by Armenian nationalists to create public organizations that intended to organize the people and formulate public opinion supporting Karabakh's unification with Armenia. The government also considered the already existing Soviet-era organizations, such as the Writer's Union, as well as the Yerevan State University, "dangerous" public institutions, because they had become fora for free discussion. These bodies invited political meetings in which the Karabakh question became the common theme of discussion among nationalist activists, intellectuals, university professors, scientists and ordinary people.²²

The vision used for national mobilization in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh gradually became the attainment of unification with Armenia. The emotional ties and solidarity between the Karabakh Armenians and Soviet Armenia played a decisive role in quickening the mobilization campaign led by the intellectuals. According to the ethno-national theory of nationalism, "a disaffected intelligentsia has been at the center of any nationalist movement"; it intends to awaken the ethnic consciousness of the members

of the nation. The mobilization of the nation by the intellectuals is apparently based on ancestral affiliations, emotions, and cultural background in order to grant the nationalist movement political legitimacy and define the members of the nation as a cultural community.²³ Indeed, the Armenian intelligentsia was at the center of the nationalist movement. For them, the Armenian cultural community had been separated since the 1920s, and what was needed now was a redefinition of the 'vernacular communal nation' in contrast to bureaucratic incorporation into Soviet Azerbaijan.²⁴ Gorbachev's invitation to criticize the Soviet system through his policy of *glasnost* marked the occasion for the Armenian intelligentsia to lead the movement of ethnic consciousness to reunite the nation. This has usually been the aim of the 'ethnic revival' of nations, which is bound up with the nationalist ideology that tries to achieve self-consciousness, unity and autonomy.²⁵ In 1987 Armenian nationalists adopted a peaceful strategy (albeit with an unclear political program) to accomplish the goal of unification of Karabakh with Armenia. Linguistic and cultural demands were temporarily substituted political demands at this stage as long as the local Communist authorities did not permit political acts.

The violent phase of the Karabakh dispute erupted in isolated and sporadic interethnic clashes in the autumn of 1987. The village of Chardakhlu, outside the borders of NKAO, was the first to experience such violence with far-reaching repercussions. It was followed by demonstrations, first in Karabakh and, then, in Armenia led by well-known nationalist intellectuals.²⁶ By the end of 1987, the population of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh were mobilizing around the political agenda of unifying Karabakh with Armenia.

The year 1988 was decisive in forging the future course of Armenian-Azerbaijani relations. At the beginning of February, the Communist Party leadership in Karabakh convened in order to discuss how it could limit future disturbances and keep control of the streets. Moreover, the Communist authorities in Baku tried to reassert party discipline by sending V. N. Konovalov, the Second Secretary of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan, to meet the demonstrators in Karabakh and explain to them Baku's position. However, on 12 February the demonstrators defied Konovalov at an organized meeting in Stepanakert, the administrative capital of Nagorno-Karabakh. Demonstrations, demanding from Baku an official declaration about its Karabakh policy, continued in Stepanakert's Lenin Square.²⁷ On 14 February Karabakh's Communist Party First Secretary, Boris Kevorkov, a protégé of the Baku leadership disliked by local nationalists, attempted but failed to break up the rallies in the Lenin

Square. Crowds gathering in front of the local Communist Party headquarters in the five districts of Karabakh urged the executive committees of the respective district councils to pass resolutions for the unification of Karabakh with Armenia. By 16 February the executive committees in four of these five districts had endorsed resolutions to that effect and had appealed to the Communist leadership in Stepanakert to resolve their demand favorably. These political developments occurring in Nagorno-Karabakh were unprecedented; "never before had public pressure overridden Communist Party discipline."²⁸

Yuzbashian submitted a secret report to the Central Committee of the Armenian Communist Party to the effect that the Karabakh demonstrations were planned and organized by the nationalist leader Igor Muradian, an economist, and his adherents in Armenia. Muradian thought that the most effective way to urge Moscow to unify Karabakh with Armenia would be the passing of a resolution in support of unification by the oblast committee of the Communist Party in Karabakh. What caused Muradian to favor and insist on this option were the unsatisfactory results of the Karabakh delegations which had visited Moscow from 8 to 17 February.²⁹ Muradian was born in Baku and lived there for twenty-six years before establishing himself in Armenia. According to Mark Malkasian, "Muradian became the point man of the movement, shuttling between Stepanakert and Yerevan, cultivating support among well-placed Armenians in Moscow, and arranging meetings with Soviet officials." He even conducted meetings with Yuzbashian. His limited knowledge of Armenian did not prevent him from becoming a popular nationalist leader.³⁰

The names of Muradian's associates – Manvel Sargsian, Genadii Yesayan, Slava Sargsian and Vatche Sarukhanian – were mentioned in a similar Armenian KGB report dated 9 February and addressed to the Central Committee of the Armenian Communist Party. This leadership had prepared an appeal to be distributed in Armenia and Karabakh, urging the Karabakh Armenians not to commit "provocative acts" such as shouting anti-Azerbaijani slogans that could fuel Azerbaijani nationalists. The appeal emphasized that "the Armenian demonstrations must be peaceful and moral, without threatening the neighborly relations between the Armenians and the Azerbaijanis." It also urged the Karabakh Armenians to organize new demonstrations and establish a network of secret committees in the villages to mobilize additional people. The village committees would remain in touch with the coordination centers in Stepanakert.³¹

In Karabakh, Kevorkov's publicized statement "that 100,000 Azeri fanatics" could enter the oblast in response to the Armenian demonstrations

did not intimidate the local Armenians. Moreover, Kevorkov's "decision to dispatch local Party bureaucrats to outlying towns and villages to convince Karabakh Armenians to condemn the demonstrations" did not succeed in stopping the movement. Even Azerbaijani policemen sent from Baku were unable to restore discipline. The media in Baku "tried to deflate Armenian hopes announcing that the Central Committee [in Moscow] would not take up the case of Mountainous Karabakh," because it had already issued an anti-unification stance on 18 February. Nevertheless, the Karabakh Armenians remained hopeful that Gorbachev would meet his pledge and hold a CPSU Central Committee plenary session to discuss the nationalities problem in the Soviet Union.³²

The Armenian demonstrations and petitions in Karabakh ultimately provoked the Azerbaijanis, who considered them hostile acts threatening Azerbaijan's territorial integrity. The Azerbaijanis demonstrated too, although in much smaller numbers, in response to the Armenian mass rallies. Emotions were running high on both sides, especially in the absence of a firm Soviet central government decision.³³

The turning point in the dynamics of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict occurred on 20 February, 1988 when a special session of the NKAO soviet adopted by a vote of 110 to 17 (with 13 abstentions) a resolution requesting the union of Karabakh with Soviet Armenia.³⁴ Kyamuran Bagirov, the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Azerbaijani Communist Party, and Kevorkov were unable to prevent a vote on the resolution. The NKAO soviet justified its action on the grounds that its constitutional right to self-determination was within the limits set by the Soviet Constitution.³⁵

The passing of this resolution was followed by massive demonstrations in Yerevan, which brought together, according to some estimates, up to one million people, who were mobilized to support the unification campaign.³⁶ Similar demonstrations were organized in other Armenian towns and even in Moscow. "One nation-one republic", "No fraternity without justice", "Unification" and "Struggle, struggle to the end" became the slogans of the day.³⁷

The demonstrations that were taking place within the framework of *glasnost* confirmed that national consciousness had been an ineradicable feature of Soviet society. Gorbachev's policy of *perestroika* had largely undermined the socialist goals of national integration and the eradication of national differences. The major components of the Soviet nationalities policy of the drawing together (*sblizhenie*) and merger (*slitianie*) of Soviet nationalities were undermined, too. Soviet cultural policy was also

damaged. The federal structure had proved ineffective in creating the concept of a 'Soviet people'.

A 'Karabakh Committee' was formed in Armenia on 23 February, 1988 when Muradian chose as his aids a few nationalist intellectuals, mostly historians, who had captivated the audience with their oratorical eloquence and charisma in Theatre Square, where the mass demonstrations were held. Among them were Gagik Safarian and Manvel Sargsian (both natives of Karabakh), Ashot Manucharian (an articulate nationalist intellectual from Yerevan) and Hrair Ulubabian (the son of a famous unification activist from Karabakh).⁵⁸ The members of the Karabakh Committee concentrated on the unification theme as the sole item on their agenda. Muradian warned against raising other issues, such as criticizing the local Communist authorities for their corruption and economic mismanagement, because that would detract from the goal of unification. In his view, "the demonstrations were a vehicle for expressing the commitment and discipline of the Armenian people."⁵⁹ Muradian's purpose was to launch in Yerevan a committee similar to that of Krunk (Crane) in Nagorno-Karabakh (see below). The general public did not know the exact number of the members of the Karabakh Committee at this stage because there were many nationalist activists, poets and actors who had taken the podium in Theatre Square addressing the demonstrators on the issue of unification. Within this context, Manucharian's explanation sounds convincing:

The boldest, the most emotional speakers became the recognized leaders. It was whoever made the strongest impression on the crowd. The danger, of course, is that actors use appeals to emotion, shifts in the direction of their ideas, simply to boost the emotional level of the crowd without appreciating the consequences.⁶⁰

At the leadership level in Armenia there was also the Council of Elders, which included Victor Hambardzumian (President of the Armenian Academy of Sciences), Zori Balayan (a writer), Silva Kaputikian (a distinguished poet) and Bagrat Ulubabian (a historian and a nationalist activist striving for unification from the 1960s). It seems that this Council agreed to serve the Karabakh cause alongside the younger nationalist activists of the Karabakh Committee and provide its members with counsel. The Council of Elders' endorsement of the Karabakh movement was probably a message to the Kremlin and to the local Communist authorities that Armenia's established intelligentsia was supporting the nationalist movement for Nagorno-Karabakh's unification with Armenia. Moreover,

members of the Council of Elders – as 'ethnic actors' – played the role of the link between the local Communist authorities and the Karabakh Committee. Paul R. Brass argues that the aim of ethnic actors in the process of ethnic mobilization may also include broader political goals, such as group rights in the political system in which they exist.⁴¹ However, at this stage, neither the Council of Elders nor the members of the Karabakh Committee in Armenia sought to compete with the ruling Communist authorities for political positions. This was perhaps a tactic employed by the nationalist actors of the Karabakh Committee to help them win the support of local Communist authorities.

The Krunk Committee had been formed to lead the nationalist movement in Nagorno-Karabakh just a few days before the above-described 20 February, 1988 decision of the Oblast Soviet. It included "within its ranks seven members of the Party Committee at the Oblast and municipal levels, four Oblast and city Soviet deputies, twenty-two enterprise and association leaders, and three secretaries of factory Party Committees." The single issue on its agenda was Karabakh's unification with Armenia. Its members played a major role in the endorsement of the 20 February resolution.⁴² The Krunk Committee usually coordinated its activities with the Karabakh Committee in Armenia. Both had a similar network of communication and subcommittees that were very active in mobilizing the people.

Thus, the popular movements in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh developed in late 1987 and early 1988 from a series of environmental rallies into an organized and coordinated nationalist movement with established leaderships and a network of activists. Especially in Armenia this network extended into factories, institutes and some governmental offices. Indeed, some members of the Karabakh Committee still remained in the Communist Party ranks.

Despite the orderly and organized nature of the demonstrations in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, ethnic tensions continued to escalate. The revival of national consciousness in early 1988 had shown that conflict rather than national harmony and consensus had been endemic in Soviet inter-ethnic relations. Ethnic clashes between the Armenians and Azerbaijanis followed the NKAO soviet decision of 20 February. On 21 February, Bagirov rejected in a televised address the resolution of the NKAO soviet and ruled out any territorial changes. On the same day, the Azerbaijani inhabitants of Karabakh attacked their Armenian neighbors. Many roads were blocked to stop the peaceful Armenian demonstrations and isolate the Armenian districts. The authorities in Baku sent party

officials to Nagorno-Karabakh "to stamp out" among the local Armenians "popular participation in the movement."⁴³ Neil McCormick argues that among the strategies usually chosen by the state to maintain order and avoid violence is the strategy of 'opposition.' It is significant that Soviet Azerbaijan also chose this strategy, which considers national aspirations 'as atavistic and tribalistic,' and encourages nations to remain in their places within states.⁴⁴ Soviet Azerbaijan rejected the unification campaign of the Karabakh Armenians and tried to calm down and control their nationalist movement.

Nagorno-Karabakh's Azerbaijani inhabitants also organized demonstrations to express their rejection of any future alteration of the status of NKAO.⁴⁵ Ayaz Mutalibov, the Deputy Chairman of Azerbaijan's Council of Ministers, countered Armenian claims that Azerbaijani authorities were responsible for Karabakh's economic underdevelopment and negligence. Azerbaijani sources mentioned that two Azerbaijanis were killed during a demonstration in Yerevan, and that "systematic deportations" were being imposed on Azerbaijanis in Yerevan and Zangezur. Western reports did not confirm such practices, however.⁴⁶

On 22 February menacing incidents took place in the town of Askeran, near the eastern borders of Karabakh. It was reported that 8,000 Azerbaijanis from the town of Agdam had crossed into the oblast, heading down the railroad toward Stepanakert. It was the first time that such a large number of Azerbaijanis had crossed the oblast's border. A detachment of Azerbaijani and local police was unable to stop them near Askeran. The furious Azerbaijani crowd destroyed factory equipment and vehicles and clashed with the Armenian residents of Askeran. Twenty-five people were injured on both sides and two Azerbaijanis were killed. A detachment of the Soviet army garrisoned in a nearby station was called in to calm the situation. It was the start of violence in Nagorno-Karabakh, Armenia and Azerbaijan.⁴⁷

Since we will deal next with renewed calls for more demonstrations and strikes in Armenia to back the Nagorno-Karabakh unification campaign, it becomes necessary to examine in the following sub-sections of this article Moscow's management of the conflict, characterized by mass mobilization and politicization of ethnicity and nationalism, and how the Azerbaijani authorities organized themselves against the Armenian demand for unification.

MOSCOW'S MANAGEMENT OF THE CONFLICT
(FEBRUARY 1988 – NOVEMBER 1989)

On 21 February, i.e. the day after the NKAO soviet passed its above-described decision, the Politburo in Moscow rejected the Armenian demand to incorporate Nagorno-Karabakh within Soviet Armenia. The CPSU, after examining the situation in Karabakh, "holds that the actions and demands directed at revising the existing national and territorial structure contradict the interests of the working people in Soviet Azerbaijan and Armenia and damage inter ethnic relations," read the decision.⁴⁸ This declaration showed that the central authorities were not ready to re-examine the nationalities issue inherited from the previous leaderships. Moscow's stance could be viewed in the context of the strategy of 'simple denial or simple aversion of the gaze', which refuses to acknowledge that there are 'real' problems of national claims of sovereignty, in order not to endanger the political integrity of the Soviet multi-ethnic empire.⁴⁹ Moreover, the Moscow leadership called upon the Armenian and Azerbaijani Communist Parties to restore discipline and normalize the situation. Moscow's official position disappointed the Armenians in Karabakh and Yerevan, who had put high hopes in Gorbachev's reforms. The rejection was followed by more demonstrations and calls for labor strikes in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh to exert leverage on Moscow.⁵⁰

On 23 February, 1988, alarmed at the growing size of demonstrations in Yerevan and Karabakh, Moscow's second measure was to deprive Kevorkov of his post and assign Henrik Poghosian, a native Armenian, to the position of party boss in Karabakh. Kevorkov was probably fired for his failure to end the Karabakh movement and restore party discipline in the oblast. Moreover, Moscow probably hoped that Poghosian could fulfill the wishes of the central government, notably the crushing of the nationalist movement in Nagorno-Karabakh and the restoration of the party's hegemony in the oblast. The measure could also be considered as a concession made to calm the Armenians. However, demonstrations did not stop, as political opportunities for national mobilization continued to develop. Moreover, Poghosian began to champion the demands of the Karabakh Armenians.⁵¹

To ease inter-ethnic tensions in Karabakh, Moscow dispatched peacekeeping forces to Stepanakert. Furthermore, the Politburo sent its representatives to Armenia and Azerbaijan to meet with Communist leaders in both republics. Petr Demichev and Georgii Razumovskii met with the authorities in Baku, while Anatolii Lukianov and Vladimir Dolgikh met

with the leadership in Yerevan. They were dispatched to calm the tense situation and deliver a clear message about the refusal of Moscow to redraw "national and territorial borders," because any violation of this principle "would open up a path for a multitude of bloody conflicts."⁵² Despite conducting meetings with the Communist leaderships in the two republics, as well as with members of the Karabakh Committee in Yerevan, the emissaries from Moscow failed to accomplish anything serious. The Karabakh Committee complained "of the paucity and bias of Soviet media coverage" of the events in Armenia and Karabakh, while the Armenian Communist leadership sided with Moscow in criticizing the Karabakh Committee. On 26 February Gorbachev's first address to the demonstrating crowds in Yerevan and Azerbaijan was read over television and radio by Dolgikh in Armenia and Razumovskii in Azerbaijan. Gorbachev urged the demonstrators to "return to normal life and work, and observe social order." He also warned against "the power of spontaneity and emotion." At the same time, he expressed hope that the CPSU Central Committee would improve conditions in Nagorno-Karabakh.⁵³

In a parallel move, Gorbachev received in Moscow Balayan and Kaputikian, two members of the newly established Council of Elders. This meeting was held on 26 February.⁵⁴ The Soviet leader asked his guests to suspend the demonstrations for one month until the CPSU Central Committee could thoroughly consider the issue.⁵⁵ After they returned to Yerevan, both Kaputikian and Balayan met the assembled crowd in Theatre Square and asked the demonstrators to disperse to give the Politburo a chance to discuss the Nagorno-Karabakh issue. Muradian, who had also suggested that demonstrations be suspended for a while, announced that the next rally would be held on 26 March.⁵⁶

Moscow's diplomatic efforts in Baku and Yerevan did not attain the expected results, partly because of the absence of a clear consensus inside the Politburo itself. Gorbachev first supported the proposal by Eduard Shevardnadze to grant Nagorno-Karabakh the status of an autonomous republic – which was higher than that of an autonomous oblast, but still under Azerbaijani jurisdiction – as a means to resolve the conflict.⁵⁷ On the contrary, Yegor Ligachev rejected any change in the status of Nagorno-Karabakh and proposed taking a hard line against the Armenian demands. According to data gathered by the Central Intelligence Agency of the United States, Ligachev "played a key role in formulating the Central Committee's resolution [of 21 February – O.G.] that characterized Armenian claims as extremist."⁵⁸ Given the lack of consensus inside the Politburo, Gorbachev's later policies to manage rather than resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh problem

become inevitable. The CPSU asked the Institute of Oriental Studies in Moscow to study the conflict and offer recommendations to help bring about a solution. In late February the institute suggested:

The Commission appointed to investigate the Karabakh issue must delay as long as possible any definite solution. The unification of Karabakh with Armenia is not desirable. It is important to calm the population with concessions in the cultural-social domain and in the realm of daily life, getting rid of a portion of the leadership.⁵⁹

The decisions and the resolutions of the Soviet authorities revealed a policy "skillfully balanced between the two sides" to close the issue of nationality problems and ignore all demands related to the redrawing of borders, which were at the core of the conflict. Moscow probably anticipated additional deterioration and ethnic strife before it could resort to force and reestablish full control, which was the traditional solution of 'divide and rule.'⁶⁰

Within this context, Gorbachev tried to remain neutral. His announcements were intended to keep the *status quo* in Nagorno-Karabakh – without favoring either party. He underestimated the early clashes between the Armenians and Azerbaijanis and regarded them as minor incidents. Gorbachev thought that a political solution should be found to the Karabakh problem by responding to the grievances of the local Armenians, but without any change in boundaries. He probably believed that unifying Karabakh with Armenia would promote national exclusiveness that could lead to further unrest. Moreover, Gorbachev refused to acknowledge his failures and considered that his adopted path would succeed in deepening both *perestroika* and *glasnost*.

The first "anti-Armenian pogrom," which broke out in the Azerbaijani town of Sumgait on February 28-29, took, according to official figures, the lives of 32 people, mostly Armenians, and wounded hundreds more.⁶¹ A few days before, a rally in Sumgait's Lenin Square had attracted thousands of Azerbaijanis, who had gathered to hear about Nagorno-Karabakh's campaign for unification with Armenia. The crowd had already become furious when "up to 2000 Azerbaijanis from Armenia were said to have arrived then in Sumgait," fleeing Armenian aggression.⁶² Among the orators who tried to calm the crowd was Bahtiyar Vahabzade, a historian and the Director of the Republic's Institute of Political Education. However, he was shouted down, and actors and Azerbaijani nationalist activists delivered inflammatory addresses, blaming the Armenians "for taking the issue of

Mountainous Karabakh to the streets" and "for committing atrocities against Azerbaijanis in Armenia." These criticisms fueled calls for "death to the Armenians" and mobilized the crowd to take revenge.⁶³

On 26 February there were more anti-Armenian demonstrations in Sumgait. According to later testimonies given in court, the addresses of the Armenian residents in Sumgait were provided to demonstrators, who, in their turn, "posted threatening leaflets on apartment buildings housing Armenian families." On 27 February the "telephone service was cut off for much of Sumgait." These measures were followed by pogroms committed by "hundreds of marauders armed with sharpened steel rods and heavy clubs." No immediate effort was made by the local Sumgait police and the Soviet Interior Ministry forces to stop the violence.⁶⁴ It should also be indicated, however, that many Azerbaijani families in Sumgait did protect their Armenian neighbors by sheltering them in their residences, often at the cost of endangering their own lives.⁶⁵

Tamara Dragadze argues that the "massacre in Sumgait is also a turning point in the history of the modern Azerbaijani nation, for it is the event that brought this previously lesser known nation to world attention." Armenians and Azerbaijanis had lived in Sumgait under harsh social and environmental conditions marked by high levels of industrial pollution. Often neglected by the Soviet authorities, the city "resembled a labor camp and its population being prisoners in forced labor." Dragadze adds: "many Azerbaijanis felt obliged to ask the world not to condemn a whole nation, because of the atrocities, however horrific, committed by a number of mostly very young men." The Azerbaijanis did not want to be associated with the "stereotypical image of wild Turks" that, Dragadze says, the Armenians have often preferred to use when referring to Ottoman Turkish responsibility for the Armenian massacres of 1915.⁶⁶

The Sumgait pogroms seem to have been a turning point for the Karabakh Committee as well. The Azerbaijani government's failure to acknowledge the anti-Armenian nature of the Sumgait pogroms and its attribution of the violence to "a group of hooligans" left little room for reconciliation with Armenians in general. Karabakh Committee member Hambardzum Galstian stated:

Now I cannot even call my Azerbaijani friend in Moscow, because of the blood that has been spilled. Another Azerbaijani intellectual told me that he can no longer sleep at night, because of what has happened. He cannot shake the hand of an Armenian. But in the future, we have no choice but to share this land together.⁶⁷

Other members of the Karabakh Committee were also looking for a new framework for future Armenian-Azerbaijani relations. Sumgait was neither a solution nor a logical response to the Armenian demands. Indeed, after Sumgait, Armenian demands took an extreme tone. The Karabakh Committee, however, was quick and accurate in its analysis of the events. It distinguished between the perpetrators of the pogroms and the Azerbaijani people in general. For example, Manucharian expressed hope in future dialogue:

Azerbaijan first must accept responsibility for Sumgait. After that, I am ready to sit down with them and discuss anything. Aside from the Karabakh issue, though, there has at least been a sense of neighborliness in areas where Armenians and Azerbaijanis live together. They have lived side by side, helped each other, and attended each other's weddings. Coexistence is possible.⁶⁸

Similar themes found expression in a letter sent by the Karabakh Committee to Gorbachev on 4 March. The Committee asked the Soviet leader to reveal and punish those who provoked the Sumgait pogroms. It also expressed hope that the Politburo would first acknowledge the existence of the Karabakh conflict and would then discuss it in accordance with its previous promise.⁶⁹

The violence committed in Sumgait allowed Armenian historical awareness to be mobilized with respect to the anti-Armenian pogroms of 1905 in Azerbaijan and the genocide of 1915 perpetrated by the Ottoman Turks. The violence led to provocations and raised questions about the neutral stand of the Soviet troops in Azerbaijan.⁷⁰

Ten years after the bloodshed, the local Armenians continued to believe that the violence was organized by the "Soviet Azerbaijani authorities" to intimidate the Armenians in Karabakh and make them step back from their separatist tendencies. On the other hand, Arif Aliev, head of the Union of Azerbaijani Journalists, described the anti-Armenian violence in Sumgait as a "complicated" issue and wondered who its real organizers were. Arzu Abdulayeva, the Chairperson of the Azerbaijani National Committee of the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, also argued that the KGB of the USSR "cultivated," "organized" and "did" the violence because neither the KGB nor Soviet military units stationed nearby interfered to stop the bloodshed in Sumgait.⁷¹

The Sumgait violence could be viewed as an outcome of Moscow's vague position on the nationalities issue. The Soviet authorities had no clear policy applicable to all the nationalities problems and conflicts so as to avoid violent ethnic confrontations.⁷² Gorbachev himself admitted that:

The massacres in Sumgait produced universal outrage; everyone was shaken. At the same time, sympathy was shown in the Muslim republics for the people of their faith. Events threatened to get out of control. We had been late in dealing with Sumgait and had underestimated its implications.⁷³

With respect to strategies adopted by the state in society, McCormick argues that the state must be the main guarantor of civil peace and economic development in society by granting the excluded nations cultural representation and "proper recognition" within the framework of its institutional structures.⁷⁴ The general inclination in the Politburo was in favor of a political solution. The Communist leaders in Moscow opposed border changes between the two Soviet republics, but endorsed at the same time cultural, social and economic improvements in Karabakh. According to Gorbachev's memoirs, the status of Nagorno-Karabakh had to be decided jointly by the Armenians and Azerbaijanis, and the central authorities should accept their eventual compromise.⁷⁵

On 23 March the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet took up the matter in accordance with Gorbachev's earlier promise to discuss the issue given to the Karabakh Armenian delegations. The Presidium rejected unification with Armenia, but acknowledged that several economic and cultural reforms had to be introduced to improve the conditions of Karabakh Armenians. The Presidium's decision also referred to "inadmissible pressures" and threats of legal proceedings by the Karabakh activists, and the Presidium made its opposition clear to "all nationalist extremist demonstrations." There was dismay among the Armenians, who quickly put the 'Gorbachev Myth' to rest.⁷⁶ The Armenian nationalist movement in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, the leadership of which had initially been sympathetic to Gorbachev, now became frustrated and mobilized Armenian national sentiments in Karabakh against the 'dominant' Azerbaijani nation in Azerbaijan. Evidently, the Armenian nationalist movement was gradually becoming ethnic because Moscow was unwilling to enact policies in accordance with the strong Armenian demand for unification.

It is usually argued in ethnic conflict literature that the strategy chosen by the state as a solution to a problem often cannot be what is favored by the

discontented nation.⁷⁷ Moscow was trying to maintain order and avoid violence in Nagorno-Karabakh. The Presidium's decision reflected Moscow's hesitant will, and it antagonized both communities, each from a different perspective. The Armenians were antagonized as the Presidium decided not to unify Karabakh with Armenia, while the Azerbaijanis were alienated because they had probably expected a harsher condemnation of the Armenian separatist attempts and the adoption of certain punitive measures against the Karabakh Armenian nationalists.

The Kremlin next allocated a 400 million-ruble economic and cultural reform package to Nagorno-Karabakh. This sum would be used to increase industrial output, improve housing and school construction, enhance Armenian language education and build a new network of roads, especially between Stepanakert and the Soviet Armenian region of Zangezur. However, the Karabakh Armenians criticized this decision for two reasons: (a) it was doubtful whether the Soviet budget would actually allow the money to be provided as the Soviet budget woes were hardly a secret by 1988; and (b) Moscow's funding was to pass through the hesitant authorities in Baku since Nagorno-Karabakh would remain part of Azerbaijan.⁷⁸

The treatment of the Karabakh conflict in the Soviet media also contributed to a rebellious mood in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh. The Soviet press reflected Gorbachev's views and "branded the Karabakh campaigners as opportunist nationalist extremists, stooges of foreign powers and anti-perestroika forces." It also claimed "that the demonstrations in Erevan had been orchestrated by external enemies."⁷⁹ Gorbachev probably feared that the powerful Armenian Diaspora was the external organizer of the nationalist movement.

Moscow's strategy became clearer when on 22 March the Soviet army with armored personnel carriers rolled into Yerevan to stop the demonstrations scheduled for 26 March. On the same day the Armenian Supreme Soviet outlawed the Karabakh Committee, while the Azerbaijani authorities dissolved the Krunk Committee of Nagorno-Karabakh. Demonstrations were also banned both in Armenia and Azerbaijan until further notice.⁸⁰

With the Sumgait massacres, the influx of refugees to Armenia and Azerbaijan and the deployment of the Soviet army on the streets of Yerevan, the Karabakh movement entered a new phase with a new strategy and tactics. In our opinion, Moscow had lost an appropriate opportunity to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Had Moscow responded to the Armenian demands for unification by upgrading the autonomous oblast's status to that of an autonomous republic within Azerbaijan, violent conflict

could perhaps have been prevented. At this initial stage of the Karabakh movement, there were no demands for according full sovereignty to Soviet Armenia and for its independence from the USSR. The Karabakh Armenians might have been satisfied with real administrative autonomy, including full cultural and economic freedoms, as well as the receipt of Armenian literature from Soviet Armenia and transmission of Armenian television broadcasts to Karabakh. Hence, Nagorno-Karabakh would have remained attached to Azerbaijan, the territorial integrity of which would have been maintained, and Armenian demands would have been met at a minimum political cost.

Such a solution could have been possible only before 27 February. Thereafter, Armenians living in various parts of Azerbaijan began to fear for their security and many moved to Armenia, where they thought they would feel more secure. Likewise, the Azerbaijanis in Armenia began to leave for their own republic. Armenian resentment began to be expressed not only against the Azerbaijani government but also against the Azerbaijani people in general, despite the fact that members of the Karabakh Committee continued to express their belief that coexistence with the Azerbaijanis was possible.

On 17 May the Karabakh Committee resumed its public activity by defying the ban on demonstrations. The reactivation of the movement reflected the changes that had occurred. The nationalist activists, who now took the podium in Theatre Square, elaborated on political themes of popular representation at the upcoming 19th CPSU conference in June, plus democratization and reform in Armenia and the rest of the USSR.³¹ Muradian now "offered an opening for activists seeking to stretch out the parameters of the movement."³² It became evident that the politicization of the nationalist movement had necessitated the inclusion of broader issues on its agenda, rather than the single issue of unification of Karabakh with Armenia, which had been dominant in the months of February and March. Vazgen Manukian, a prominent activist, now proposed the formation of a broad-based Karabakh Committee to lead the nationalist movement in Armenia. It seemed that a new leadership of the Armenian nationalist opposition was emerging.

Indeed, a new eleven-member Karabakh Committee, comprising nationalist intellectuals, was formed on 19 May. It included dissident nationalist activists, some of whom had had experience in anti-Soviet activity and underground organizational work since the 1960s: Levon Ter Petrosian (scholar in Armenian and Syriac philology), Vazgen Manukian (professor of mathematics), Ashot Manucharian (vice-principal at an

experimental school), Rafayel Ghazarian (professor of technical sciences), Babken Ararktsian (professor of physics and mathematics), Davit Vardanian (professor of physics and mathematics), Samson Ghazarian (history teacher), Hambarzum Galstian (history teacher), Alexander Hakobian (history lecturer), Samvel Gevorgian (political analyst) and Vano Siradeghian (writer).⁸³ The new Committee decided that the movement's agenda should now extend beyond the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Muradian and his associates were excluded, possibly because of Muradian's dominant character and his refusal of debate in the decision making process. Furthermore, his close association with Karen Demirchian, the First Secretary of the Armenian Communist Party, and Yuzbashian, Armenia's KGB chief, had antagonized many activists. His proposal at the beginning of May that "the movement should cooperate with Demirchyan" and his criticisms of those "who saw the demonstrations as a vehicle for democratization" created a strategic rift between his unification campaign and the new, broader political outlook of the Karabakh Committee.⁸⁴ Muradian now formed a separate group called *Miatsum* (Unification) to pursue his single-issue campaign.⁸⁵

Whatever the causes that led Muradian to propose a strategy of cooperation with Demirchian, this was not acceptable to the Karabakh Committee for a number of reasons. First, the various attempts by local Communist leaders to discredit the Karabakh Movement in the official media and their refusal to allow adequate coverage of developments in the streets had discredited them in the eyes of the nationalist opposition. Second, in the era of *glasnost* and reform, many thought it had become necessary to think of an alternative local leadership instead of supporting the old and corrupt Communists and rescuing them from imminent collapse. Third, the new members of the Karabakh Committee believed that the movement in Armenia was associated with the broader current of political change that was sweeping the USSR. For example, they thought that developments in the Baltic republics (Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia) were encouraging, despite their firm belief that the fate of democratic reform in the USSR ultimately depended on Russia. They had concluded that the Karabakh Movement had to play a crucial role in the democratization process in the USSR in general and in Armenia in particular. They were, hence, convinced that decisions concerning strategy and future demonstrations and strikes should be taken through debates in Theatre Square.

On 21 May, two Politburo members, Alexander Yakovlev and Yegor Ligachev, arrived from Moscow in Armenia and Azerbaijan respectively.

The official Soviet media first reported that they had been sent to discuss economic reform and encourage *perestroika* and *glasnost* in these republics. However, it soon became apparent that their mission was to oversee the replacement of the First Secretaries in Yerevan and Baku. Suren Harutiunian replaced Demirchian, while Abdul Rahman Vezirov succeeded Bagirov. Vezirov was born in Nagorno-Karabakh and knew some Armenian.⁸⁶ Moscow probably replaced the Communist leaders of the two republics because of their inability to manage or resolve the Karabakh conflict. It was also a tactical move by Gorbachev, who probably preferred to have new leaders in both republics in order to pursue a different approach in dealing with the Karabakh Movement.

Some hoped that the new First Secretaries could become peacemakers. Following Moscow's directives, they made their first public appearance together in the Azerbaijani city of Kazakh and then traveled to nearby Ijevan in Armenia. This meeting was intended to convey the idea that conciliation was possible. However, when Harutiunian appeared in Theatre Square in Yerevan a few days later to address a huge rally and try and convince the demonstrators to abandon an ongoing strike, the popular response to this conciliatory strategy was discouraging. When Harutiunian said: "I am with you, but I cannot work under these conditions", the crowd responded by insistent chants of "*Gortsadul! Gortsadul!* [Strike! Strike!]."⁸⁷

Nevertheless, a new relationship emerged between Harutiunian and the Karabakh Committee, especially as regards the media. This was an altogether different approach to dealing with the Karabakh Movement. The Armenian television started broadcasting formerly taboo subjects, such as uncensored comments from demonstrators and scenes from Theatre Square. The print media published analyses of the Sumgait massacres, other instances of ethnic violence and discrimination against Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh. Finally, the official media in Yerevan announced on 7 June that the Armenian Supreme Soviet would discuss the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict on 15 June.⁸⁸ This was an unprecedented political development since the Armenian Communist leadership had seldom disobeyed Moscow's will in the past. Some observers hoped that the Armenian Communist Party leadership and the Armenian people were moving toward agreeing upon a common goal, which was Karabakh's ultimate unification with Armenia.

Moreover, Harutiunian further defied Moscow's will on 11 June when he informed the crowd in Theatre Square about a secret meeting held in Moscow between Ligachev and the First Secretaries of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh. The only item on the agenda had been the

possibility of upgrading the status of Nagorno-Karabakh to an autonomous republic. Harutiunian and Poghosian had rejected Moscow's proposal after being told that "Karabakh's borders would be expanded to include areas populated largely by Azerbaijanis."⁸⁹ Harutiunian's candor restored partial prestige to the local Communist leadership and increased public interest in the Armenian Supreme Soviet session of 15 June. However, the impatient and radicalized population went on with the general strike in both Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh.

On 15 June the Armenian Supreme Soviet succumbed to the pressure of hundreds of thousands of demonstrators and endorsed the decision of the NKAO soviet of 20 February, which had requested the transfer of the oblast to Soviet Armenian jurisdiction. The Armenian Supreme Soviet based its decision on Article 70 of the USSR Constitution, which guaranteed the right of Soviet peoples to self-determination. Another resolution condemned the Sumgait massacres.⁹⁰

The Azerbaijani response to the Armenian Supreme Soviet decision came on 17 June, when the Azerbaijani Supreme Soviet, in turn, rejected the decision of the NKAO soviet of 20 February and labeled it "undesirable."⁹¹ Suleiman B. Tatliyev, the Chairman of the Azerbaijani Supreme Soviet, declared:

In the course of discussion in the [Azerbaijani Supreme Soviet – O.G.] presidium, the opinion was expressed unanimously that the question of Nagorno-Karabakh has been raised without justification, contrary to the preservation of the historically existing unity of the whole of Karabakh, an age-old Azerbaijani land, without consideration of the interests of citizens of all nationalities living in the Oblast, and contrary to the wishes of the majority of the republic's population.⁹²

Moscow now had to play the role of an arbiter. The resolutions passed by the legislatures of the two republics brought them into direct confrontation. On 18 July the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, citing Article 78 of the USSR Constitution, which prohibited territorial changes without the consent of the republic concerned, rejected the transfer of Nagorno-Karabakh to Soviet Armenia. Gorbachev emphasized that the transfer of Karabakh would set a precedent for other territorial disputes within the USSR.⁹³ His refusal to redraw republican boundaries was perhaps a logical decision from Moscow's viewpoint, but it provided no solution to the conflict as far as the Armenians were concerned.

On the other hand, significant political developments had taken place in Nagorno-Karabakh a few days before the above-described meeting of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet. The Krunk Committee's efforts in Nagorno-Karabakh to pass a resolution on secession from Soviet Azerbaijan reached their climax on 12 July. The 101 deputies present at the session of the NKAO soviet voted unanimously to secede from Azerbaijan and "renamed the Oblast the Artsakh Armenian Autonomous Region." This legislative move of the NKAO soviet further escalated the political tensions between Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh. The Azerbaijani Supreme Soviet immediately declared the resolution "null and void," arguing that it contradicted the bases of the Azerbaijani and USSR Constitutions.⁹⁴

The NKAO soviet's decision to secede from Soviet Azerbaijan could be analyzed within the context of the successive stages of the national political programs adopted usually by various nationalist movements. Miroslav Hroch argues that 'secession' is the third stage of a nationalist movement's national political program, the first two stages being 'substitution' and 'participation.' During the 'substitution' stage, it is usual for linguistic and cultural demands to temporarily substitute for political demands because the existing political regime does not permit political acts. In the second, 'participation' stage, a national political program includes initial demands of participation at the municipal and parliamentary levels of the state. Successful participation in the institutions of the state usually gives the national movement prestige and further opportunity to present its demands more effectively. Finally, the stage of 'secession' becomes an effective option for nationalist leaders to lessen the power of the state and "to get more space for independent decisions."⁹⁵

The NKAO soviet, by enacting its legislative move of 12 July, was apparently formulating its political goal of establishing a separate statehood. Now, it became evident that the previous 'linguistic self-determination' (unification) campaign of the Karabakh Committee served only as a 'substitute' for the political demands of the Karabakh Armenians at a time when political circumstances did not permit open political acts. Indeed, the initial unification campaign that included 'partial elements of politics' was considered basic for a later stage that would emerge for the attainment of sovereignty. An example of a 'partial element of politics' was the crossing of the political border between Soviet Armenia and Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh) by the Armenian nationalist movement and the adoption of the image of a single fatherland. This psychological link between the members of the nation in Soviet Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh was extremely important for national agitation among the Karabakh Armenians.

It could be argued that Gorbachev perceived the nationalities issues in general and the Nagorno-Karabakh problem in particular as peripheral nuisances in the way of his democratization plans. Gorbachev failed to realize that mobilized nationalists were getting stronger, more demanding and restive under *glasnost*. He underestimated the fervor underlying various national identities within the USSR. The decision of 18 July radicalized the nationalist movement in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, which became more anti-Soviet and sought a radical political agenda in pursuit of full democracy and independence. The Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians, under the leadership of the Krunk Committee, also opposed Moscow's decision.

The period after 18 July witnessed the further institutionalization of the Karabakh Committee. Its members recognized that they had taken the unification campaign as far as they could within the framework of the Soviet Constitution. Pushing the issue further could mean violence and confrontation with the local authorities and Soviet Interior Ministry forces in Armenia. Their only viable option was to direct the politicized population toward a broader set of political goals, perhaps enter the arena of domestic politics and become the formal political opposition. Indeed, to the politically oriented members of the Karabakh Committee, like Manukian, the nationalist movement had always represented much more than the single issue of unification. The Karabakh Committee had endorsed a long-term strategy to create cultural and economic ties with Nagorno-Karabakh, but the national revival in the republic had increasingly necessitated the formation of a political opposition to the ruling Communists.

The Armenian nationalist movement had thrown the Karabakh Committee members into the center of Armenian politics. The Committee had gradually won popular support, like the other nationalist movements in the Baltic republics and in other parts of the USSR. The anti-Communist opposition had coalesced around the Karabakh Committee, and public opinion now provided the psychological ground for its members to act almost like a shadow government. As new participants in determining the republic's political process, the Committee members had become the only practical alternative to the Communist government.

With the popular support that it now enjoyed, the Karabakh Committee had to prepare an ambitious national program for Soviet Armenia. This program should be analyzed within a broader perspective, rather than be restricted only to the Karabakh unification campaign. Hroch argues that a nationalist movement often prepares a national program that is not restricted to the personal wishes and demands of the nationalist activists alone, but tends to include certain objective conditions like the political system of the

state, the social structure of the nationalist movement and its historical experience prior to the emergence of the nationalist movement.⁹⁶

On 8 August the Karabakh Committee was transformed into the *Hayots Hamazgayin Sharzhum* (Armenian National Movement) or HSH (ANM). Its platform crystallized the outlook of the Armenian democratic movement and defined its political role in the republic. The platform indicated that the ANM "would organize rallies and strikes, would participate in elections and campaign for change in Armenia's constitution and legal structure." It also "called Armenians to reclaim national rights and symbols repressed under Soviet rule," supported the "establishment of ties with the Armenian diaspora" and demanded "official Armenian and Soviet support for gaining recognition of the 1915 genocide by the United Nations."⁹⁷

On 10 September the Armenian KGB confided to the Central Committee of the Armenian Communist Party that the ANM platform provided grounds for anti-Soviet activity by urging that the local authorities must serve national interests. The platform also tended to endanger the stability of Soviet Armenia by calling for rallies and strikes. By its acceptance of the anniversary of 28 May, 1918 as a national holiday, it revived historical awareness of the Armenian "bourgeois" republic of 1918-20, which the Communists had suppressed. The KGB reported that the ANM had already established relations with the anti-Communist, popular fronts in the Baltic republics and was trying to create parallel institutions to Communist-controlled ones in Armenia. The ANM had also mobilized the people on national lines, something that could threaten national relations between the peoples of the USSR. Furthermore, the ANM, following the Estonian model, was now directing its struggle to attain political power in the republic. Therefore, the KGB proposed: (1) to create a group from academics and historians to counterbalance the national activity of the ANM; (2) to use the media to discredit the movement and to organize similar rallies to weaken the popular base of the ANM; (3) to criticize the ANM platform among Communist Party sub-committees and collectives; and (4) to create a similar organization under the control of the Communist Party, the task of which would be confined to the promotion of *perestroika*, reform and the examination of environmental problems.⁹⁸

On 18 September another wave of ethnic clashes struck Nagorno-Karabakh, this time in the Azerbaijani-populated town of Khojalu. The political climate was already tense with the oblast's Armenians arguing that the arrival of large numbers of Azerbaijani refugees from Armenia in Shushi (Shusha, according to the Azerbaijanis), a largely Azerbaijani-populated city in the oblast, would change the demographic balance in

Nagorno-Karabakh. The Karabakh Armenians were asking for the evacuation of these refugees to Azerbaijan. However, the Armenians were following a similar strategy by inviting hundreds of Armenian refugees from Azerbaijan into Stepanakert, the largely Armenian-populated capital of the oblast. Fearing the spread of violence to other villages, the Soviet authorities imposed a curfew and banned demonstrations in the region.⁹⁹

Anthony D. Smith argues that the ethnic strategies of 'separatism' and 'irredentism' employed by nationalist movements give rise to ethno-nationalism and ultimately to conflict, since the major aim of these ethno-cultural movements is to obtain maximum autonomy for their community.¹⁰⁰ Indeed, the emerging ethnic nationalism on the Armenian side in Nagorno-Karabakh justified its existence by using a specific dynamic that opposed the 'alien,' Azerbaijani group. The Azerbaijanis, after all, were unable to join the Armenian nation on a political basis and on the basis of blood ties. Consequently, when the Armenian ethno-nationalists aimed at establishing a sovereign state within Azerbaijan, nationalism became violent. It employed killing, deportation and the cleansing of the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh from its so-called 'alien' Azerbaijani inhabitants. Similarly, when the Karabakh Armenians campaigned for the unification of Karabakh with Soviet Armenia, Azerbaijani nationalism became violent and committed atrocities particularly in Sumgait to push the Armenians of Azerbaijan out and prevent cohabitation. The Azerbaijanis, too, considered the Armenians in Karabakh as 'aliens', and they never acknowledged that they should be treated as equal citizens to Azerbaijanis in the 'titular' republic of the latter. In the previous few decades, the Azerbaijanis had tried to gradually alter the demographic balance of Karabakh in their favor. This was done by encouraging Azerbaijanis from other regions of the republic to migrate to Nagorno-Karabakh and by practicing cultural, economic and political discrimination against the ethnic Armenian majority of Karabakh to force the latter to leave the autonomous oblast that had been created for them in 1923.

The events in Khojalu, like the Sumgait massacres, transformed the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict into ethnic enmity. Indeed, ethnic polarization had already begun to pull Nagorno-Karabakh apart following the Sumgait massacres six months before. After the Khojalu incidents, a sense of vulnerability haunted the people once again in the ethnically mixed villages in Nagorno-Karabakh. The renewed ethnic violence offered a model of what ethnic war would probably resemble in Nagorno-Karabakh, with both Azerbaijanis and Armenians from nearby villages coming to the rescue of their co-nationals. Under these circumstances, it became doubtful whether

the ANM's Karabakh campaign could still be framed in solely constitutional terms.

In early December 1988 the Soviet media hinted that popular leaders would be arrested and "held responsible for provoking violence." It seemed that Moscow was planning "to clamp down on disorder in Armenia and Azerbaijan" and decapitate the Karabakh movement. Eventually, Moscow arrested some of the activists of the Krunk Committee in Nagorno-Karabakh, including Arkadii Manucharov. In Yerevan the situation was not better, and the ANM called on workers to suspend their strike until further notice in order to avoid any confrontation with the Soviet Interior Ministry troops that had moved into positions in Yerevan. In Baku, too, Moscow tried to halt demonstrations that were increasingly taking an anti-Soviet character. There were already attacks on Communist Party headquarters in the Azerbaijani city of Kirovabad (now Ganja). Curfews were imposed in Yerevan, Baku, Kirovabad and Nakhichevan. The Soviet Interior Ministry forces obliged demonstrators to evacuate Lenin Square in Baku in order to prevent further anti-Soviet gatherings.¹⁰¹

The growing refugee problem had a lasting and tragic influence on the dynamics of ethnic clashes. Michael Hechter argues that the strategic use of violence by ethno-nationalists may attain part of their goals, but that will occur at the expense of the overall population on both sides, who usually pay a very high price.¹⁰² It was reported that Armenian refugees who had left Azerbaijan amounted to 30,907, while the number of Azerbaijani refugees who left Armenia reached 55,000. It was further reported that very few among those who had left their homes were eager to return any time soon. Instead, by the end of December 1988, the majority of the approximately 300,000 Armenians in Azerbaijan (outside NKAO) and the 160,000 Azerbaijanis in Armenia, feeling isolated and vulnerable, had mostly left or were planning to leave.¹⁰³ As a consequence, future cohabitation between Armenians and Azerbaijanis in both republics seemed improbable.

On 7 December the earthquake that struck northern Armenia contributed to the widening of the gap between the ANM and the local Communist government. The ANM's offer to help the government in its relief and rescue operations was not welcome. The non-cooperative attitude of the government could be explained as part of its desire to discredit the ANM in the eyes of the Armenian people and to prevent the organization from gaining additional popular support. The Communist authorities were afraid of the quick mobilizational capacity of the ANM in collecting relief supplies, which could stand in contrast to the government's inefficiency. On

10 December, when some of the ANM leaders refused an order from the Interior Ministry forces to disperse a crowd assembled at the headquarters of the Writer's Union in Armenia, they were immediately arrested and later transferred to Moscow to await trial.¹⁰⁴ The ANM leaders were charged with breaking the Soviet Criminal Code by organizing gatherings that violated public order. With some of the prominent members of the *Krunik* Committee also in jail, Moscow thought that the crackdown on the leadership of the nationalist movement would end the strikes and rallies. It could also provide an opportunity for the local Communist government to restore its hegemony in the absence of its rival.

Moscow's anxiousness about the "negative geopolitical spillover" if the Armenian demands were realized, ended in a policy of "muddling through,"¹⁰⁵ which started with attempts to calm the situation, without acknowledging the general nationalities problem. It continued with offering a series of reforms, followed by limited military control, and ended by placing Nagorno-Karabakh under its direct rule on 12 January, 1989.¹⁰⁶ Arkadii Volskii, a Russian, who headed a nine-member Special Administration Commission, was to administer Karabakh and respond to the demands of both Armenians and Azerbaijanis. This arrangement to introduce more autonomy in the oblast bypassed the Baku authorities but emphasized that Karabakh formally remained part of Azerbaijan.¹⁰⁷

Although Moscow's direct rule brought some improvements to the Karabakh Armenians, including "the acquisition of Armenian textbooks, the provision of access to Armenian television, the teaching of Armenian history in the schools, and the opening of a theatre which produced plays in the Armenian language," ethnic violence did not stop.¹⁰⁸ Azerbaijanis, who carried out attacks against the Russian troops, escaped punishment at the insistence of Moscow so as to avoid further bloodshed. Volskii, whose administration in Karabakh was bound to come to grief, eventually declared: "for a great power ... it is a loss of face to exchange generals for hooligans."¹⁰⁹ On 28 November, 1989, after having been unable to restore order and find a mutually acceptable political solution, Moscow abolished the Volskii Commission and returned Karabakh to direct Azerbaijani rule.¹¹⁰ Gorbachev's decree of 28 November, 1989 urged the Azerbaijani Supreme Soviet to solve the security problems of the Karabakh Armenians within a legal and constitutional framework. Furthermore, it emphasized that the Azerbaijani government should implement the necessary measures to grant the region a *real* autonomous status.¹¹¹ It was difficult to anticipate what Gorbachev would plan to do in the future, but such an administrative withdrawal from Karabakh could grant him justification for future Soviet

military intervention and the imposition of a settlement on both parties to the conflict.

Hence, none of Gorbachev's measures after 20 February, 1988 ended the tensions in Nagorno-Karabakh or Armenia. He was blamed on both sides. The Azerbaijanis believed that Gorbachev favored the Armenians, especially after the administrative arrangement of 12 January, 1989, which the Azerbaijanis considered as the first step in giving Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia. The Armenians, who had initially supported Gorbachev's *perestroika* and hoped that Moscow would unify Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia, gradually came to believe that he was pro-Azerbaijani. Gorbachev's main concern was probably the preservation of order and prevention of bloodshed. He also stayed firm on his stance against redrawing republican borders. However, if he succeeded in the task of keeping the borders unaltered, the prevention of bloodshed became almost impossible once the first wave of ethnic violence had taken place in Sumgait and passions had been aroused on both sides.

THE AZERBAIJANI MOVEMENT ORGANIZED (1989)

We now turn to the analysis of Azerbaijani attempts to organize themselves against Armenian ethno-nationalism and its separatist ambitions in Nagorno-Karabakh. Baku remained relatively calm through most of 1988. The first large demonstrations had taken place in May, but it was only in November that the mobilization of Azerbaijanis under a fully-fledged nationalist movement reached its climax.

Hundreds of thousands demonstrated in Lenin Square and adjacent streets in Baku, raising diverse concerns such as environmental pollution, corruption among local Communist Party officials, restoration of national monuments, etc. However, the retention of Azerbaijani sovereignty over Nagorno-Karabakh remained throughout the dominant rallying issue of the demonstrators. Dragadze argues that some members of the Azerbaijani intelligentsia distanced themselves from the demonstrators "as a tactic in order to act as mediators with the local Communist Party members, who at first had been totally hostile" to Azerbaijani nationalist demands. Therefore, the initiative was taken by the working class (laboring masses), "which at first distanced itself from the intelligentsia whose members it deemed to be mainly corrupt in their pursuit of personal wealth." It seemed that the working class was associating the intelligentsia with the corrupt Communist Party officials in the republic. The orators addressed Armenian hostility and the Nagorno-Karabakh problem, but soon grievances "were to center on

economic mismanagement and workers' rights." Those who took the podium cautioned the demonstrators against shouting anti-Armenian slogans. One of the leaders of the rallies, Neimat Panakhov, "at the time dubbed the Lech Walesa of Azerbaijan," directed most of his criticism toward the local authorities.¹¹²

Panakhov's nationalist mobilization campaign centered on democracy and *glasnost*, despite his attendant condemnation of the Azerbaijani government's management of the Karabakh conflict. The three issues that he placed at the top of the Azerbaijani national agenda were (a) gaining autonomy for Azerbaijanis living in Armenia; (b) transferring criminal cases related to the Sumgait massacres back to Azerbaijan from various locations in Russia; and (c) guaranteeing the safe return of Azerbaijani refugees from Mountainous Karabakh to their homes.¹¹³

The response of Azerbaijan's Communist government to the workers' demonstrations was harsh. Panakhov later stated that "had the government agreed to a genuine dialogue on workers' grievances," the demonstrations would have stopped. However, Communist officials from Baku and Moscow refused to address the crowd, and after several calls to evacuate the square, the authorities moved in troops and tanks and arrested the nationalist leaders, including Panakhov. This intolerant reaction was attributed to the government's "fear of an Azerbaijani democratic workers' movement that had motivated their inaction to stop the Armenian irredentist movement, which they knew full well would be highly provocative for the Azerbaijanis."¹¹⁴ The local Communist leadership, as elsewhere in the USSR, was under Moscow's thumb. Moscow probably exercised pressure on Baku to neglect the workers' demands and turn a deaf ear to the Nagorno-Karabakh problem, since the oblast was already part of Azerbaijan and further provocation could lead to disorder and instability in the republic.

Another incident that aggravated the Azerbaijani nationalist movement in November 1988 was a skirmish fought over a hillside called Topkhana in Nagorno-Karabakh. Tensions emerged when the Karabakh Armenians started to build a vacation resort for the workers of Yerevan's aluminum factory without receiving permission from the Azerbaijani authorities to begin construction. Baku considered the site a "historical natural monument" and argued that the Karabakh Armenians "would resort to underhanded means to deprive Azerbaijanis of Mountainous Karabakh."¹¹⁵ This incident was a good indicator of the loss of mutual confidence; both parties now viewed all incidents in light of inter-ethnic enmity.

Moreover, the Soviet Supreme Court in Moscow issued that same month a death sentence against Akhmed Akhmedov for his involvement in

the Sumgait massacres. The Azerbaijanis, who considered the verdict unjust and pro-Armenian, resorted to the streets, expressing their anger in mass rallies. They accused the Soviet media "of ignoring and distorting their cause." The demonstrating crowd chanted "Ka-ra-bagh!" while many raised overhead banners and posters on which the word "Karabagh" was inscribed. Other slogans on Azerbaijan's polluted environment and the protection of "Azerbaijani language and history" were reiterated in the streets.¹¹⁶ It was the beginning of the emergence of the Azerbaijani nationalist opposition movement. The rallies they organized were very similar to the Armenian demonstrations taking place in Yerevan at the time.

However, Baku's demonstrations had their distinctive character. As the days passed and the workers' rallies mobilized more people, "the green flag of Islam became more prominent, while portraits of Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini were hoisted above the crowd. Chants of 'death to the Armenians' and 'Russians and Armenians out of Azerbaijan' were also heard." The Azerbaijani media coverage of the events was significant. For those who did not participate, the story of the rallies was transmitted to their homes. The local Communist authorities permitted the press and television to convey news of the demonstrations and often expressed sympathy toward the nationalist movement.¹¹⁷

As the number of refugees arriving from Armenia increased, demonstrations and ethnic tensions extended to other areas in Azerbaijan. In December Azerbaijani demonstrators clashed with Soviet troops in Kirovabad and Jalilabad (in Nakhichevan), and some casualties were reported.¹¹⁸

At the same time, the themes of economic deprivation and foreign dominance were featured in the Baku press. Many Azerbaijanis felt that ethnic Armenians competed with them on certain resources. They argued that:

Representatives of the Armenian nationality ... were said to be undeservedly using things that there were not enough [of] for the Azerbaijanis themselves. The relatively well-off Armenians were occupying scarce housing, while Azerbaijanis lived in cramped dormitories, and ... the Karabakh movement was part of a larger scheme to deprive Azerbaijan of territory.¹¹⁹

The Armenian nationalist movement was, hence, a major focus for counter-mobilization of the Azerbaijanis. Fears of loss of sovereignty over Nagorno-Karabakh became widespread, and popular frustration with Baku's

and Moscow's handling of the Karabakh conflict gave more impetus to Azerbaijani nationalism. Many Azerbaijanis felt that the Communists had allowed the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict to drag into November 1988, when it was probably easier to respond to the Armenian demands in February by granting them cultural and linguistic freedoms and strengthening the ties between Soviet Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. Moreover, Moscow's failure to enforce the existing inter-republican borders threatened Azerbaijan's nationhood and awakened Azerbaijani national identity. The powerful emergence of the Azerbaijani nationalist movement in the autumn of 1988 was aimed at both Armenian nationalism and Moscow.

In 1989 the Azerbaijani nationalist movement grew confident enough to form a popular front. Azerbaijan viewed Moscow's direct rule in Karabakh from January 1989 as interference in its domestic affairs.¹²⁰ In July the Azerbaijani Popular Front (APF) emerged as a mass movement, which drew its support from the masses rather than the intelligentsia.¹²¹ The APF leaders became aware that the only issue which could mobilize the population was the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute, but they linked this issue to demands for implementing *perestroika* and achieving greater democracy.¹²² Hence, they organized mass demonstrations where they could both call for Azerbaijani sovereignty over Nagorno-Karabakh and present their political program as the nationalist opposition.¹²³

In August 1989 the demonstrations and the general strike organized by the APF raised the front to a prominent role in local politics and exerted additional pressure on the already weakened Azerbaijani Communist Party.¹²⁴ Among the APF leaders, Abulfaz G. Aliyev (Elchibey), Elibar Mamedov, Leila Iunusova, Iu. Samedoglu and Issa Kambarov were members of the intelligentsia. They emphasized the rights of the Azerbaijanis as "the dominant ethnic group in the republic" and demanded "the restoration of the ethnic unity of Azerbaijanis living on both sides of the Soviet-Iranian border."¹²⁵ The APF threatened to call for a national strike on 2 September if Azerbaijan's Communist government refused to meet its demands, which included an unscheduled meeting of the Soviet Azerbaijani Supreme Soviet to discuss matters of sovereignty, "normalization" in Nagorno-Karabakh, the release of political prisoners, and the formal recognition of the APF.¹²⁶ The Azerbaijani "democratic national"¹²⁷ movement took a nationalist stance on the Karabakh conflict, countering the unification demands raised by the Karabakh Armenians. With the Azerbaijani Communist Party supporting Moscow's policies, the APF grew popular by taking a hard position and demanding direct

Azerbaijani control over Nagorno-Karabakh and the abolishing of its administrative autonomy.

As part of its political program, the APF argued that if Karabakh's autonomy was to remain, then Azerbaijanis living in Armenia must be granted similar autonomy. It also proposed a new law on Azerbaijani sovereignty, "asserting the republic's full control of all its natural resources... the right to veto laws imposed by Moscow, and the right to quit the Soviet Union."¹²⁸

In an effort to halt Armenian separatism, the APF organized a rail and land blockade of Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia, which it called off only on 5 October, 1989, after discussions with the members of the Communist-controlled Azerbaijani Supreme Soviet.¹²⁹ During these negotiations, the APF justified the blockade as a retaliatory action to Armenia's blockade of the exclave of Nakhichevan. One pro-Azerbaijani author argues that the serious impact of the blockade on Armenia indicated the extent to which Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh relied on Azerbaijan's "products and infrastructures," which in turn refute, she says, the Armenian argument that Karabakh was economically dependent on Armenia.¹³⁰

On 15 September the Communist government succumbed to nationalist pressure. The Azerbaijani Supreme Soviet met in an extraordinary session that was broadcast live on television. With demonstrators surrounding the legislature's building, the heated discussions ended with the government officially recognizing the APF. More significantly, some government officials endorsed the APF's stance on sovereignty and the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute.¹³¹ Western reporters opined that the APF had forced the Azerbaijani Communist Party into an "effective partnership" and that, as a "nationalist movement," the APF was on its way to capturing full political power.¹³² It appeared that the APF's political program, which espoused sovereignty, had become the common ground on which the Communists and nationalists agreed. The APF had gained increased popular support as it had centered its criticism on the Communist Party's support for the Kremlin's policy of establishing special administrative rule in Nagorno-Karabakh. This so-called "effective partnership" between the government and the APF was probably achieved on the basis of mutual concessions. The Azerbaijani government recognized the APF as a legal organization and withdrew its support for Moscow's direct rule in Nagorno-Karabakh. In return, the APF ended its rail blockade of Armenia in October 1989.

The intransigence of the APF on the issue of Azerbaijani sovereignty was matched by the stubborn position of the Karabakh Armenians on the unification issue. On 16 August, 1989 the Armenian National Council

(ANC) was created in Nagorno-Karabakh. "The seventy-eight member council declared that it would represent Mountainous Karabakh's Armenians until the restoration of the Oblast's government" that had been dissolved by Moscow in January. On 24 August the ANC announced Nagorno-Karabakh's secession from Azerbaijan and its unification with Armenia. Baku and Moscow predictably condemned this declaration. Like the APF, the ANC was challenging Moscow's steadfastness as regards the special administration in Nagorno-Karabakh, where the situation was becoming extremely dangerous.¹³³

The new law on sovereignty, which the Azerbaijani authorities passed on 5 October, 1989, asserted that Azerbaijan should exert full control over all its territory, including Nagorno-Karabakh. Any territorial changes were to be preceded by a referendum.¹³⁴ Hence, the political success attained by the APF did question not only the autonomous status of Karabakh, but also Moscow's handling of the Karabakh dispute, and even the "Soviet system of government" as a whole.¹³⁵ In a further challenge to Moscow, APF leaders met in October 1989 with some members of the ANM "to promote reconciliation on the future status of Mountainous Karabakh." This meeting coincided with the ANM's attempts to create "self-defense units in Armenia to protect border areas" with Azerbaijan. The meeting, about which we have few details, failed to establish any dialogue, however.¹³⁶

Moscow ended its direct rule over Nagorno-Karabakh and restored the oblast to Azerbaijani sovereignty on 28 November, 1989. "A republic-level oversight committee staffed primarily by ethnic Azeris was created" to facilitate the restoration of Azerbaijani sovereignty and administer the oblast until "local Party organs would be revived." "Azerbaijani agencies" took the responsibility for security in Nagorno-Karabakh.¹³⁷ Initially, the decree represented a capitulation to the APF's demands. The APF feared, however, that Armenian guerrillas in Nagorno-Karabakh and from the border areas with Armenia would now seize the oblast by force. "An Azerbaijani voluntary militia" was therefore created, and skirmishes broke out between the two sides.¹³⁸

Moscow's restoration of Azerbaijani sovereignty over Nagorno-Karabakh raised a number of questions. One possible explanation is that Gorbachev consented to this measure out of frustration. After failing to quell conflict using direct rule, the only alternative was to abandon it. However, this political act was also humiliating for Moscow, because it had succumbed to Azerbaijani nationalist pressure. Therefore, more compelling is the explanation that Gorbachev was laying the groundwork for a future, imposed settlement to the conflict. By placing the administrative and

security issues in Nagorno-Karabakh wholly under Azerbaijani responsibility, Gorbachev was perhaps anticipating a resurgence of violence between the Karabakh Armenians and the Azerbaijanis. The Karabakh Armenians had already rejected direct administrative control from Baku. The renewal of inter-communal violence would, in turn, justify Moscow's direct intervention and the enforcement of a centrally planned settlement to the conflict at some later stage, in the process according the central government previously lost political prestige. This type of settlement could enable Moscow to retain its hegemony in the South Caucasus.

Indeed, ethnic relations between the Armenians and Azerbaijanis had deteriorated further by the end of 1989 as irregulars from both communities continued to attack transportation routes that connected Karabakh to Azerbaijan and Nakhichevan to Armenia. Soviet troops in the region were totally ineffective in maintaining law and order.¹³⁹ In a situation resembling "the verge of war," demographic displacement continued to take place in Karabakh as the Azerbaijanis felt obliged to gather in the Shushi district. The APF's attempts to create a "special force" to defend Azerbaijan's borders did not succeed.¹⁴⁰ Gorbachev's warnings to both parties did not attenuate ethnic tensions. The joint session of the Armenian Supreme Soviet and the ANC of Karabakh on 1 December, 1989 triggered further escalation when it decided to annex Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia and extended Soviet Armenian citizenship rights to the oblast's population.¹⁴¹

Hence, the year 1990 started with an escalation of inter-communal violence and a subsequent Soviet military intervention in Azerbaijan. We will examine next the political developments that triggered this decision.

ARMENIANS AND AZERBAIJANIS FACING THE ESCALATION OF CONFLICT (1989-1991)

The joint decision of the Armenian Supreme Soviet and the ANC of Karabakh of 1 December, 1989 could be considered as an act of defiance to the authorities in Moscow and Baku. Thomas D. Musgrave argues that where a non-self-governing territory intends to separate itself from a state within which it exists, it threatens the territorial integrity of that state.¹⁴² The Baku leadership also perceived the said decision as a violation of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity and as an official claim to its territory.¹⁴³ The Azerbaijani Supreme Soviet decreed on 6 December that Armenia's resolution was an "impermissible interference in sovereign Azerbaijan SSR's affairs, and a measure aimed at encroaching on the Azerbaijan SSR's territorial integrity."¹⁴⁴

The Armenian Supreme Soviet further provoked Baku and Moscow when it discussed on 9 January, 1990 the preparation of a budget for Karabakh.¹⁴⁵ A crowd consisting of the radical wing of the APF responded by committing anti-Armenian violence in Baku, which led to Soviet military intervention to stop the pogroms.¹⁴⁶ Michael Keating argues that in case of conflict between state nationalism and the right of national minorities to self-determination "there may be no resolution short of violence."¹⁴⁷ Violent acts were also committed along Nakhichevan's borders with Iran and Turkey, where the Azerbaijani opposition dismantled border fortifications and occupied the Caspian coastal town of Lenkoran, raising serious security fears in Iran.¹⁴⁸

On 13 January, 1990 a new assault was launched against the Armenian minority in Baku. There were also armed clashes between the two communities in Nagorno-Karabakh and along the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan.¹⁴⁹ Fearing further attacks, Armenians broke into Soviet army installations in Armenia and Karabakh and confiscated weapons in order to protect themselves. This could reflect the degree of tolerance and support of the Soviet army of the Armenians. Armenian officials justified the formation of paramilitary units and the confiscation of weapons for defensive purposes.¹⁵⁰ However, for some Armenians the tense situation could have been an excuse for the formation of independent militias.

Michael P. Croissant argues that the anti-Armenian violence in Baku in January 1990 was the result of "protracted tensions" since 1988; it was instigated and committed especially by Azerbaijani refugees, who had been driven out of Karabakh in thousands.¹⁵¹ The Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet responded by imposing a state of emergency. Gorbachev sent Yevgenii Primakov to Baku on 14 January and reinforced Soviet troops in the city to prevent further atrocities and bring order to Azerbaijan.¹⁵² However, Moscow's mobilization of forces came late and raised doubts among observers whether these new troops were sent to prevent further violence or impose occupation by the central government.¹⁵³

On 19 January, 1990 the newly reinforced Soviet troops started their assault on Baku. After hours of fighting and more than a hundred Azerbaijanis dead, the Soviet troops occupied the city and imposed martial law.¹⁵⁴ However, it was difficult to control the situation in many Azerbaijani towns outside Baku. Ethnic clashes continued in the border regions between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The aim of the Soviet military intervention was to crush the Azerbaijani nationalists, discredit the APF and consolidate the existing pro-Moscow government.¹⁵⁵ These "Black January" events created

new anti-Soviet hatreds and wounds among the Azerbaijanis, however, which they have found difficult to forget ever since.¹⁵⁶

The Kremlin justified its interventionist policy in Azerbaijan by arguing that the "Azerbaijani nationalists had called for the forceful overthrow of Soviet power and the secession of Azerbaijan from the USSR."¹⁵⁷ Moscow changed the leadership of the Azerbaijani Communist Party and installed Mutalibov as its new First Secretary. He would subsequently become the first President of Soviet Azerbaijan. To win popular support, Mutalibov embraced in the coming months a program calling for Azerbaijani sovereignty over Nagorno-Karabakh, the withdrawal of Soviet troops from the republic and disciplinary measures against "unprincipled Party members."¹⁵⁸ However, he also called only for a gradual process toward political independence, "given Azerbaijan's dependence on Russian supplies in the economic field."¹⁵⁹ Attempts to reestablish confidence between the new leadership of the Azerbaijani Communist Party and the Azerbaijani people proved difficult, however. Mutalibov wanted to satisfy both Moscow and the Azerbaijani people. Relying steadfastly on Moscow, he expected from the Soviet authorities, in return, the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in Azerbaijan's favor. However, his attempts to disarm the Azerbaijani nationalist political opposition and reassert Baku's control over Nagorno-Karabakh failed.¹⁶⁰

Moscow's intervention in Baku was directed more at countering the APF's organizational structure and its supporters rather than protecting the local Armenians. The late intervention of Soviet troops to stop the anti-Armenian violence in Baku was probably calculated to hold the APF responsible for the Armenian deaths. The APF's nationalist political agenda had begun to pose a threat to the integrity of the USSR. There was the need, therefore, to take firm action against the APF to strengthen the Communist leadership in Azerbaijan and preserve the USSR. Hence, internal political developments in Azerbaijan and Armenia determined to some extent the escalating pace of the Karabakh conflict.

In Armenia, on the other hand, anti-Soviet sentiment had been running high ever since 1988, when Gorbachev first refused to attach Karabakh to Armenia, and later when Soviet troops did not prevent the anti-Armenian massacres in Sumgait.¹⁶¹ The Karabakh Committee members were released from Soviet imprisonment on 31 May, 1989 and soon resumed activity under the name of the ANM.¹⁶² The nationalist activists received a hero's welcome in Yerevan and were immediately escorted to participate in a midnight rally. The ANM now moved forward to establish itself as the leading exponent of Armenian political demands, because the people

believed that the local Communist Party leadership was not defending those claims. The Armenian Communist government refused to be associated with the ANM and preferred to remain loyal to Moscow. On the other hand, the arrested members of the Krunk Committee of Nagorno-Karabakh remained jailed and were released later.

The escalation of violence in January 1990 brought the ANM closer to the levers of political power in Armenia. ANM associates and representatives worked as a crisis management team, often with the government and Communist Party officials. The ANM also organized a handful of unofficial paramilitary groups to serve as "self-defense brigades." Armenian armed groups were on patrol, too, in Nagorno-Karabakh, particularly in areas where Armenian and Azerbaijani villages were close to one another. In February 1990 the ANM took a further step when its executive committee conducted informal talks with APF representatives in Riga, the capital of Latvia, under the auspices of the Baltic Council. "In an unusual display of solidarity," the ANM "condemned the Soviet use of force in Baku and both sides issued a communiqué in which they called for a cease-fire to be effective February 15, and for the creation of a council to resolve all outstanding disputes."¹⁶³ However, these talks were soon interrupted as news was received of further deterioration in the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Power was transferred from the Communists to the nationalists in Armenia after a decisive victory of the ANM and its allies over the Communist Party in the elections to the republic's Supreme Soviet in July 1990. The first non-Communist government assumed power on 5 August, 1990 when Levon Ter-Petrosian, a founding member of the Karabakh Committee and the leader of the ANM, was elected chairperson of Armenia's Supreme Soviet. This transfer took place without bloodshed and in accordance with constitutional procedures.¹⁶⁴ Hroch argues that successful participation in the institutions of the state (one of the stages of a national program) usually gives the nationalist movement "prestige" and further opportunity to present its political demands "more effectively."¹⁶⁵ The opposition nationalist ANM's victory in the 1990 parliamentary elections was badly needed for Armenia's internal stability and transition to independence. On 21 September, 1991 Armenia voted overwhelmingly in favor of secession from the USSR, and, on 16 October, 1991, Ter-Petrosian became the country's first President elected by a popular vote.¹⁶⁶ The referendum on independence was conducted after the unsuccessful coup against Gorbachev in August 1991, which, Elizabeth Fuller noted, meant that "Armenia had chosen the correct path in deciding to secede."¹⁶⁷

Back in Azerbaijan, Mutalibov's Communist government committed a "severe tactical mistake" by supporting the Moscow coup of August 1991. Despite Mutalibov's domestic unpopularity, the nationalist opposition APF failed to depose him. However, his persistence in office and failure to restore Azerbaijani sovereignty in Karabakh affected Azerbaijan's internal stability and weakened its national unified stance against Armenia's irredentist ambitions.¹⁶⁸ The instrumental use of the Karabakh conflict by the conflicting parties as a means of political mobilization, together with the loosening of the center's control over the Soviet periphery after the August 1991 coup, pushed both republics toward open warfare.

We can deduce that Moscow's manipulation of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and its military support of both parties at various stages of the conflict aimed at keeping the governments of Armenia and Azerbaijan under its control. This had become clearer after the "Black January" incidents and the imposition of Mutalibov as the new ruler in Azerbaijan. However, the August coup would have momentous consequences on the evolution of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict. The months following this unsuccessful coup witnessed the emergence of the Armenian and Azerbaijani independent republics. Thereafter, the level of the escalation of violence in Nagorno-Karabakh was to be decided more or less by the local nationalist politicians rather than in Moscow. The Karabakh conflict had become a focal point for nationalist politicians both in Yerevan and Baku, who used it instrumentally to seek domestic political success.

The Nagorno-Karabakh problem had distant roots, but it is undeniable that ethno-nationalists in Armenia, Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan used ethnic identity for purposes of political mobilization to attain political goals. Ethnic political mobilization of this sort caused ethnic tensions and conflict between the Armenians and Azerbaijanis. After having reached a point of no return, both parties began to advocate a military solution to the Karabakh conflict. This exposed them to manipulation by the newly independent Russian Federation, the major supplier of arms to both parties. This will be discussed in Section II of this article.

**SECTION II:
FROM ESCALATION TO OPEN WARFARE (1991-1994)
FROM ETHNIC MOBILIZATION TO WAR
(1991-1992)**

The account provided in this section has important implications for the escalation of violence and eventually the outbreak of open warfare between

the Armenians and Azerbaijanis. Though it might seem just an additional detail, this phase of the conflict is crucial to understanding the escalatory process.

The Turkish Prime Minister, Suleyman Demirel, congratulated Ter Petrosian on his election as President and offered to cooperate economically with Armenia. In a spectacular political move, Demirel raised the possibility of providing Armenia with access to the Turkish port of Trabzon on the Black Sea and promised to include Armenia among the members of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) organization, which was eventually created in 1992. Moreover, Turkey wanted to construct a gas and oil pipeline connecting the oilfields of the Central Asian republics with the Turkish port of Trabzon through Armenia. Hence, Trabzon could become a free economic zone for Armenia. This would facilitate the reestablishment of the rail network along the Turkish-Armenian border.¹⁶⁹

Ter Petrosian was interested in the Turkish initiative because it would provide Armenia with new prospects of economic development and would facilitate access to the world markets. An initial contract for the execution of this plan between two outwardly private companies was signed in Moscow.¹⁷⁰ Hence, Ter Petrosian's ambitious economic outlook for independent Armenia would clash with Russia's economic interests in the South Caucasus. Questions were asked if Russia would encourage Armenia to drift gradually towards the West. Moreover, would Moscow support a western initiated and financed oil pipeline to be constructed in its 'near abroad'?

The analysis of the escalation of the Armenian-Azerbaijani violence in the early part of 1991 and the Soviet participation in some battles in the last few months of the Communist state's existence could provide some answers to the questions raised above, which became very crucial from the first months of 1992.

On 30 April, 1991 the Soviet armed forces and Azerbaijani Interior Ministry troops had launched a massive offensive to establish full control in Nagorno-Karabakh. This joint Soviet-Azerbaijani military offensive, known as 'Operation Ring,' caused massive violations of human rights.¹⁷¹ "Internal troops subordinated to the Soviet MVD (Interior Ministry) ... conducted actions coordinated with Azerbaijani OMON (Azerbaijani Interior Ministry) forcibly to deport entire villages, often brutalizing civilians, including women, children and elderly persons."¹⁷² The troops undertook "systematic deportations" of the Armenian population to Stepanakert in order to replace them with Azerbaijani refugees, who had fled from Armenia.¹⁷³ "Hundreds of villagers were forced at gun point to leave all their belongings and sign

letters of 'voluntary' consent to deportation. One whole village was deported at night and the people left over the border in the pouring rain at midnight with no possessions.¹⁷⁴ Moscow and Baku justified their military operation by declaring that the attacked Armenian villages were "harboring Armenian militias" which were refusing to lay down their arms and were attacking the Azerbaijani villages.¹⁷⁵ The operation, aimed at demoralizing the Armenians and persuading them to abandon their territorial demands, continued well into the summer.

The impact of 'Operation Ring' was profound on the Karabakh Armenians and led to the emergence of a more militant Armenian leadership in the oblast, which vowed to protect the Armenian villages from further attacks. Ter Petrosian also viewed the Soviet military actions as "undeclared war" and "state terrorism" against Armenia.¹⁷⁶ Moreover, 'Operation Ring' increased the security dilemma between the Armenians and Azerbaijanis.¹⁷⁷ As the Karabakh Armenians took up arms for protection against possible Azerbaijani attacks, the fears of the Azerbaijanis also multiplied, and they also armed themselves for the same purpose. As the Armenians fought to retake "their villages", Azerbaijanis also used force to maintain their positions. Smith argues that "for the members of the secessionist group violence becomes instrumentally rational, in order to resist state repression in the name of the nation."¹⁷⁸ As a consequence, the number of refugees and casualties mounted rapidly on both sides, and any possibility of coexistence between the two communities within the borders of Azerbaijan became almost impossible. The Soviet policy of using the traditional military option to solve the conflict and crush the opposition had failed.¹⁷⁹ Armenian armed groups continued to put up resistance in Karabakh. By late 1991 population shifts in Karabakh had become complete on ethnic lines and each group tried to conquer as much territory as it could.¹⁸⁰

However, if Moscow's intention in the short run was to send signals to the Armenians through "Operation Ring" that their demands were unacceptable and that they had to resolve the Karabakh conflict through negotiations, then it did achieve a limited breakthrough. In this context, 'Operation Ring' could be considered a signal to the Karabakh Armenians that Moscow did not favor a military resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. In addition, Moscow wanted to keep its leverage in the region and manipulate both sides of the conflict to the extent that they would recognize Russia's role in any future peaceful settlement. However, the main signal was probably aimed at Ter Petrosian. Moscow wanted him to abandon his pro-Western orientation and follow the traditional pro-Russian orientation

of the Armenians. On 23 September, 1991, Armenians and Azerbaijanis discussed a new peace initiative, introduced by the Presidents of the Soviet republics of Russia and Kazakhstan.¹⁸¹

In the meantime, Mutalibov was changing course in face of increasing popular demands for a firm position on Nagorno-Karabakh and was trying to co-opt the rising nationalist sentiments in Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan declared its independence from the USSR on 20 August, 1991. The Azerbaijani parliament also voted in November 1991 to terminate the autonomous status of Karabakh. This was a clear indication of Azerbaijan's desire to exercise full sovereignty over Karabakh.

On the other hand, the ANC was now in control of large parts of Karabakh and was calling for a referendum on Karabakh's independence. It was the only "democratic solution they could envisage" to counter the Azerbaijani decision.¹⁸² Hechter argues that usually the aim of the nationalist group is to secede from the larger political unit and establish a separate state.¹⁸³ In the autumn of 1991, the Armenian majority among the 180,000 population of Karabakh voted overwhelmingly for independence. The Azerbaijanis, who comprised about 25 percent of the total population in Nagorno-Karabakh, boycotted the referendum. The ANC went further and organized general elections for a new parliament, allocating seats on a proportional basis for the Azerbaijanis, too.¹⁸⁴ Despite the Azerbaijani boycott, this parliament was elected, and it immediately declared Nagorno-Karabakh's independence from Azerbaijan on 6 January, 1992. In a further amazing move, the ANC of Karabakh asked to become a member of the newly established Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS),¹⁸⁵ but the "request was ignored." Moreover, the ANC laid claim to the district of Shahumian, which had been excluded from the boundaries of NKAO in 1923. The Nagorno-Karabakh leadership ruled out any peaceful solution that did not accept the independence of the enclave, including Shahumian.¹⁸⁶ This declaration was followed immediately by fighting in the area between Armenian and Azerbaijani militiamen.

The self-declared Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh was not granted international recognition, even by Armenia. Armenian diplomacy adopted this tactical stance because the Ter Petrosian administration was trying to avoid international criticism for Armenia's supporting the war in Karabakh and did not wish to alienate Russia and Turkey. As a consequence, however, Armenia lost control over the Karabakh leadership after it failed to persuade the latter to agree to its policy options.¹⁸⁷

The rift between Ter Petrosian and the Nagorno-Karabakh leadership intensified after 8 January, 1992, when Artur Mkrtchian, a member of the

radical nationalist Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnak) party, was elected Chairman of the Nagorno-Karabakh Supreme Soviet. Ter Petrosian was apparently backing Robert Kocharian, Mkrтчian's rival. Mkrтчian's election tightened the relationship between radical elements in Karabakh and their supporters in Armenia. It also "gave the Dashnaks in Yerevan added leverage against Ter Petrosian, allowing them to cast doubts on his patriotic commitment to the struggle in Karabakh." The Dashnak party, with its headquarters in the Diaspora, considered Turkey as a threat to Armenia and was "favouring a harder line against Ankara" as long as Turkey did not recognize the Armenian Genocide of 1915. It also pressured the Armenian government to formally recognize Nagorno-Karabakh's independence. Eventually, the Dashnak party found itself on the side of the opposition political parties in Armenia and formed in June 1992 a coalition with the Union for National Self-Determination against Ter Petrosian's moderate Karabakh policy.¹⁸⁸

In a clear sign of discontent with the leadership in Nagorno-Karabakh, Ter Petrosian declared that "Armenia gave up all territorial claims on Nagorno-Karabakh, and that it had lost all influence over decisions taken by the enclave." However, the Armenian government continued to supply Karabakh with humanitarian aid, food and arms in order not to become further alienated from the opposition parties in Parliament and to refute doubts raised by the Dashnaks on the President's patriotic commitment to the Karabakh cause.¹⁸⁹ Yerevan also tried to explain to the international community that Karabakh had the right to decide on its future.

The Karabakh leadership's policy contradicted the peaceful diplomatic approach of Ter Petrosian, who was probably not less committed to the Nagorno-Karabakh cause. Ter Petrosian was also a nationalist, but after becoming President of Armenia, he preferred to achieve a political resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, supported by the international community, rather than pursue the military option that would not necessarily bring peace and economic development to the region.

The belligerence of the Karabakh leadership increased the possibility of full military confrontation between the Armenians and Azerbaijanis. With the withdrawal of the Soviet forces from Karabakh in December 1991, military operations escalated. Azerbaijani forces tried to occupy positions vacated by the withdrawing troops and started their attacks on besieged Stepanakert.¹⁹⁰ Karabakh became an open battlefield with atrocities being committed on both sides and with thousands of refugees seeking refuge out of the oblast.¹⁹¹

Four months after his election, Mkrtychian was assassinated under mysterious circumstances in front of his house in Stepanakert on 14 April, 1992. No further details are known about this incident. For his part, the Azerbaijani President, Mutalibov, chose to play the nationalist card in order to stay in power. He endorsed the popular demand for a full-scale economic blockade of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. "All transportation and communication links between Stepanakert and its environs were cut, and the facilities providing the city with power and water were demolished by Azerbaijani forces." Mutalibov, who had initially resisted the formation of a national army, now issued a decree "calling up all able-bodied citizens aged 18 or older for active military service."¹⁹² Azerbaijan was preparing for a full-scale war. The next part of this section will discuss the military and political developments in Karabakh between the years 1992 and 1994.

MILITARY AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS (1992-1994)

In early 1992 the war in Nagorno-Karabakh had already been transformed from an internal matter of the former USSR to a full-scale war between two independent sovereign states, Armenia and Azerbaijan. Therefore, the military operations in and outside the borders of Nagorno-Karabakh became wrapped up with the dynamics of regional geopolitical interests and old rivalries between Russia, Turkey and Iran. However, as the war escalated into four different phases, it influenced not only domestic political stability in Armenia and Azerbaijan, but also the regional powers, which tried to mediate in order to prevent further deterioration in the area. Nevertheless, these powers were cautious not to get directly involved in the conflict.

THE FIRST PHASE OF THE WAR (JANUARY-MAY 1992)

The catalyst for the Azerbaijani offensive in 1992 was the proclamation by the Armenian leadership of the independent Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh. The aim of the Azerbaijani troops was to break the Armenian resistance and capture Stepanakert. Parallel with the Azerbaijani ground assault, Mutalibov expressed readiness for negotiations. He insisted, however, that the only concession on offer was "the issue of greater cultural autonomy within Azerbaijan. He stated that Azerbaijan had become a democracy, where questions of discrimination could be easily addressed by guarantees of human rights for all."¹⁹³ The Azerbaijani military offensive, which ultimately failed, became an additional factor in the escalation of hostilities in 1992.

The Armenian counter-offensive – which according to the Azerbaijanis, was “backed by Russian arms”¹⁹⁴ – took place in February 1992 against Azerbaijani-populated Khojalu. After the seizure of Khojalu, many of its inhabitants were massacred. According to Human Rights Watch/Helsinki, “more than 200 civilians were killed in the attack,” making it “the largest massacre to date in the conflict.”¹⁹⁵ Hechter argues that “groups can employ violence strategically to polarize a conflict to their advantage.”¹⁹⁶ The Karabakh Armenians could be said to have implemented this strategy to hinder future inter-ethnic cohabitation with the Azerbaijani inhabitants of Nagorno-Karabakh and to ‘polarize’ the conflict to their advantage. It should be noted, however, that the Azerbaijanis, too, aimed at preventing inter-ethnic cohabitation from February 1988, when they committed the Sumgait massacres against the city’s Armenian residents. Later, the Azerbaijanis participated in ‘Operation Ring’, which was planned by the central Communist leadership in Moscow against the Karabakh Armenians in an attempt to frighten them and make them flee the region. After capturing Khojalu, the Armenians succeeded in lessening the military pressure on Stepanakert. Moreover, the Armenians claimed that they had negotiated with the Azerbaijanis on a safe passage to evacuate the civilians of Khojalu, but this retreat was disorganized. After interviewing some survivors, Helsinki Watch concluded that the Azerbaijani “militia still in uniform, and some still carrying their guns, were interspersed with the masses of civilians” evacuating the town.¹⁹⁷

The loss of Khojalu was both a military and moral defeat for the Azerbaijanis since it was one of the remaining two Azerbaijani-inhabited towns in Nagorno-Karabakh from which they had tried to spread their control over all of Karabakh. This military setback also had disastrous repercussions in Baku. Hechter argues that nationalist violence is adopted as a strategic instrument “to raise the Center’s costs of controlling a restless periphery.”¹⁹⁸ Indeed, in addition to the approximately 200,000 Azerbaijani refugees who had left Armenia and Karabakh since 1988, new waves of displaced persons now arrived from Karabakh, heightening Azerbaijan’s internal difficulties and creating humanitarian problems.¹⁹⁹ At an emergency session of the Azerbaijani Parliament on 6 March, Mutalibov was held responsible for the Armenian successes in Karabakh and was forced to submit his resignation.²⁰⁰ Political instability in Baku revived the opposition ARF’s hopes to capture power and force a harder stance as regards the conflict over Karabakh.

On the diplomatic scene, Iran showed readiness to mediate and help attenuate tensions between the warring parties. This offer would also

counter possible Turkish influence in the region.²⁰¹ Iranian diplomatic efforts, which also envisaged a role for the CSCE in the peacemaking process, helped arrange two cease-fires in February and a tripartite meeting among Armenian, Azerbaijani and Iranian representatives in Tehran on 14-16 March. A draft plan to resolve the Karabakh conflict was discussed. Although the Armenian and Azerbaijani governments welcomed Iranian mediation, peace was not secured, and hostilities resumed at the end of March. The Iranian foreign minister, Ali Akbar Velayati, "laid the blame for the collapse of the cease-fire on the CIS military leadership in the region."²⁰²

The next focus of the Armenian military operations was Shushi, the last Azerbaijani stronghold in Nagorno-Karabakh. When Shushi fell on 9 May, 1992, the Azerbaijani government terminated the Iranian peace-making efforts as a sign of discontent.²⁰³ Smith argues that if the state is weak and the "solidaristic nationalist group" challenging its authority is strong, then violence is most likely to escalate.²⁰⁴ Indeed, with political instability and a power struggle over the presidency in Baku, the Armenians pressed for further victories on the battlefield.²⁰⁵ In May the Armenian forces broke through the Lachin region, the narrow strip of Azerbaijani land that separated Nagorno-Karabakh from Armenia. The so-called 'Lachin corridor' was created and Nagorno-Karabakh was linked by land to Armenia. The Armenians thus reduced the pressure of supplying the formerly besieged enclave solely by air. Moreover, the previously psychological connection to Armenia now turned into reality. By the end of that month, almost all of Nagorno-Karabakh was under Armenian control.²⁰⁶

It seemed that the failure of diplomatic efforts had increased the likelihood of a final military solution. As the first phase of the war came to an end by the end of May 1992, it was argued that three major factors had contributed to the Armenian victory. First, the weak structure and limited number of qualified military officers in the Azerbaijani army had made the latter rely on Afghan mercenaries as well as advice from retired Turkish officers. Second, the Nagorno-Karabakh army had unmistakable superiority in fighting guerilla warfare in an area that it considered as "home territory." Russian military assistance was also seen as decisive in supplying military aid and equipment to the Armenians. Third, the role of the Armenian Diaspora was noted in funding the war in terms of economic and military aid.²⁰⁷ The following statement by Samvel Babayan, the one-time Defense Minister of the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh and the Commander of the Nagorno-Karabakh Army underlines the political position of the Karabakh Armenian leadership with respect to war and peace in the area:

We will not give in to pressures from anyone. We have no room for compromise when it comes to the safety, security and freedom of our people. The strength of our armed forces is one of the main safeguards for peace. We have to be vigilant while waiting for a political solution.²⁰⁸

The Karabakh Armenians were convinced that they were fighting for self-defense and the liberation of their territory, although there were also volunteers from Armenia fighting alongside the Karabakh army. The Nagorno-Karabakh leadership believed that only through inflicting a military defeat on Azerbaijan would it put pressure on both Armenia and Azerbaijan to recognize Karabakh's independence.

The Karabakh army's victories in May 1992 did not lead to the capitulation of Azerbaijan, while Armenia was still prepared to listen to moderate and sensible peace offers to resolve the conflict made either by the Nagorno-Karabakh leadership and/or by the Azerbaijani government. However, in the wake of escalating armed hostilities, a peaceful resolution remained out of reach.

The military defeats of the Azerbaijani forces intensified the internal debate in Turkey on the usefulness of Ankara's declared neutrality in the conflict. Direct intervention in support of Azerbaijan could have created serious problems for Turkey because it could revive Armenian fears about Ankara's aggressive pan-Turkic policy in the region and also jeopardize Ankara's relations with its North Atlantic Treaty Organization allies. Demirel stated: "We are not indifferent to the sufferings of the Azerbaijanis, ... but ... one step too many by Turkey would put the whole world behind Armenia."²⁰⁹

The official Turkish policy towards the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict did not reflect the country's internal public opinion, which was largely critical of Demirel's hesitant and cautious steps. The Turkish government's failure to demonstrate its support for Azerbaijan could lead the Central Asian republics to lose confidence in the Turkish 'political model' and open the way for Iranian influence in the region. When Demirel tried to respond to public demands in favor of intervention, Armenia's Foreign Minister, Raffi Hovannisian, warned Turkey to "return to its neutrality" and not play the role of a "regional superpower."²¹⁰

The internal debate over Turkish policy towards Azerbaijan was revived after the Armenian forces also attacked Nakhichevan in May 1992.²¹¹ Demirel's pledges to aid Nakhichevan to enable it to cope with the

Armenian assault did not go unnoticed. Marshal Yevgenii Shaposhnikov, the Defense Minister of the Russian Federation, cautioned Turkey, in the name of the CIS, against any provocative act against Armenia that could "trigger a third World War."²¹² The Russian warning was based on the spirit of the Collective Security Pact that Russia, Armenia and four Central Asian republics, all members of the CIS, had signed on 15 May, 1992.

The Nagorno-Karabakh war thus remained not only a domestic issue central to Armenian and Azerbaijani politics, but it also created serious dilemmas for the regional powers. For Turkey, the Armenian advances were not only at the expense of its ethnic kinsmen in Azerbaijan, but they also posed a challenge to Ankara's role in influencing the Turkic states of Central Asia. For Russia, the conflict was an opportunity to intervene as a third-party mediator, but such an attempt could pose the risk of a wider regional war and discredit Moscow's future political plans in the geo-strategic region of Transcaucasia. Finally, Iran tried to step in as a peacemaker to establish a foothold in the region and cut short any future Turkish influence there. The above-mentioned geopolitical interests of the regional powers, which came into the open in early 1992, could also be viewed in terms of their old historical rivalries in the region.

The Armenian victories, which were partly the result of the political disarray in Azerbaijan, were temporarily reversed in June 1992, when the APF came to power in Baku. Moreover, as the war entered its second phase, the mediatory efforts of Russia and the CSCE were activated.

THE SECOND PHASE OF THE WAR (JUNE -DECEMBER 1992)

The June 1992 presidential elections in Azerbaijan brought the nationalist opposition to power.²¹³ The new President, Abulfaz Elchibey, the APF leader, had mobilized the electorate on the Karabakh issue and now promised to retake Nagorno-Karabakh within a short period.²¹⁴

Elchibey reversed the foreign policy of his predecessor, Mutalibov, and pursued an anti-Russian, anti-Iranian, and pro-Turkish policy. Azerbaijan now viewed Russia and Iran as two regional powers trying to interfere in its internal affairs. This choice antagonized not only Russia and Iran, but embarrassed Turkey as well.²¹⁵ Despite Elchibey's call for "political unification" with Iranian Azerbaijan and the creation of a "greater Azeri state," Iran continued its efforts to establish peace in Karabakh. Iran did not hesitate to criticize Armenian aggression, but simultaneously attempted to establish a foothold in the region by keeping its political and economic ties with Yerevan.²¹⁶

Elchibey immediately resorted to military operations in Karabakh. The Azerbaijani assault that started on 12 June was directed at the Martakert and Shahumian districts in northern and central Nagorno-Karabakh. Northern Karabakh fell into Azerbaijani hands for the first time since 1988. The degree of devastation left an impression among Armenians that a Karabakh empty of its Armenian inhabitants was the ultimate aim of Azerbaijan. The Karabakh Armenians feared they would eventually suffer the fate of the Nakhichevan Armenians, who had in the end, been obliged to leave their homes. They were worried that losing Nagorno-Karabakh would threaten their national identity.²¹⁷

The Azerbaijani advance forced thousands of refugees into Armenia, in addition to the 180,000 refugees who had already left Azerbaijan since 1988. Elchibey raised the ceiling of his territorial claims to "at least the whole of southern Armenia, as far north as Lake Sevan," a demand that dashed the last hopes for a compromise. Armenians became convinced that agreeing to these peace terms would be not less dangerous than fighting.²¹⁸

Even if Elchibey's expansionist statements were tactical, designed to boost the morale of the Azerbaijani forces and secure him more popularity at home, they created security concerns among the regional powers. The APF's pro-Turkish foreign policy and the military success of the Azerbaijani forces in northern Nagorno-Karabakh generated fears in Iran and Russia. Iran was worried about its domestic stability and its border with Azerbaijan. If the millions of Azerbaijanis living inside Iran were mobilized, they could create a security problem along the border. Likewise, Russia's concerns about military developments in the South Caucasus multiplied because an Azerbaijani victory could threaten its internal security and territorial integrity, particularly with respect to its Turkic-speaking minorities. Any attempt by Elchibey to realize his territorial claims would have encouraged Iranian and Russian intervention to bring his military advances to a halt. Elchibey's claims, hence, prompted Iran and Russia "to adopt a pro-Armenian posture in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict," at least during this particular stage.²¹⁹

For Elchibey, it was possible to act both instrumentally and with commitment. The Azerbaijanis now believed that they had nothing to lose since they had been forced to abandon territory and their ethnic presence in Karabakh. This was an ethnicized battle in which the Azerbaijanis were now fighting for everything. The same argument could also be applied to the Armenians, who were not less determined and committed than the Azerbaijanis.

The military reversal in Karabakh presented a challenge to domestic political stability in Armenia as well. The ruling ANM elite ignored popular demands to resign. The government declared that domestic "stability was the highest priority for the country and that no forces, either internally or externally would be allowed to threaten the integrity of the state." It coped with the psychological and political pressure by emphasizing the need for a joint struggle by government and opposition in the Karabakh war. The latter could become threatened in case of internal political instability in Armenia. Moreover, another issue, which maintained an uneasy internal stability, was the danger of the total loss of independence and the possibility of a looming Turkish threat.²²⁰

In September 1992 the Azerbaijani forces continued their advance and captured strategic areas in the Lachin and Shushi districts, which increased their ability to interrupt traffic and avoid the crossing of convoys from Armenia to Nagorno-Karabakh.²²¹ Thereafter, an Armenian counter offensive succeeded in stopping the Azerbaijani advance, and the danger to the Lachin corridor was relieved. The military situation stabilized in the following months.

Throughout the year 1992, military instruments proved stronger than diplomatic efforts. The Karabakh Armenians and Azerbaijanis refused to adhere to Iranian and Russian calls to stop the fighting. This could be for two reasons. First, the conflicting parties were receiving foreign support to continue the war and hoped to emerge victorious and politically dominant. Second, the military stock of the Soviet army, which had been confiscated by the warring sides, made them determined to continue fighting.²²² The table below gives a clear picture on the comparative military forces of Nagorno-Karabakh, Armenia and Azerbaijan in 1992:

Political Unit	Military Personnel	Artillery	Tanks	Armored Personnel Carriers	Armored Fighting Vehicles	Fighter Aircraft
Karabakh	20,000 (a)	16	13	120	-	-
Armenia	20,000 (b)	170	160	240	200	-
Azerbaijan	42,000 (c)	330	280	360	480	170

(a) includes 8,000 volunteers from Armenia.

(b) all in the army.

(c) 38,000 in the army, 1,600 in the air force.

Source: The International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 1993-1994* (London, 1993), pp. 68-69, 71-73, quoted in Chorbajian, 'Introduction to the English Language Edition', in Chorbajian, Donabedian and Mutafian, *The Caucasian Knot*, p. 14.

A key development in the mediatory efforts to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was the UN agreement in late 1992 to make the CSCE the leading international body to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.²²³ The CSCE's 11-member Minsk Group, which had already been involved in facilitating negotiations since the summer of 1992, continued to be guided by the principles agreed upon in the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, which include the inviolability of international borders, the territorial integrity of member states, human rights and the right of peoples to self-determination.²²⁴

The preliminary discussions in Rome, attended by the CSCE members as well as Armenian and Azerbaijani delegates and held between June and September 1992, did not find common ground because the dispute over the official status of representatives of Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians was not resolved.²²⁵ The Azerbaijani delegates categorically refused to negotiate with Armenian representatives from Nagorno-Karabakh, asserting that such a step would threaten Azerbaijan's sovereignty. They underlined that Armenia and Azerbaijan should remain the sole negotiators for the conflict. They argued that Armenian and Azerbaijani officials already represented both communities in Nagorno-Karabakh.²²⁶

Another difficulty that blocked discussions was the final status of Nagorno-Karabakh. Armenia insisted that the future legal status of Nagorno-Karabakh should be determined after the permanent cessation of hostilities and the deployment of international peacekeeping forces in the region. According to Azerbaijan, however, any mandate to a peacekeeping force would diminish its sovereignty over the region. Therefore, the legal status of Nagorno-Karabakh must be clarified first, as a precondition to any further talks with Armenia.²²⁷ Because of these contentious issues, the CSCE meetings in 1992 did not make any progress in reconciling the basic differences between the parties.

The Russian Foreign Ministry also stepped in and vitalized its peacemaking efforts through a meeting held in Moscow on 20 February, 1992.²²⁸ After intensive negotiations, with the participation of Pavel Grachev, the Russian Defense Minister, an agreement was reached on 19 September, 1992, which called for a cease-fire and a phased withdrawal of Armenian and Azerbaijani armed forces from the conflict zone.²²⁹ However, the lack of implementation of this agreement eventually led to the escalation of confrontations beyond Karabakh's borders and threatened the outbreak of an international crisis.

During the second phase of the war, the Karabakh Armenians and the Azerbaijani ethno-nationalists remained firm in their uncompromising positions. The Karabakh Armenians were fighting to preserve their self-

declared independence, while the APF-led Azerbaijanis were trying hard to restore Azerbaijani sovereignty over Nagorno-Karabakh. It proved difficult for either the CSCE or Russia to negotiate a cease-fire because the warring parties preferred to continue their military operations. The early months of 1993 were marked by heavy fighting both along the Armenia-Azerbaijan border and beyond the borders of Nagorno-Karabakh.

THE THIRD PHASE: MILITARY ESCALATION THREATENING INTERNATIONAL PEACE (MARCH-OCTOBER 1993)

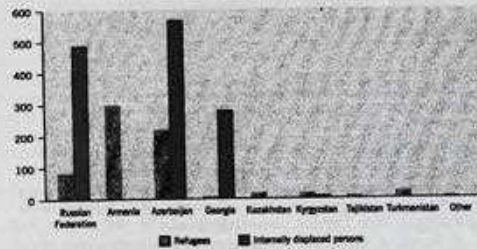
A large-scale, successful Armenian offensive in April 1993 recaptured most of the Martakert district and seized strategic territories beyond the borders of Nagorno-Karabakh as far as Kelbajar in the west and Fizuli in the southeast.²⁰ The Armenian incursion approached the borders of Iran and added to the number of Azerbaijani refugees. Turkey, Iran and the UN Security Council condemned the offensive. On 30 April, 1993 the UN Security Council passed Resolution 822, which called for an immediate cease-fire and "withdrawal of all occupying forces from the Kelbajar district and other recently occupied areas of Azerbaijan." This was the first Security Council resolution concerning the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict. It enshrined the principle of the inviolability of international borders and confirmed the primary role of the CSCE in the resolution of the Karabakh conflict.

Parallel to the passage of Resolution 822, the USA, Turkey and Russia presented a draft, tripartite peace plan to the warring parties. The three-step plan called for (a) a timetable for the beginning of a 60-day cease-fire; (b) the withdrawal of Armenian troops from Kelbajar; and (c) the resumption of negotiations.²¹ The plan was later modified and ultimately accepted by both Armenia and Azerbaijan. However, the Karabakh Armenian leadership rejected the plan on the pretext that it did not provide the necessary security guarantees for Karabakh Armenians. Robert Kocharian, the Chairman of the Nagorno-Karabakh State Defense Committee formed in 1992, stated: "A peace ... to the region should take into account the essential interests of the Karabakh people."²² Karabakh's position was later modified under Yerevan's pressure, but Resolution 822 was not implemented.

The Karabakh Armenian forces took advantage of the continuing political disarray in Azerbaijan and launched a new offensive on the town of Agdam, east of Karabakh, in Azerbaijan proper. The Armenian aim was to establish a security zone around Nagorno-Karabakh. Agdam fell in late July. These additional territorial gains renewed international criticism against the

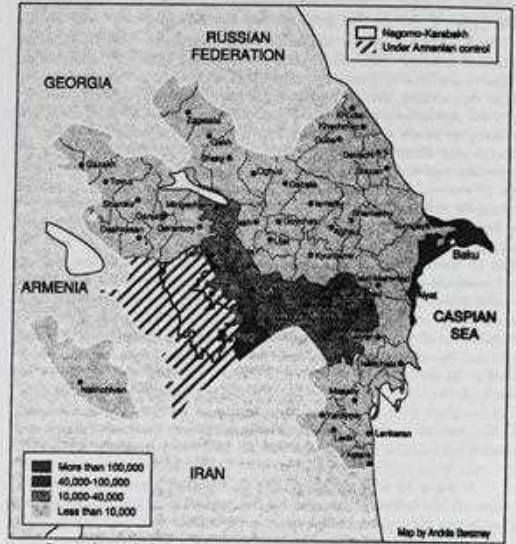
Armenians.²³³ A new Turkish diplomatic initiative at the UN resulted in a new Security Council Resolution, number 853, which condemned the seizure of new territories by Armenians and repeated its previous request for the withdrawal of "occupying forces" from Azerbaijan. The Karabakh Armenian forces continued to defy the UN Resolutions and attacked areas in the southwest of Azerbaijan. Facing a retreating Azerbaijani army, the Armenians seized the Azerbaijani districts of Qubati, Jebrail, Fizuli and Zangelan in August-October 1993. They thus occupied large swathes of territory between the southern border of Nagorno-Karabakh and the Azerbaijani-Iranian frontier.²³⁴ Azerbaijanis claimed that the Karabakh Armenian forces had devastated Azerbaijani villages and property during their advance, violated the "rules of war" and committed acts of violence in Azerbaijani villages.²³⁵ This massive Armenian assault against Azerbaijani towns and villages brought the number of Azerbaijanis displaced in their own country to an estimated one million people, including the refugees from Nagorno-Karabakh. It thus created a humanitarian problem which Azerbaijan did not have the capability to cope with.²³⁶

Refugees and Internally Displaced People in the CIS



The above graph provides more accurate information about internally displaced people and refugees from both Armenia and Azerbaijan:
 Source: United Nations High Commission for Refugees, *The State of the World's Refugees, Fifty Years of Humanitarian Action* (Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 208.

Azerbaijan: Concentrations of Internally Displaced Persons by District
 The map below provides a picture of the internally displaced persons by district and the area occupied by the Karabakh Armenian forces.



Source: *Internally Displaced People: A Global Survey* (London and Sterling, VA: Earthscan, 2002), p. 141.

The US Committee for Refugees (USCR) estimated that 60,000 Armenians had been displaced in 1992-1994 in Nagorno-Karabakh, of which 28,000 returned to their villages after the cease-fire in May 1994. On the other hand, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees

(UNHCR) estimated that the highest wave of Azerbaijani displaced persons occurred in 1993, when the Armenians occupied territories beyond the borders of Nagorno-Karabakh. The Azerbaijani displaced persons were estimated between 450,000 and 500,000.²³⁷ Refugees (who crossed Azerbaijan's borders to other countries) are not included in these figures.

The Karabakh Armenian leadership's non-compliance with the Security Council Resolutions 822 and 853 and its continued seizure of Azerbaijani territories could be attributed to the insufficient level of outside pressure to oblige the warring parties to reach a compromise. The attempt by the Karabakh Armenian forces to solve the conflict militarily left little political incentive to reach a settlement based on mutual concessions. John J. Maresca, the former US Ambassador to the CSCE, would later claim: "There are national leaders on both sides who continue to press for some form of victory. These people do their countries no good, for they merely prolong the suffering."²³⁸

Besides the UN, other diplomatic initiatives in response to military developments came from Iran, Turkey and Russia. Threatened with an influx of Azerbaijani refugees along its northern frontier, Iran condemned the Armenians and pushed its military units into the border areas to facilitate the distribution of humanitarian relief among the displaced people and prevent their entry into Iran. Moreover, Iran exercised pressure on the Karabakh Armenians to stop their offensive and made it explicit that "if our peace and border security is going to be threatened ... our leaders cannot afford to let the situation take care of itself."²³⁹ Turkey also reinforced its military forces along its border with Armenia, delivering a political message on its readiness to protect Azerbaijan's territorial integrity. Despite the fact that the Iranian incursion into Azerbaijani territory alarmed Turkey, the latter tried to exercise self-restraint. Ankara stated diplomatically that:

It must be viewed as natural for regional countries, which are directly or indirectly affected by the Armenian attacks, to adopt the measures they deem necessary to protect their own and the region's security, as long as they respect Azerbaijan's unity, sovereignty, and territorial integrity.²⁴⁰

In late July 1993, Russia also stepped in through Vladimir Kazimirov, its special negotiator for the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, who met with Armenian, Azerbaijani and Nagorno-Karabakh representatives and attempted to enforce a Russian peace plan for the conflict. The initial draft

of Kazimirov's plan included: (a) cessation of hostilities; (b) the creation of a buffer zone in which international observers would be deployed; (c) withdrawal of Armenian forces from occupied territories, which in turn would create conditions for the return of displaced persons; and (d) negotiations on a long-term political settlement, including the future status of Nagorno-Karabakh.²⁴¹

Maresca criticized the Russian peacemaking efforts. He viewed the Russian move as a "rogue operation" and an obstruction to the multinational efforts for peace. Maresca presented to Kazimirov an altered plan, which included the formation of an international peacekeeping force, including Russians, but this was rejected by Moscow. It has been argued that the Russian Defense Ministry and the various political divisions within the Russian government caused Kazimirov's passive stance and non-cooperation with the CSCE.²⁴²

With no substantial progress toward a settlement, the new Azerbaijani President, former Communist leader Haidar Aliiev (who had succeeded Elchibey in 1993) met the Russian President, Boris Yeltsin, and embarked upon a two-track approach. Aliiev both encouraged Russia's efforts for a peace plan and also initiated direct talks with the Karabakh Armenian leadership. Karabakh's Foreign Minister, Arkadii Ghukasian, responded positively, and, for the first time, direct Azerbaijani-Karabakh talks were held under the aegis of the Russian Foreign Ministry in Moscow on 13 September.²⁴³ The talks resulted in a cease-fire agreement, which lasted till November.

However, peace did not last in the region, and the new Armenian offensive in October 1993 seized more Azerbaijani territory along the Arax River. To curtail the possible dangers of escalated warfare, the UN Security Council adopted on 14 October, 1993 Resolution 874, which was similar to the previous two resolutions. It affirmed the inviolability of international borders, condemned the fighting and expressed serious concern at the human suffering. Musgrave argues that despite the fascinating hope of liberation that the principle of national self-determination promises to certain people, it has certain weaknesses and problems that pose a threat to peace and order.²⁴⁴ Indeed, the Karabakh Armenian desire for ethnic self-determination implied secession from Azerbaijan and tried to delineate new geographic boundaries on ethnic lines, which threatened Azerbaijan's territorial integrity. Resolution 874 was different from the previous two resolutions in that it called on "all the states in the region to refrain from any hostile act and from any interference or intervention, which would lead to

the widening of the conflict and undermine peace and security in the region."

The Azerbaijanis defied this third UN resolution. They launched an unexpected counter-offensive in late October. The Azerbaijanis were supported by Afghan mercenaries, but were unable to reverse the military *status quo* on the battlefield.²⁴⁵ The Karabakh Armenian forces repulsed the assault and then launched a counter-offensive, occupying a 40-kilometer area on the north bank of the Arax River along the Azerbaijani-Iranian frontier. With the fall of Zangelan, all of southwest Azerbaijan came under Karabakh Armenian control. An estimated 60,000 Azerbaijanis were displaced and forced to flee into Iran. Faced with the escalation of hostilities and an augmented humanitarian crisis, the CSCE Minsk Group called again for "urgent measures" to end the Karabakh conflict.²⁴⁶ A CSCE peace proposal in October 1993 called on Azerbaijan to end its rail and pipeline blockades of Armenia as a precondition for the withdrawal of the Karabakh Armenian forces from Azerbaijani territories. Azerbaijan was also asked to recognize Karabakh as a party to the conflict. The proposal was termed unacceptable by Azerbaijan because it (a) did not mention the refugee problem; (b) did not consider the 'Lachin corridor' issue; and (c) did not call for an unconditional withdrawal of Armenian forces.²⁴⁷ The CSCE peacemaking efforts thus remained unsuccessful as well.

Alarmed with the growing tension on the Iranian border, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 824 on 12 November, 1993, reiterating its previous calls. It also demanded that the antagonists "continue to seek a negotiated settlement of the conflict within the context of the CSCE Minsk process, and the 'adjusted time table' as amended by the CSCE Minsk Group meeting in Vienna of 2 to 8 November 1993."

Of the numerous international mediation attempts only a few had been successful in imposing short-lived cease-fires. Most peacemaking draft plans were stillborn because the parties which negotiated them lacked implementation mechanisms and effective means for monitoring. Moreover, the ill will of the warring parties and their continuous rejections of some of the provisions of the peace plans contributed to their failure. The Karabakh Armenian leadership insisted on full independence from Azerbaijan, while the Baku authorities insisted on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of their republic.

The international community demonstrated high concern for the possibility of a major regional war in the Transcaucasus. The four UN Security Council resolutions affirmed the principle of the inviolability of international borders, because, as many theoreticians argue, "drawing

boundaries on the basis of nationality is a very sensitive issue for the international community, and well-nigh impossible.²⁴⁸ As the Karabakh Armenian forces occupied additional Azerbaijani territory and approached the Iranian border, Iranian armed forces took up positions along their northern frontier. Russia was also eager to protect what it perceived as its zone of exclusive influence in the Transcaucasus. The Nagorno-Karabakh war did not expand into a regional conflagration due to the maximum restraint exercised on the part of Russia, Turkey and Iran. However, tensions remained high on the front, and both warring parties looked forward to improving their strategic positions.

THE FOURTH PHASE OF THE WAR (DECEMBER 1993-MAY 1994)

Like his predecessor, President Aliiev also focused on the Karabakh issue during his 1993 election campaign and declared that re-taking Karabakh was his top priority. Aliiev reversed his prior conciliatory positions towards the Karabakh Armenian leadership (manifested in the summer of 1993) and insisted on unconditional withdrawal of the Karabakh forces from the 'Lachin corridor' as a precondition to future negotiations.²⁴⁹ During November and December 1993, Azerbaijan instituted stopgap measures to restructure and reequip what was left of its army. After a year of unbroken defeats, Azerbaijan and President Aliiev faced further humiliation unless a viable military deterrent to Karabakh forces could be mustered. In an address before the nation, Aliiev admitted past mistakes and promised tough measures to punish treachery and instill discipline in military ranks.²⁵⁰ Finally, on 18 December, 1993, the Azerbaijani army violated the CSCE Minsk Group/Russian initiated cease-fire and launched a large-scale offensive on all fronts.²⁵¹

The Azerbaijani forces achieved limited success by capturing some strategic villages in the Martakert district and on the Azerbaijani-Iranian border but at a very high cost in human losses, estimated at between 6,000 and 10,000 deaths.²⁵² The Armenian casualties were estimated to be much lower, between 500 and 1000 dead.²⁵³ Foreign involvement in the fighting was undeniable; Afghan mercenaries fought on the side of the Azerbaijanis, while regular army units and volunteers from the Republic of Armenia assisted the Karabakh Armenian forces. In February 1994, during a visit to London, Ter-Petrosian affirmed that "Armenia would intervene militarily if the Karabakh Armenians were faced with forced deportations or genocide."²⁵⁴ In addition to his endorsement of the CSCE peace proposals, the Armenian President called upon the United Kingdom, which is not a

member of the Minsk Group, to enhance international efforts toward a peaceful settlement.

Azerbaijan also tried to mobilize international diplomatic support for its official position. Aliiev visited Turkey in February 1994 and declared that "we are two states [but] one nation." This portrayed Aliiev as seeking Turkish support in order not to be left at the mercy of any future Russian-mediated solution. He expressed willingness to accept the deployment of Russian peacekeepers in the conflict zone, but only under the auspices of the CSCE and together with military units from other CSCE member states.²⁵⁵ Svante E. Cornell argued that "Aliiev plays the Turkish card whenever it suits his purposes." He had dismissed the "1,600 Turkish military experts" from Azerbaijan and enforced new visa regulations on Turkish nationals entering Azerbaijan just a few months before, but he now decided suddenly to alter his foreign policy towards Turkey. Aliiev's visit was intended to end the cool period in bilateral relations with Turkey that had followed Elchibey's ouster.²⁵⁶

Azerbaijan and Turkey agreed on an international peacekeeping force either within the framework of the CSCE or through the tripartite Russian/US/Turkish peace plan of July 1993 that had been accepted by Armenia and Azerbaijan but rejected by the Nagorno-Karabakh leadership. However, two questions remained to be answered. Was it possible to achieve peace by marginalizing Russia's role in a region that had top priority in Russia's security interests? And, was it possible to conduct negotiations and achieve a lasting peace without the Nagorno-Karabakh leadership's participation?

In April 1994 after the Karabakh Armenian forces regained some territories lost during the early stages of the latest Azerbaijani offensive, the warring parties agreed on 12 May, 1994 to sign the Russian-brokered Bishkek cease-fire protocol, which continues to hold until the time of writing.²⁵⁷ The Russians envisaged the following three stages as the only solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict: (a) entry into force of a cease-fire and deployment of intervention forces; (b) withdrawal of troops from occupied territories, restoration of lines of communication, return of refugees; and (c) negotiation of the status of Nagorno-Karabakh.²⁵⁸ Parliamentary representatives from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh signed a separate protocol under the aegis of the CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, pledging to accept peacekeeping troops to monitor the cease-fire.²⁵⁹

With the establishment of the 12 May, 1994 cease-fire the warring parties were to enter into negotiations that seemed more serious this time

than on previous occasions. However, the peace process was to involve not only internal – Armenian, Azerbaijani and Karabakh Armenian-leadership but also external – Turkish, Iranian, CSCE and, particularly, Russian – actors. The external actors who became involved in the peace process had their own geopolitical agendas and tried to influence the process according to their regional interests. It was not clear at this stage how the external actors were going to deal with the alterations on the ground to the internationally recognized boundaries of Azerbaijan which had been forced by the Karabakh Armenians.

CONCLUSION

This article discussed two ethnic communities in conflict. Ethnic mobilization by national leaders in Armenia and Azerbaijan eventually led to the escalation of the Karabakh conflict and ultimately to open warfare. The article presented a detailed examination of the dynamics of national consciousness that emerged in Armenia and Azerbaijan as a result of Gorbachev's policies of *perestroika* and *glasnost* after 1985. Crucial in this examination were (a) the form that ethnic mobilization took; (b) the nature of the programs put forward by the nationalist activists; and (c) the response of the state. According to the ethno-national theory of nationalism, the 'ethnic core' is considered the root for national mobilization to attain sovereignty for the nation.²⁰⁰ Thus, in a situation of political transformation, like in the USSR after 1985, ethnic identity became a political tool used by nationalist intellectuals in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh to mobilize the population to demand Karabakh's unification with Armenia. The national political program of the Armenian nationalist movement changed gradually from including 'partial elements of politics,' mainly the unification issue with Armenia, into a complete political program, starting with secession from Azerbaijan and trying to establish a separate state within Azerbaijan, after Moscow's rejection of the Armenian demands. In fact, crossing the political border between Soviet Armenia and Azerbaijan and establishing a psychological link between the members of the Armenian nation in Soviet Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh was just an example of a 'partial element of politics'. This psychological link between the members of the Armenian nation was crucial not only in the formation of the image of the homeland, but also in the national agitation of Karabakh Armenians to demand unification with Armenia. Moscow's stance could be considered within the context of the strategy of 'opposition', which considers national aspirations "as atavistic and tribalistic" and encourages nations to remain in their places within the existing states. It seemed that Moscow's aim was to maintain

order and avoid violence because ethnic political mobilization, which usually causes ethnic tensions and conflict between ethnic communities, could endanger the viability of the multi-ethnic Soviet state.

The strategy of separatism and secession employed by the Karabakh Armenian nationalist movement gave rise to ethno-nationalism and ultimately conflict, since the major aim of ethno-cultural movements is to grant maximum autonomy to the community. The Karabakh Armenians justified their separatist act as self-determination, while the Azerbaijani government refused to recognize Karabakh's independence and insisted on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. Based on the liberal and the right of self-preservation arguments, the Karabakh Armenians' claim for self-determination could be justified in that they "ought to have the right to opt out from the larger system, because the contrary view would inevitably justify oppression."⁶¹ However, ethnic self-determination, which usually implies secession, threatens the existence of states. Therefore, it is difficult to strike a balance between the principle of self-determination of nations and the principle of territorial integrity of states.

The mobilization of the masses on ethnic lines in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh from 1988 escalated eventually into violence. However, it must be remembered that the principle of national self-determination has been applied without violence and war only on very rare occasions. Like the issue of secession, nationalist violence is also immediately relevant to the theoretical study of the concept of nationalism as a whole. The nationalist leaders of Armenia's Karabakh Committee and Nagorno-Karabakh tended to protect the threatened cultural, linguistic and economic rights of the Karabakh Armenians by resorting to collective action. On the other hand, the Azerbaijani nationalism that emerged from November 1988 was not less committed to protecting the rights of the Azerbaijanis in Nagorno-Karabakh. The Azerbaijani state resorted to repressive measures to confront the secessionist Karabakh Armenians and preserve the *status quo*. For the members of the secessionist group, i.e. the Karabakh Armenians, "violence becomes instrumentally rational in order to resist state repression in the name of the nation."⁶² The Karabakh Armenians employed violence strategically to increase Azerbaijan's costs of controlling Nagorno-Karabakh and to polarize the conflict to their advantage. They implemented such a strategy (a) to prevent future inter-ethnic cohabitation with the Azerbaijani inhabitants of Nagorno-Karabakh and (b) to prevent these Azerbaijanis from returning to their towns and villages. Hence, a large number of Azerbaijani refugees and internally displaced persons resulted, creating a humanitarian problem for Azerbaijan.

The Azerbaijanis, too, resorted to violence, first in Sumgait and then in Nagorno-Karabakh, to push the Armenians out of Azerbaijan. They tried to empty Nagorno-Karabakh of its ethnic Armenian majority. As a consequence of Azerbaijani violence, Armenian refugees from Baku and Nagorno-Karabakh poured into Armenia, creating socio-economic and humanitarian problems for the government. The examination in this article of ethnic nationalism in Nagorno-Karabakh and the strategic use of violence for national self-determination presents a convincing argument why people render immense sacrifices for their nation.

The ethnic hostilities between the Armenians and Azerbaijanis in Nagorno-Karabakh exploded into a full-scale war in 1991. With the declaration of Armenian and Azerbaijani independence from the USSR, the Nagorno-Karabakh war threatened the domestic stability of both republics. They both had to confront the possibility of an intra-state war that could escalate at any moment. The ferocity of the war in Nagorno-Karabakh and the ethnic cleansing of the weaker side in the mixed villages terminated all hopes for future cohabitation and a possible resolution to the conflict in the near future. In 1992 and 1993 the Karabakh Armenian forces achieved a military victory over the Azerbaijanis, occupied several districts from Azerbaijan proper and tried to delineate the boundaries of Nagorno-Karabakh on ethnic lines. However, this did not end the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict because the strict application of the principle of national self-determination does not necessarily terminate the conflict. Instability persisted in Nagorno-Karabakh because delineating boundaries on the basis of nationality has often been provocative and notoriously difficult, if not impossible. The four UN Security Council resolutions criticized and rejected the Karabakh Armenian attempts to draw new boundaries on ethnic lines. They confirmed the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, mainly because of the sensitivity of this issue for the other member states of the UN. Nation-states are usually reluctant to decide which people are candidates for self-determination. After several abortive initiatives from Iran, Russia, Turkey and the CSCE, Russia finally succeeded in imposing the 12 May, 1994 cease-fire that holds to the time of writing of this article.

The mediation efforts of Russia, Iran and the CSCE, as well as the UN Security Council resolutions, remained mostly abortive because they failed to provide a settlement acceptable to the warring parties. Moreover, the conflicting interests of the regional powers put the prospects for a peaceful settlement in jeopardy. Commitment to peace within the framework provided by the CSCE (now renamed the OSCE, the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe) remains to date the only avenue

available to conduct future negotiations and attain peace. The regional powers and the OSCE have to meet the challenge of whether to accept the altering of internationally recognized boundaries through the use of force. It is still debated whether the regional powers and the UN could at this stage of the conflict force the Karabakh Armenians to withdraw unconditionally from the Azerbaijani occupied territories. If not, then this would imply that the Karabakh Armenians would at least confirm the establishment of their independent republic either *de facto* (with Azerbaijan unable to overturn the existing military balance in the coming decades) or *de jure* (with Azerbaijan acquiescing formally through a written agreement to Karabakh's complete self-rule).

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Claire Mouradian, 'The Mountainous Karabagh Question: Inter-Ethnic Conflict or Decolonization Crisis?', *The Armenian Review*, Vol. 43, Nos. 2-3 (Summer/Autumn 1990), p. 12.
- ² Anthony D'Agostino, *Gorbachev's Revolution (1985-1991)* (London: Macmillan, 1998), p. 188. See also Graham Smith, 'The State, Nationalism and the Nationalities Question in the Soviet Republics', in Catherine Merridale and Chris Ward (eds.), *Perestroika. The Historical Perspective* (London, New York, Melbourne and Auckland: Edward Arnold, 1991), pp. 202-245.
- ³ Walker Connor, 'Soviet Policies Towards the Non-Russian Peoples in Theoretic and Historic Perspective: What Gorbachev Inherited', in Alexander J. Motyl (ed.), *The Post-Soviet Nations: Perspectives on the Demise of the USSR* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), p. 46. See also Paul A. Goble, 'Gorbachev and the Soviet Nationality Problem', in Maurice Friedberg and Heyward Ishan (eds.), *Soviet Society Under Gorbachev: Current Trends and the Prospects for Reform* (U.K. and New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1987), pp. 76-99.
- ⁴ Connor, p. 46. See also 'Gorbachev's Domestic Gambles and Instability in the USSR', FOIA-CIA Document (CIA-SOV-89-10077x), compiled on 1 October 1989 and released on 3 February 2000, case no. F-1993-02215, pp. iii-iv, available online at <http://www.foia.cia.gov/browse_docs.asp?>.
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- ⁶ Christopher J. Walker, *Armenia and Karabakh: The Struggle for Unity* (London: Minority Rights Publications, 1991), pp. 120-121.
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- ⁹ Claude Mutaflan, 'Karabakh in the Twentieth Century', in Levon Chorbajian, Patrick Donabedian and Claude Mutaflan, *The Caucasus Knot: the History and Geopolitics of Nagorno-Karabakh* (London and New Jersey: Zed Books, 1994), p. 148.

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- ¹¹ Mouradian, p. 15. Among the Armenians in Gorbachev's entourage who supported *perestroika* were Ambarsumov, Nikolai Shakhnazarov, Andranik Migranian and others.
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- ¹³ D'Agostino, p. 189. The majority of inhabitants of Nakhichevan were Azerbaijanis, but the region, despite having no common boundaries with the rest of Azerbaijan, was an autonomous republic subordinate to Baku.
- ¹⁴ Malkasian, p. 29.
- ¹⁵ Stephen Cornell and Douglas Hartmann, *Ethnicity and Race: Making Identities in a Changing World* (Thousand Oaks, London and New Delhi: Pine Forge Press, 1998), pp. 59-60.
- ¹⁶ State Central Archive of Documents of Social and Political Organizations of the Republic of Armenia (henceforward, SCADSPORA), fund 1, list 87, file 11, p. 35. On the position of the Armenian political parties in the Diaspora with respect to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, see *ibid.*, file 16, pp. 61-62 and file 26, pp. 53-54.
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- ¹⁹ Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, p. 196.
- ²⁰ Malkasian, pp. 33-34.
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- ²³ Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Revival* (Cambridge, London, New York, Melbourne and Sydney: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 63-68.
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- ²⁸ Malkasian, pp. 29-30.
- ²⁹ SCADSPORA, fund 1, list 87, file 11, p. 83.
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- ³⁶ Uwe Halbach, 'Anatomy of an Escalation: The Nationality Question', in Federal Institute for Soviet and International Studies, *The Soviet Union (1987-1989): Perestroika in Crisis* (Boulder, San Francisco and Oxford: Westview Press, 1990), pp. 77-78.

- ³⁷ Walker, p. 123.
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- ³⁹ Malkasian, p. 42.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 38.
- ⁴¹ Paul R. Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism, Theory and Comparison* (Newbury Park, London and New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 1991), pp. 62-66.
- ⁴² Malkasian, p. 74.
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- ⁴⁶ Altstadt, 'O Patria Mia', p. 116.
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- ⁴⁸ Croissant, p. 27. See also David Lane, *Soviet Society Under Perestroika* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 212.
- ⁴⁹ McCormick, pp. 127-128.
- ⁵⁰ Edmund M. Hertzog, 'Armenia and the Armenians', in Graham Smith (ed.), *The Nationalities Question in the Post-Soviet States* (New York: Addison Wesley Longman Publishing, 1990), p. 257.
- ⁵¹ Suny, 'Nationalism and Democracy', p. 491.
- ⁵² Archie Brown, p. 263; Lane, pp. 212-213.
- ⁵³ Malkasian, p. 43.
- ⁵⁴ Eduard Oganessian, 'Interview With Zori Balayan', *Report on the USSR*, Vol. 2, No. 26 (June 29, 1990), pp. 12-14.
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- ⁵⁶ Malkasian, pp. 49-50.
- ⁵⁷ Archie Brown, p. 263.
- ⁵⁸ 'Unrest in the Caucasus and the Challenge of Nationalism', FOIA-CIA Document (CIA-SOV-88-10059D), 1 November 1988, case no. CSI-2001-0004, available online at <http://www.fbia.cia.gov/browse_docs.asp?>.
- ⁵⁹ Mouradian, pp. 17-18.
- ⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.
- ⁶¹ Human Rights Watch/Helsinki, *Azerbaijan, Seven Years of Conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh* (1994), p. 1.
- ⁶² Tamara Dragadze, 'Azerbaijan and the Azerbaijanis', in Graham Smith, *The Nationalities Question*, p. 283.
- ⁶³ Malkasian, pp. 51-52.
- ⁶⁴ Malkasian, p. 53 mentions reports he heard from Armenian activists, who said that "four busloads of young Azerbaijani men were recruited from the Ghapan district in Armenia and then crossed into Azerbaijan. Members of the caravan fanned rumors about Armenian massacres of Azerbaijanis as they drove deeper into Azerbaijan, exhorting their compatriots in small towns and villages to join them in the trek to Sumgait."

- ⁴⁰ Malkasian, p. 53.
- ⁴¹ Dragadze, p. 283.
- ⁴² Malkasian, p. 58.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁴ SCADSPORA, fund 1, list 87, file 12, p. 86.
- ⁴⁵ Mouradian, p. 17.
- ⁴⁶ Jolyon Nagele, 'Azerbaijan: Armenians and Azerbaijanis Remember Suffering', 2 March 1998, available online at <<http://www.rferl.org/oc/features/1998/03/P.RU.980302143758.html>>. Abduleyeva further argued that "what happened in Sumgait was very similar to events in the Gagark district in north-western Armenia several months later in 1988, when, she said, 17 ethnic Azeris were slaughtered. She said nothing was known for a long time about the Gagark killings beyond rumors, because of a cover up." See also Altsofi, *Azerbaijan* Tarkis, p. 197.
- ⁴⁷ Paul Goble, 'Moscow's Nationality Problems in 1989', *Report on the USSR*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (January 12, 1990), pp. 13-14.
- ⁴⁸ Mikhail Gorbachev, *Memoirs: An Inside Look at the Events* (Doubleday, 1996), pp. 333-335, available online at <<http://www.cificia.com/arm019g.html>>.
- ⁴⁹ McCormick, pp. 127-128.
- ⁵⁰ Gorbachev, pp. 333-334.
- ⁵¹ Mutaflan, p. 151. For additional details on this decision, see Caroline Cox and John Eibner, *Ethnic Cleansing in Progress: War in Nagorno-Karabakh* (Zurich, London and Washington: Institute for Religious Minorities in the Islamic World, 1993), pp. 39-41.
- ⁵² McCormick, pp. 127-128.
- ⁵³ Malkasian, pp. 62-63.
- ⁵⁴ Herzig, pp. 257-258. For issues related to censorship of the media in both Armenia and Azerbaijan, see SCADSPORA, fund 1, list 87, file 30, pp. 3-4.
- ⁵⁵ Malkasian, pp. 63-64.
- ⁵⁶ Grigorian, p. 137; National Intelligence Daily for 14 May 1988, p. 8, FOIA-CIA document, available online at <http://www.foia.cia.gov/browse_docs.asp?> SCADSPORA, fund 1, list 87, file 23, pp. 15-18, 31-35, 179-184, 209-215, 220-222.
- ⁵⁷ Malkasian, p. 71.
- ⁵⁸ *Yevlata Shevop* [Iron Ladle], Vol. 3, No. 15 (August 1988), pp. 4-5.
- ⁵⁹ Malkasian, pp. 72-73.
- ⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 73-74.
- ⁶¹ Grigorian, p. 140. When "Ligachev visited Baku to install Vezlov on 21 May, he reportedly promised the Azerbaijan Central Committee that the [Nagorno-Karabakh - O.G.] Oblast would remain subordinated to Azerbaijan"; see 'Unrest in the Caucasus and the Challenge of Nationalism', p. 19.
- ⁶² Malkasian, p. 86. On the change of the Communist leaders in Armenia and Azerbaijan, see 'National Intelligence Daily for 31 May 1988', CIA-FOIA Document, p. 9, available online at <http://www.foia.cia.gov/browse_docs.asp?>.
- ⁶³ Malkasian, p. 86.
- ⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 90-91.
- ⁶⁵ Herzig, p. 258; Grigorian, p. 144; V. B. Arutunian, *Sobitilo v Nagornom Karabakhe: Khronika* [Events in Nagorno-Karabakh: Chronology], Part I: February 1988-January 1989 (Yerevan: Armenian SSR Academy of Sciences, 1990), p. 105.
- ⁶⁶ Arutunian, p. 105.
- ⁶⁷ Malkasian, p. 93.

- ⁹⁰ Grigorian, p. 144.
- ⁹¹ Malkasian, p. 113.
- ⁹² Miroslav Hroch, 'National Self-Determination from a Historical Perspective', in Sukumar Periwal (ed.), *Nations of Nationalism* (Budapest, London and New York: Central European University Press, 1995), p. 70.
- ⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 65-67.
- ⁹⁴ Malkasian, pp. 127-130; Grigorian, p. 174.
- ⁹⁵ SCADSPORA, fund 1, list 87, file 15, pp. 103, 113-118, 120-122.
- ⁹⁶ Croissant, pp. 30-31.
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- ⁹⁹ Michael Hechter, *Containing Nationalism*, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 128-130.
- ¹⁰⁰ Malkasian, p. 176.
- ¹⁰¹ Herzog, p. 259.
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- ¹⁰³ Richard Sakwa, *Gorbachev and His Reforms (1985-1990)* (London and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 244.
- ¹⁰⁴ Stephan White, *After Gorbachev* (London and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 164. See also Susan Goldberg, *Pride of Small Nations: The Caucasus and Post-Soviet Disorder* (London and New Jersey: Zed Books, 1994), p. 163.
- ¹⁰⁵ Archie Brown, p. 263. See also Cox and Elbner, p. 40.
- ¹⁰⁶ Archie Brown, p. 264.
- ¹⁰⁷ Martin McCauley, *Gorbachev* (London and New York: Longman, 1998), pp. 158-159. Croissant, p. 35 writes that in order "to facilitate this restoration, a republic level oversight committee staffed primarily by ethnic Azeris was created to take over the day to day administration of Nagorno-Karabakh until local party organs could be revived."
- ¹⁰⁸ Grigorian, pp. 321-322.
- ¹⁰⁹ Dragadze, p. 277.
- ¹¹⁰ Malkasian, pp. 170-171.
- ¹¹¹ Dragadze, pp. 277-278.
- ¹¹² Malkasian, p. 169.
- ¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 170.
- ¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹⁵ Charles Van der Leeuw, *Azerbaijan: A Quest for Identity* (London: Curzon Press, 2000), pp. 157-158.
- ¹¹⁶ Malkasian, pp. 171, 177.
- ¹¹⁷ Goldberg, p. 163.
- ¹¹⁸ Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, pp. 200-201.
- ¹¹⁹ Elizabeth Fuller, 'Azerbaijan after the Presidential Elections', *RFE/RL Research Report*, Vol. 1, No. 26 (June 26, 1992), pp. 1-2.
- ¹²⁰ For an overview of the APF's political program, see Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, pp. 205-207.
- ¹²¹ Elizabeth Fuller, 'Azerbaijan', in *Regional Surveys of the World: Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States*, 3rd edition (UK: Europa Publications, 1997), p. 159.
- ¹²² Jonathan Aves, 'The Evolution of Independent Political Movements after 1988', in Geoffrey A. Hosking, Jonathan Aves and Peter J. S. Duncan (eds.), *The Road to Post-*

- Communism: Independent Political Movements in the Soviet Union 1985-1991* (London and New York: Printer Publishers, 1992), pp. 41-42. Azerbaijani nationalists estimate that over 20 million Azerbaijanis live in Iran and consider the latter as an extension of the Azerbaijani nation. They argue that the Azerbaijani nation has been divided since the early 19th century between those who live in northern (the present-day Republic of) Azerbaijan and those who live in southern (i.e. Iranian) Azerbaijan.
- ¹²⁶ Dragadze, p. 279.
- ¹²⁷ Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, p. 205.
- ¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 206.
- ¹²⁹ Aves, 'Evolution', p. 42.
- ¹³⁰ Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, p. 206.
- ¹³¹ Dragadze, p. 280.
- ¹³² Altstadt, p. 206.
- ¹³³ Malkasian, p. 193.
- ¹³⁴ Mesh and Krikorian, p. 17.
- ¹³⁵ Croissant, p. 35.
- ¹³⁶ Malkasian, pp. 194-195.
- ¹³⁷ Croissant, p. 35.
- ¹³⁸ Dragadze, p. 285.
- ¹³⁹ Nadia Diuk and Adrian Karatnycky, *New Nations Rising: The Fall of the Soviets and the Challenge of Independence* (New York and Toronto: John Wiley and Sons, 1993), p. 161.
- ¹⁴⁰ Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, p. 207.
- ¹⁴¹ Malkasian, pp. 195-196; Croissant, p. 35.
- ¹⁴² Thomas D. Musgrave, *Self-Determination and National Minorities* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 180-181.
- ¹⁴³ Jeyhan Mollazade, 'The Legal Aspects of the Karabakh Conflict', *Azerbaijan International*, No. 1.1 (Winter 1993), available online at <<http://www.azer.com>>.
- ¹⁴⁴ Croissant, appendix C (no page number).
- ¹⁴⁵ Goldenberg, p. 163.
- ¹⁴⁶ Elizabeth Fuller, 'Democratization Threatened by Inter-Ethnic Violence', *Report on the USSR*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (January 4, 1991), p. 42. Malkasian, p. 196 writes that, as a consequence of the outbreak of violence, "of the roughly 25,000 Armenians who remained in Baku, more than 50 were killed. Nearly all the others fled the city."
- ¹⁴⁷ Michael Keating, *Nations Against the State: The New Politics of Nationalism in Quebec, Catalonia and Scotland*, second edition, (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 21-22.
- ¹⁴⁸ Elizabeth Fuller, 'Armenia: From Apathy to Violence', *Report on the USSR*, Vol. 2, No. 23 (June 8, 1990), pp. 19-20.
- ¹⁴⁹ Elizabeth Fuller, 'Paramilitary Formations in Armenia', *Report on the USSR*, Vol. 2, No. 31 (August 3, 1990), pp. 20-21.
- ¹⁵⁰ Fuller, 'Paramilitary', pp. 20-21 writes: "A western journalist who visited Erevan in March [1990 - O.G.], however, reported that quantities of illicitly obtained armaments remained in the hands of three unofficial militias, including the so-called Armenian National Army."
- ¹⁵¹ Altstadt, *Azerbaijani Turks*, pp. 213-214. Croissant, p. 37 says that "in two nights of carnage, which neither the local authorities nor the 12,000 Soviet Interior Ministry troops stationed in Baku did anything to stop, more than 74 people died, the majority of them

Armenians, and the rest of Baku's estimated Armenian population of 50,000 was evacuated hastily by air and sea."

- ¹⁵² Archie Brown, p. 264.
- ¹⁵³ Shireen T. Hunter, 'Azerbaijan: Searching for New Neighbors', in Ian Bremmer and Ray Taras (eds.), *New States, New Politics: Building the Post-Soviet Nations* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 445-446.
- ¹⁵⁴ Croissant, p. 38.
- ¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39.
- ¹⁵⁶ Azar Panahli, 'The Russian Bear's Voracious Appetite', *Azerbaijan International*, No. 3.1 (Spring 1995), available online at <<http://www.azer.com>>.
- ¹⁵⁷ Alnadi, *Azerbaijani Turks*, p. 217.
- ¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 220-221.
- ¹⁵⁹ Dragadze, p. 281.
- ¹⁶⁰ Erik Melander, 'The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict Revisited: Was the War Inevitable?', *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 2, (Spring 2001), pp. 60-65.
- ¹⁶¹ Boris Kagarlitsky, *Farewell Perestroika*, translated by Rick Simon (London and New York: Verso, 1990), pp. 68-70.
- ¹⁶² Mutafian, p. 155 writes: "The Karabakh Committee joined with other organizations – ecological, humanitarian, cultural – and the ANM began to move forward as the established leader of the Armenian struggle."
- ¹⁶³ Masih and Krikorian, p. 19. For previous contacts (during and before September 1988) between members of the Karabakh Committee and nationalist organizations in the Baltics, see SCADSPORA, fund 1, list 87, File 15, p. 135.
- ¹⁶⁴ Herzig, p. 13.
- ¹⁶⁵ Hiroch, p. 71.
- ¹⁶⁶ Nora Dudwick, 'Armenia: Paradise Regained or Lost?', in Bremmer and Taras, *New States, New Politics*, p. 487.
- ¹⁶⁷ Elizabeth Fuller, 'Armenia Votes Overwhelmingly for Secession', *Report on the USSR*, Vol. 3, No. 39 (September 27, 1991), pp. 19-20.
- ¹⁶⁸ Elizabeth Fuller, *Azerbaijan at the Crossroads* (London: The Russian and CIS Programme of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, Chatham House and RFE/RL Research Institute, 1994), pp. 4-5.
- ¹⁶⁹ Hakob Chakerian, *Gharabaghian Himnashartse Hay-Turkakan Haraberutanneri Hamostekatum* [The Karabakh Conflict in the Context of Armenian-Turkish Relations] (Yerevan: The Armenian National Academy of Sciences, 1998), pp. 14-16.
- ¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 17.
- ¹⁷¹ Cox and Eibner, pp. 45-50; Masih and Krikorian, pp. 32-33.
- ¹⁷² Cox and Eibner, p. 47.
- ¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 45.
- ¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 46.
- ¹⁷⁵ Croissant, pp. 41-42.
- ¹⁷⁶ Fuller, 'What Lies Behind the Current Armenian-Azerbaijani Tensions?', p. 13.
- ¹⁷⁷ Stuart J. Kaufman, 'Spiraling to Ethnic War', in Michael E. Brown, Owen R. Corte, Jr., Sean M. Lynn-Jones and Steven E. Miller (eds.), *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: The MIT Press, 1996-1997), pp. 174-175. As groups take steps to defend themselves, they often threaten the security of others. This leads neighboring groups to take steps that will diminish the security of the first group.

- ¹⁷⁸ Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), p. 66.
- ¹⁷⁹ Croissant, pp. 35-36.
- ¹⁸⁰ Goldenberg, p. 164.
- ¹⁸¹ Melander, pp. 62-68.
- ¹⁸² Cox and Eibner, p. 51.
- ¹⁸³ Hechter, p. 129.
- ¹⁸⁴ Cox and Eibner, p. 51.
- ¹⁸⁵ As the USSR collapsed in December 1991, the three Slavic republics – Belarus, Russia and the Ukraine – created the CIS. Later, eight other former Soviet republics joined the CIS. The only exceptions were the Baltic republics and Georgia. The aim of the CIS was to maintain security, economic and political cooperation between the member states.
- ¹⁸⁶ Goldenberg, p. 166.
- ¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 165.
- ¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 147-148. On the rift between Ter Petrosian and the Dashnak party, see Liz Fuller, 'Ruling Party Strengthens Its Hold on Power', *Transit*, Vol. 1, No. 19 (October 1995), pp. 56-58.
- ¹⁸⁹ Goldenberg, p. 165.
- ¹⁹⁰ Croissant, p. 46.
- ¹⁹¹ Altstadt, 'O Patria Mia', p. 117.
- ¹⁹² Croissant, pp. 45-46.
- ¹⁹³ Goldenberg, p. 166.
- ¹⁹⁴ Yafa Guluzade, 'Karabakh: The Armenian-Azerbaijani Conflict', *Azerbaijan International*, No. 6.2 (Summer 1998), available online at <<http://www.azer.com>>.
- ¹⁹⁵ Human Rights Watch/Helsinki, pp. 4-5. See also Cox and Eibner, pp. 56-58.
- ¹⁹⁶ Hechter, p. 130.
- ¹⁹⁷ Cox and Eibner, p. 57 point out that an Azerbaijani woman, who survived the Armenian attack, stated in her testimony to Helsinki Watch that the Armenians "made an ultimatum ... that the Khodjali people had better leave with a white flag. Alif Gajaliev (the head of the Azeri Turk OMON in Khodjali) told us this on February 15, but this did not frighten me or other people. We never believed they could occupy Khodjali."
- ¹⁹⁸ Hechter, p. 129.
- ¹⁹⁹ Svante Cornell, 'Undeclared War: The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict Reconsidered', *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (Fall 1997), available online at <<http://www.geocities.com/seidov/cornell.html>>.
- ²⁰⁰ Fuller, 'Azerbaijan after the Presidential Elections', pp. 2-3.
- ²⁰¹ Elizabeth Fuller, 'Nagorno-Karabakh: Internal Conflict Becomes International', *RFE/RL Research Report*, Vol. 1, No. 11 (March 13, 1992), pp. 1-2.
- ²⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 2.
- ²⁰³ Jonathan Aves, *Post-Soviet Transcaucasia* (London: The Royal Institute of International Affairs, Chatham House), p. 24. See also Croissant, p. 79.
- ²⁰⁴ Anthony Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism*, p. 66.
- ²⁰⁵ Fuller, 'Azerbaijan After the Presidential Elections', pp. 2-3.
- ²⁰⁶ Goldenberg, p. 168.
- ²⁰⁷ Aves, *Post-Soviet Transcaucasia*, p. 26. See also Goldenberg, pp. 166-167.
- ²⁰⁸ 'Interview with Samuel Babayan', *Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) News*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (September 1997), p. 15.

- ²⁰⁹ Elizabeth Fuller, 'Nagorno-Karabakh: Can Turkey Remain Neutral?', *RFE/RL Research Report*, Vol. 1, No. 14 (April 3, 1992), p. 37.
- ²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.
- ²¹¹ Croissant, p. 81.
- ²¹² Croissant, p. 81. Caroline Kennedy-Pipe, 'The CIS, Sources of Stability and Instability', in Regina Owen Karp (ed.), *Central and Eastern Europe: The Challenge of Transition* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 258-259 writes: "The CIS that was created in December 1991 was entitled to consider two forms of ethnic tensions: a) tensions between republics, as for example between Russia and Ukraine, and Armenia and Azerbaijan; and b) what might be regarded as internal ethnic conflict, for example, the current conflict in Tajikistan."
- ²¹³ Fuller, 'Azerbaijan After the Presidential Elections', pp. 2-4.
- ²¹⁴ Kennedy-Pipe, pp. 259, 271.
- ²¹⁵ Fuller, *Azerbaijan at the Crossroads*, pp. 14-18. Croissant, p. 83 writes: "The foreign policy of Elchibey sought to steer the republic's external alignment away from Russia and the CIS. Driven by the long term nationalist goal of achieving the union of 'Northern' and 'Southern' Azerbaijan, Elchibey called upon the Azeris of north-western Iran to break away from the Islamic Republic and join their brethren to the north in the formation of a 'Greater Azerbaijan'." See also Elizabeth Fuller, 'Transcaucasia: Ethnic Strife Threatens Democratization', *RFE/RL Research Report*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (January 1993), pp. 20-21.
- ²¹⁶ Tchanganiz Pahlavan, 'Iran: New Policies for New Times', *Warreport*, No. 50 (April 1995), p. 29.
- ²¹⁷ Grgorian, p. 47.
- ²¹⁸ Haroutun Khachaterian, 'A Test of Maturity', *Warreport*, No. 58 (February-March 1998), p. 88.
- ²¹⁹ Hunter, *Azerbaijan*, p. 430.
- ²²⁰ Mashi and Krikorian, pp. 39-45.
- ²²¹ Human Rights Watch/Helsinki, p. 5.
- ²²² Levon Chorbajian, 'Introduction to the English Language Edition', in Chorbajian, Donabedian and Mutaflan, *The Caucasus Knot*, p. 14.
- ²²³ S. Neil Macfarlane, 'Keeping Peace or Preserving Conflicts?', *Warreport*, No. 52 (June-July 1997), p. 34.
- ²²⁴ Richard Weitz, 'The CSCC's New Look', *RFE/RL Research Report*, Vol. 1, No. 6 (February 7, 1992), pp. 27-30; Elizabeth Fuller, 'Transcaucasia: Ethnic Strife', p. 22.
- ²²⁵ Fuller, *Azerbaijan at Crossroads*, p. 13.
- ²²⁶ Croissant, pp. 85-86.
- ²²⁷ Fuller, 'Nagorno-Karabakh: Internal Conflict', p. 3.
- ²²⁸ Croissant, p. 86.
- ²²⁹ Human Rights Watch/Helsinki, pp. 5-6.
- ²³⁰ Fuller, *Azerbaijan at Crossroads*, p. 19.
- ²³¹ Human Rights Watch/Helsinki, p. 18.
- ²³² Yashar T. Aliyev, 'UN Reaffirms the Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity of Azerbaijan', *Azerbaijan International*, No. 6.4 (Winter 1998), available online at <<http://www.azer.com>>.
- ²³³ Human Rights Watch/Helsinki, pp. 29-30.

- ²³³ 'A Brief Report on the Economic Damage to the Republic of Azerbaijan Inflicted by the Aggression of the Republic of Armenia', available online at <<http://www.president.az/azerbaijan/nk/conf10.html>>.
- ²³⁴ Kaiser Zaman and Suzan Cornell, 'Humanitarian Relief in Azerbaijan: an Assessment Two Years Later', *Azerbaijan International*, No. 2.4 (Winter 1994), available online at <<http://www.azer.com>>.
- ²³⁵ *Involuntarily Displaced People: A Global Survey*, second edition (London: Earthscan, 2002), pp. 138-140.
- ²³⁶ Betty Blair, 'Forging a Lasting Peace: The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: An Interview with John J. Marosca (Former US Ambassador to the OSCE)', *Azerbaijan International*, No. 4.1 (Spring 1996), available online at <<http://www.azer.com>>.
- ²³⁷ Human Rights Watch/Helsinki, p. 37.
- ²³⁸ Croissant, p. 93.
- ²³⁹ Elizabeth Fuller, 'The Karabakh Mediation Process: Grachev Versus the CSCE?', *RFE/RL Research Report*, Vol. 3, No. 23 (June 10, 1994), p. 14.
- ²⁴⁰ David D. Laitin and Ronald Grigor Suny, 'Paper on Armenia and Azerbaijan: Thinking a Way Out of Karabakh', *Journal of Middle East Policy*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (October 1999), available online at <<http://www.mepc.org>>.
- ²⁴¹ Daniel Snelder, 'At Russia's Prodding, Caucasus Rivals Talk', *The Christian Science Monitor*, 21 September 1993, p. 7; Fuller, *Azerbaijan at Crossroads*, p. 20.
- ²⁴² Mughrave, pp. 180-181.
- ²⁴³ Daniel Snelder, 'Afghan Fighters Join Azeri-Armenian War', *Christian Science Monitor*, 16 November 1993, p. 7; Chorbajian, p. 17; Human Rights Watch/Helsinki, pp. 39-40.
- ²⁴⁴ Human Rights Watch/Helsinki, pp. 39-44.
- ²⁴⁵ Chorbajian, p. 37.
- ²⁴⁶ Adam Roberts, 'Beyond the Flawed Principle of National Self-Determination', in Mortimer and Finn, *People, Nation and State*, p. 86.
- ²⁴⁷ Chorbajian, p. 40.
- ²⁴⁸ Human Rights Watch/Helsinki, p. 47.
- ²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 45-47.
- ²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 47-48.
- ²⁵¹ Chorbajian, p. 41.
- ²⁵² Human Rights Watch/Helsinki, pp. 46-48.
- ²⁵³ Elizabeth Fuller, 'Russia, Turkey, Iran, and the Karabakh Mediation Process', *RFE/RL Research Report*, Vol. 3, No. 8 (February 25, 1994), pp. 35-36.
- ²⁵⁴ Svante E. Cornell, 'Turkey and the Conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh: A Delicate Balance', *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (January 1998), p. 62.
- ²⁵⁵ Human Rights Watch/Helsinki, p. 49; Gayane Novikova, 'Armenia and the Middle East', *Middle East Review of International Affairs (MERIA)*, Vol. 4, No. 4 (December 2000), posted online at <<http://www.meria.biu.ac.il>>.
- ²⁵⁶ 'Report on the Conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh', Document 7182, presented to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, 17 October 1994, available online at <<http://stars.coe.fr/doc/doc94/edoc7182.htm>>.
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- ²⁵⁸ Anthony D. Smith, *Theories of Nationalism* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co., 1971), pp. 186-191.
- ²⁵⁹ Danilo Turk, 'The Right of Self-Determination', in Mortimer and Finn, *People, Nation and State*, p. 113.

**ԱՆՈՒՄԱՅԻՆ ԿԱՄԱԿԱՆՈՒՄԻ ԳՆԱԳՈՒՄԱՆՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ ԵՒ ԱՇԳՈՒՄԻ
ԼՈՐԱՋՈՐՈՒՄ ԶԱՅԱՏՈՒՄ, ԱՏՐՊՈՒՄ ԵՒ ԼԵՈՂԱՅԻՆ ՂԱՐԱԳՆՆ
ՀԱՎԱՍՏՆՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ (1987-1994)**

(Ա.Ք.Գրիգորյան)

Յովհաննէս Կէրէմեան

Սրբ. պատմիկան մը կեդրոնական կիլոմետրիկը կը տնտեսական՝ քաղաքական հիմնական փոփոխութիւն մը այլ պատճառներով, այլ կերպիւ մէջ ապրող զոյգ՝ փոքր-ժամանակներ, ժամանակ տեսից որակի ինքնակամայական պահանջ կը պահանջէր, կամ պահանջ կը պահանջէր ժամանակ տեսից որակի միտումը կը ընտելն, լուսազոյն առիթը կ'ունենան ընթացումներու եւ միջին տնտեսական քայլեր տանելու:

Հայկեանց քաղաքական կերպի մէջ տնտեսականութեան տնտեսական այս ընթացումէն կերպով կը մերթառնէ Լեւոնակն Ղարաբաղի Հանրապետութիւնը: Ան կ'անդրադառնայ՝ եւս Հանրապետութեան իրազարկ կարգաւորման ի իրազարկ միջոցառման ընտանիքի առաջնորդանք քաղաքական եւ ընդհանրապէս իրազարկութեան գործընթացին: