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NEW DIMENSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS. ANTHROPOLOGICAL DEFENSE CONTRA GLORIFICATION OF DECEIVING BY ALL MEANS.

ABSTRACT: This article aims to contribute to the available data, presenting exemplary sources that may constitute point of reference for experts who seek information on sociological, anthropological and ethnological dimensions of the topic. It is crucial to highlight the evidence on some main aspects concerning Azerbaijan, on which there is a lack of precise information. Possibilities of a potential reconciliation between Armenia and Azerbaijan are exposed indicating existing disadvantages of the process. Articles from the press, interviews with experts; interviews with expatriates of Armenian origin that lived in Azerbaijan; an interview with soldiers captured during military operations versus Armenia are offered. Historical sources and contemporary official data presented. Despite critique and debates against an anthropological defense, this article brings forward information that might offer ideas on conflict solving perspectives within war studies. Article attempts to state paramount importance of growing awareness on the exploitation of the ignorance of masses by some activists and press, concluded primarily through social media. Furthermore, article aims to oppose people's attitude of passively accepting fake news without scrupulous investigation.

KEYWORDS: anthropology, Armenia, Azerbaijan, reconciliation, ignorance.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

Including the available audiovisual material can help to increase understanding of the definition of the topic.

As to strictly academic sources known to western scholars, we can mention authors that evaluated this subject in their publications earlier than second Nagorno-Karabakh (*Qarabağ*) War. They are: Svante Cornell, Thomas de Waal, Nadia Diuk, Fiona Hill, Thomas Goltz, Ronald Grigor Suny, and Erik Melander.

Due to the particularity of the issue, the topic of the conflict in the Nagorno-Karabakh, so far is widely presented in journalistic publications, mainly in the mass media, rather than in monographies. Yet, there is a substantial wealth of academic publications growing since recent trimester. Video interviews with experts on crucial points of the matter are also available. Academic research is divided in two main streams: pro-Armenian self-determination claims and defense of territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, according to the international law.

During the escalation of the conflict as of September 2020, debates around the matter intensified: numerous experts began addressing public opinion by exchanging their views in mass media and TV; particularly trough Russian Federation TV channels.

Major points of the matter are presented below:

There are Armenian historians, analysts and public figures¹
that made numerous official statements
against Armenian territorial claims and allegations,
justifying territorial integrity of Azerbaijan.

There is not a single one Azerbaijani,
or tied in any way to Azerbaijan
historian, political expert, public figure that defends ideas of self-determination of
Armenian community, against territorial integrity of Azerbaijan.

¹ Namely: Philip Ekozyants, Aram Gevorgian, Sergey Danielyan, Karen Shakhnazarov, Armen Dzhigarkhanyan, Ayrin Avetyan.

In this context, even if not directly related to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, historians such as Yevgeni Ivanovich Kychanov, Christopher Gunn, Nina Garsoian, George Bournoutian, Levon Avdoian, Richard Hovannisian; along with soviet researchers such as Emanuel Dolbakian, Manuk Abegian, Ashot Abramian, Rafik Abramian, Grigor Grigorian, Suren Yeremian, Abgar Joannisian, Jacob Mandanian, Karapet Melik-Ogajanian² stated that the mainstream of the theories produced to support Armenian allegations, which are representing to certain extent the background of the issue and the allegations from historical perspectives, are either questionable or groundless.

Farid Shafiyev remains the most prolific author of research projects and publications on the topic accessible to western readers. He presents the matter advocating territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. Azerbaijani authors who published in English are Shamkhal Abilov, Ceyhun Mahmudlu, Ismail Isayev. Other authors of articles available in press in English language are Jakub Kamaras and Colins Stevens.

It is significant to underline two facts:

1. Number of publications raised after November the 10th 2020.
2. Certain authors that recently started writing on this issue, prior to November the 10th 2020 were avoiding the topic.

In Russian language the issue is presented by Ramiz Abutalibov (Aboutalybov), Elmira Akhundova, Arif Aliyev, Alexander Artamonov, Aydin Balayev, Rizvan Huseynov, Farhad Jabbarov, Victoria Ivleva, Igor Korotchenko and Maksim Shevchenko.

The topic seems not to be popular among social anthropologists in Poland prior to the II Nagorno-Karabakh War. So to speak, in the context of anthropological research related to war, Chris Hann in his monography dated 2008, choses to present examples from conflict in Yugoslavia³. The Polish Institute of International Affairs experts Anna Maria Dyner, Agnieszka Legucka, Arkadiusz Legieć offer detailed up to date information on the issue. Additionally there have been publications in Polish language by Elnur Kalbizada and Farid Shafiyev.

In general, it can be stated that the quantity of sources presenting the Armenian point of view is higher.

² R. Huseynov, *Questionable Reliability of Armenian Sources*, p. 58-63, www.irs-az.com (accessed: 1/11/2020)

³ C. Hann, *Antropologia społeczna*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków 2008. pp. 137-138.

METHODOLOGY

Linguistics are used to indicate and strengthen the functional meaning of the information presented to reader, rephrasing statements.

Combining facts and sources by drawing parallels between events occurred starting from the beginning of the XX and the XXI century applied. Fact check based on materials such as data presented by governmental organizations is provided for readers' evaluation. Non-English language sources are translated into English for the first time.

One of the methods applied in this article is the desk research. Database for substantial fact check is extensively provided. Expert interviews within cultural studies are offered. Combining ethnological interview, aims to include the point of view of people excluded from the reach of western public. Their ideas on matters such as coexistence and reconciliation with Armenia in new post war era are provided.

INTRODUCTION

The available information on the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh shows tendencies to repetitions. It is mainly based on the description of the history of the conflict, presenting solely one, rarely both sides of the conflict, along with major facts related to various aspects of casualties.

Differently from the mainstream, this article attempts to present least known details with regard to the components that determined the history of the conflict.

Following the developments in Nagorno-Karabakh conflict resolution, the whole world is witnessing an unfolding that can be easily considered as an unusual phenomenon.

Surprising or not to some, "painful and humiliating" to others, apart from how it feels to those mostly involved, it should be stated that numerous analytics, commentators, experts, politicians and sympathizers have found an extensive topic to comment on, excitedly depicting the glory of one side, the defeat of another, while listing the reasons according to own political preferences. This way, some Ukrainians are defining the developments as a defeat of Russia, some French as a victory of Turkey, some Russians as a victory over the West, whereas according to the international law, justice seems to be restored in favor of Azerbaijan.

In an age when the world is desperately overwhelmed with a turmoil of concepts, where a right to offend is confused with democracy, a right to kill confused with religious devotion,

disinformation considered as a right to manipulate, traditional definitions of certain social balance determining pillars seem in need of being heavily revised.

Thus, anthropological defense emerged as one of the few prerogatives which Azerbaijan can acquire against the hysteria of misnaming and misleading attempts of exploiting the ignorance of masses in aspects such as history of the region, social diversity background, achievements of Azerbaijan in the fields of secularism, women rights, multiculturalism and coexistence of religions.

DECEIVING AS A FORM OF POWER

According to the Cambridge Dictionary of English language, “deceive” is “to make someone believe something that is not true” or “to mislead or cause to make mistakes, usually by giving or suggesting false information”⁴.

Significantly, in case of Azerbaijan related public opinion, the process of deceiving comes forward in quite peculiar combination of facts and occurrences that are still not largely known. So to speak, in case of Azerbaijan, politics determine tendentious approach in various fields, one of which is mass media. Coincidentally, such politics are applied not only to target Azerbaijan itself, but primarily the international community along with the majority of Armenian population.

First of all, we can state that the process of deceiving by all means international community’s right to access fast, most correct and unbiased information is ongoing. Yet, this practice is constantly evolving, despite military operations in Nagorno-Karabakh ended on November the 10th, 2020. Remarkably, when the idea of this publication was brought forward by the publishers of this special edition of Polish *Wiedza Obronna* Journal, the state of issues was yet at a different stage. Hopefully, unbiased academic circles will keep contributing extensively, paving the way to reconciliation process between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Deception is often used in politics. It gains momentum thanks to certain political figures, who, on one hand, drag masses behind ideas, on the other provoke the hatred of those who are fed with lies behind served information. We should not forget, that there is also another group of people, opposing the first one, which takes lies as pure truth. This second group is marginalised and excluded from a fair discussion. They are overwhelmed with bitterness of

⁴ *Deceive*, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/> (accessed: 27/01/2021)

injustice, primarily trying to understand reasons of such a treatment. Deceived in their turn, the first group, receives nothing else than empty promises. The cycle of meaningless plot goes on and on endlessly. Nevertheless, the politician is safe as he or she gained votes and kept his/her position of untouched manipulator. Hatred instilled by politicians in the minds and hearts of first group of voters remains. The second group reacts with similar hatred and goes throughout hopeless and bitter disappointment. Needless to say, fierce and desperate reactions might be dangerous for societies. Luckily, such reactions do not belong to civilized and peaceful communities, which would never use extremism to defend themselves, whilst the peaceful attitude of certain groups is often exploited by manipulators.

History is one of the primary pillars of understanding social developments. Knowing it is useful while exploring conflicts between people. Similarly to what happened due to Nazism, ethnological differences came forward as reasons to target and pursue people. Ignorance causes hatred towards those who are considered different and that do not react violently to express their hurt feelings.

Meanwhile, from the perspective of politics, the most striking example is French parliamentarian, Senator Madame *Valérie Boyer*. Regrettably, she is not an author of publications on social media that could advocate peaceful coexistence. Her interviews in TV are not promoting mutual respect along with submission to international law. Mme Boyer's posts on social media, gain within hours thousands of reactions, hundreds of sharing. Content of her posts advocate abuse of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, misnaming the governance of President İlham Aliyev as "the most oppressive dictatorship of the planet"⁵, urging hatred towards Azerbaijan, referring as barbaric⁶ to Azerbaijani Islam, as the one that supposedly intends ethnic⁷ and cultural cleansing⁸, possessing in addition Jihadist features⁹.

⁵ *Valérie Boyer's video featuring her speech addressing The Parliament of the Republic of France, Facebook official page publication on October the 14th, 2020.*

https://m.facebook.com/watch/?v=702385530698444&_rdr (accessed: 31/01/2021)

⁶ *Ibidem, Valérie Boyer's Facebook official page publication on January the 11th, 2021.* (accessed: 31/01/2021)

⁷ *Ibidem, Facebook official page publication on November the 12th, 2020.* (accessed: 31/01/2021)

⁸ *Ibidem, Facebook official page publication on November the 24th, 2020.* (accessed: 31/01/2021)

⁹ *Ibidem, video featuring Valérie Boyer's speech addressing The Parliament of the Republic of France 0:42*
https://m.facebook.com/watch/?v=702385530698444&_rdr (accessed: 31/01/2021)

Similarly to Mme Boyer, Polish activist Tomasz Buczek¹⁰ is deceiving his numerous followers and gaining high consensus on social media. Apparently, French Senator Boyer is trying to keep Armenian population in hands, feeding them with lies and by this keeping her position of parliamentarian for the following term. Her tactic is to state that “France and Europe cannot abandon sister Armenia”¹¹, repeating such complaint more or less every 10 days. Mme Boyer involves from time to time some other French politicians into her strive. Hers and Mr. Buczek’s activity is a source of great concern as it is based on purposefully misleading masses by using terms such as expansion of Islam, Jihadism, genocide, crimes against Christianity, dictatorship, being nothing more than completely groundless allegations against the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Remarkably, it looks like the activities of both Mme Boyer and Mr. Buczek’s are not taken seriously even in their own countries, as all their petitions or calls referring to public opinion are ignored by the authorities. As a consequence, Mr. Buczek addresses world leaders but not those ones of Poland. Clearly, these two figures are openly acting against the policy of their own countries, simply engaging in an interpersonal stir among masses. As a result, the image of their own countries stays as shattered, while Armenia and Azerbaijan are dragged into an endless process of bitterness, instead of being supported in the process of finding consolidation.

DECEIVING BY ALL MEANS IN PRESS

Reading certain articles of main news channels such as BBC was from time to time particularly disturbing during the 44 days of war due to the remorseless impression of information being intentionally distorted by editing.

Let’s take a closer look at the citations from the article titled: “Nagorno-Karabakh: The Armenian-Azeri 'information wars”¹², provided by the BBC Reality Check and Anti-disinformation unit, penned by Christopher Giles and Upasana Bhat.

“Nagorno-Karabakh - key facts

- A mountainous region of about 4,400 sq km (1,700 sq miles)”

Precisely: 4 388 sq.km.

¹⁰ Tomasz Lech Buczek’s official Facebook Page, <https://www.facebook.com/tomaszlechbuczek/> (accessed: 08/02/2021)

¹¹ Ibidem, Facebook official page publication on November the 10th, 2020. (accessed: 31/01/2021)

¹² Nagorno-Karabakh: The Armenian-Azeri 'information wars', <https://www.bbc.com/news> (accessed: 27/01/2021)

- “Traditionally inhabited by Christian Armenians and Muslim Turks”

Precise way to formulate the sentence would be: “Traditionally inhabited by Christian Armenians and by Muslim Azerbaijanis”. Indeed, the content of the article includes definition such as “Azerbaijani” in reference to population of Azerbaijan. Example: “Many Azerbaijani people have also been heavily sharing content,”¹³ while in this particular sentence it defines Muslim population as “Turks”. According to the international law definition, “Turk” is more likely to specify citizens of the Republic of Turkey. Such a usage of the word is aiming to mislead the reader, creating the psychological pattern that for some may be attributed to more negative than unbiased impressions.

- “Internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan, but majority of population is ethnic Armenian”

Precisely: here we see improper information with regard to numbers, no information is given to demonstrate a situation which in reality is based on the complete absence of Azerbaijani population in the region since October 1993¹⁴. The absence of Azerbaijanis indicates war crimes against civilians. Azerbaijani population was gradually displaced from the conflict zone by Armenian armed units since the beginning of the war in Nagorno-Karabakh.

- “An estimated one million people displaced by war in 1988-1994, and about 30,000 killed”

Precisely: Only displaced Azerbaijanis number is 1 200 500.¹⁵

Precisely: Only killed number of Azerbaijanis declared as 20 000.¹⁶

- “Separatist forces captured some extra territory around the enclave in Azerbaijan in the 1990s war”

Precise version would be: Armenian separatist forces captured some extra territory of Azerbaijan around the enclave in the 1990s war.

¹³ Ibidem, (accessed: 27/01/2021)

¹⁴ Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Statistics, <https://mod.gov.az/en/consequences-of-armenian-military-aggression-statistics-412/> (accessed: 30/01/2021)

¹⁵ Ibidem, Statistics, (accessed: 30/01/2021)

¹⁶ Ibid, Statistics, (accessed: 30/01/2021)

- Reading throughout the article, another paragraph that needs clarification comes forward. It says: “Facebook has taken steps to remove some accounts associated with Azerbaijan”¹⁷. Obviously, here a double standard is applied by social media, because it cannot be that improper activity comes only from one side, which is actually a nation. Indeed, during the 44 days of war, Azerbaijanis tried to oppose such a discrimination and joined their efforts on Facebook and Twitter.

The article goes on:

- “There are private Facebook groups, with names such as "cyber armies" and "media fighters", in which supporters of Armenia are suggesting posts and hashtags, and coordinate to amplify the content.”¹⁸

Precisely, ongoing activity is almost identical on both sides. Instead of stating the factual situation, authors of the article serve the information the way it actually becomes a disinformation and above all an advertisement to the pro-Armenian Facebook related content.

- Another citation from the article:

“BBC Arabic has contacted one man who says he was recruited in northern Syria “to guard military points" on Azerbaijan's borders.”¹⁹ This sentence is an example of bad journalism and lack of ethics in that it does not provide concrete and reliable source to this alarming allegation.

Would paraphrasing be helpful to understand the extend of such a statement? Let’s try:

**BBC Reality Check and Anti-disinformation Unit
has contacted one man who says he was recruited in Northern Ireland
"to guard military points" on Great Britain's borders.**

Once paraphrased, would anybody take such a statement, even presented by BBC, seriously? Then, why there should be such an expectation from people, when “news” of such a quality refer to Azerbaijan?

¹⁷ Nagorno-Karabakh: *The Armenian-Azeri 'information wars'...*, Ibidem, (accessed: 27/01/2021)

¹⁸ Ibid, (accessed: 27/01/2021)

¹⁹ Ibid, (accessed: 27/01/2021)

ANTHROPOLOGICAL DEFENSE CONTRA DECEIVING

This part of the article is dedicated to the interviews of Armenians born in Azerbaijan and an interview of Azerbaijani historian. All the interviews are meant to seek potential for reconciliation between the two nations. As one of the main arguments against Azerbaijan during 44 days of II Karabakh War was the concern about fates of war prisoners. This chapter presents interview with Armenian captive soldiers as well.

Sources of the each of the interviews are different. Indeed, to representatives of many nations and peoples, Azerbaijan has become not only a place of residence, but also a true homeland. Tens of thousands of Russians, Jews, Lezghins, Poles, Udins, Tatars, Armenians et c.²⁰ live in the country. Despite many Armenians left Azerbaijan, due to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, they are retaining the warmest memories of their native lands they were born in. To make interviews of Erik Khachaturov and Armenian soldiers more accessible for non-Russian speaking audience, they are partly translated in written form by the author of this article to English and presented below.

INTERVIEW WITH ERIK KHACHATUROV

Erik Khachaturov, was dreaming of visiting Baku since years. His wish came true in April 2017. As soon as he crossed the threshold of the Baku airport, Armenian Erik Khachaturov could not hold back his tears and asked to be left alone. He is a native of Baku. He was met by members of the "Platform for Peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan" - from the Azerbaijani side by Orkhan Nabiyeu and Dilara Efendiyeva, from the Armenian side - a journalist from Armenia, now living in Baku, Susan Jaginyan.

Erik Khachaturov says to the camera: "I just got off the plane, I can't say anything. It's kind of overwhelming. Emotions shook me a little. Plans?" "Yes, of course, three sleepless nights."

Journalist asks: "What did you plan, where will you go first?"

Erik Khachaturov: "To my own street, 150 meters, high school, Maiden Tower of Baku, I would like to visit the sights., places where I spend my youth."

²⁰ Human Rights Without Frontiers Report, https://www.academia.edu/10576325/Ethnic_Minorities_in_Azerbaijan (accessed: 8/02/2021)

Journalist narrates: “Erik Khachaturov left Baku at the end of the last century, when the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict began to flare up. Then, he, the head of a workshop in one of the Baku cafes, was 18 years old. From Azerbaijan Erik Khachaturov went to Armenia, but there they were not very happy about him. Baku Armenians were always disliked there and even called *shurtvats*, which means shape-shifters. Unable to withstand such an attitude, Eric almost immediately moved to Russia, where he lives with his family to this day. However, his heart still remained in Baku.”

Erik Khachaturov: “As I loved my native Baku, I will love it until the end of my life. This is my homeland,” he says.

Journalist: “On the very first day of his arrival, Erik Khachaturov went to the office of the “Platform for Peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan”. Here, together with the participants of the civil initiative, he discussed the contribution of public diplomacy to the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. He stressed that in Azerbaijan, Armenians and Azerbaijanis have always lived in peace, there were no disagreements between them. The fate of the two peoples was predetermined by the conflict unleashed by the Armenian separatists. Even today, propagating the hatred of Armenians towards Azerbaijanis, Armenian nationalists unleash a flurry of reproaches against Khachaturov.”

Erik Khachaturov looking into the camera: “Many acquaintances tell me that they paid me. I’ll tell you – no! I wanted all this myself! And personally, this is my desire to come to my native Baku,” he says. “When I lived in Armenia, many said to me - here is your homeland, the 90s - those were bad years. Well, there were bad years. And the residence permit too? They asked me money for the residence in Armenia. And thank God, I did not give it. ”

Journalist: “According to Eric, his place is only in Baku. He says he regrets that his children grew up in another country.”

Erik Khachaturov: "I just feel like a fish in the water. Do you understand, that this air is mine..." At this point Erik Khachaturov struggles to keep his tears...²¹

INTERVIEW WITH IRINA BERCHIYAN

Armenian by nationality Irina Berchiyan like other Baku Armenians, was able to visit Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan 30 years after leaving the city. Her visit was possible upon the

²¹ CBC TV Azerbaijan, *Уроженец Баку Эрик Хачатуров приехал на родину*, 2017, 0:00-2:59, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hosp5oklYa4> (accessed: 31.01.2021)

mediation of the Civil Peace Platform between Armenia and Azerbaijan. She learned about the project from her husband, who is Azerbaijani by nationality. The city where she was born and raised, Irina left because of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. In video Irina Berchiyan shares her emotions and thoughts regarding possibility of revisiting the city. She also expresses her ideas and wishes in context of peaceful coexistence of two nations.²²

INTERVIEW WITH CAPTIVE ARMENIAN SOLDIERS

Five captured Armenian soldiers are interviewed by Baku based, first independent public broadcaster Azerbaijani İctimaiTV²³. The video of this interview was published on November the 2nd 2020, on the YouTube.

Video features, among other four soldiers, Haik Dilanian. Dilanian starts his narration telling about his birth place which is Sisian area, Brnakot village (*Armenia*). He adds that presently he lives in Erevan. He has a sister, who is a mother of more than one children. (*Quantity not specified*). He indicates that he has been married since 4 months. Dilanian and other 2 captured soldiers speak Russian language during interview. When Dilanian starts describing circumstances of their being taken into captivity by Azerbaijani troops, he is visibly moved.

So as to allow more individuals benefiting from the chance to get information on this exemplary occurrence, Haik Dilanian's narration (2:05- of that moments is presented in written form below(9:30-13:15):

"We were thinking that Azerbaijanis, as soon as they take into captivity, cut and kill. This is what we were thinking and in a bit I will tell you whom I met.

I shouted out: "Is there someone who understands Russian language."

There we heard a reply:

"Yes I do!"

I said: "Can I have a request from you, as from a soldier with a dignity, as from a man of honour?"

The voice replied: "Go on!"

²² Armenia-Azerbaijan Civil Peace Platform, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yeEAzU_o4ow&feature=youtu.be (accessed: 31/01/2021)

²³ İctimai Television, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C4%B0ictimai_Television (accessed: 29/01/2021)

I said: “When you will kill us, when we will die here, please can you send our bodies to Armenia, so our parents can bury us.” I said: “You also have a mother, so you will understand what I am asking you about now”.

He answered: “Brother, nobody intends to kill you, just come out!”

“But can you just confirm that you will do according with my request?” I asked.

He said: “But I have no intention to kill you!”

Someone was approaching so we started shooting again. I was wounded, kept talking to him. At the same time there was a firefight ongoing. Other people trying to communicate with us. I was insisting he promises to me what I asked. He was keeping his point, just asking me to come out. Then, I was already not able to stand on my feet, I got on my knees... Then I said to my friends, look I am wounded, will die in anyhow, I will go first so we see how he behaves, if he kills me, then you kill each other at least, this way the matter ends. If he doesn't kill, then we will understand their intentions. Comrades said no, you are crazy, if Azerbaijanis capture, they will start cutting, they will cut your ear straight there on the spot. Then this guy addressed me saying: “Brother, you do not believe me, that I will not kill you?” I replied: “Of course I don't! You will throw a grenade.”

He approached the slot, asking: “Do you see me?” I was holding him at gunpoint, my position was convenient to shoot. He asked: “Do you see me?” I said: “Yes”.

He replied:

“Look now, I am approaching even closer, and I saw him coming into sight without bulletproof vest on...

He placed his weapon on the ground, and said:

“Look I trust you, if you prefer so, you can just kill me right now...

But if you are not going to kill me,
you must trust me as well, just come up to talk!”

At this moment, I don't know...

Only a strong-willed person can stand in front of an enemy without a weapon in hand and without bulletproof vest on, asking for cooperation...”

Haik Dilanian,
November the 2nd 2020. İctimai TV.

Source: Interview with captured Armenian soldiers²⁴

²⁴ *Əsir götürülmüş erməni hərbiçilərlə müsahibə* [Interview with captured Armenian soldiers], İctimai TV 2020, 11:20-12:00
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vvHYGRtpj5k&feature=youtu.be> (accessed: 31/01/2021)

Haik Dilanian continues his narration: I came up, I was wounded, he asked me: “Do you smoke?” My reply was: “I do.” He took out two cigarettes and lighted them, giving one to me.” *(At this moment Haik looks even more moved)*. “We sat down next to each other, he understood I was wounded. He called a paramedic to bandage my wound. We were smoking and talking. He asked me to tell my other comrades to come up from the shelter. I said, I cannot tell them, I trust you but what if others will start killing. He said: “Actually we are all like that! We do not kill people the way you were thinking.” To be brief, I will tell that the rest of our guys came up, I told them to do so. We introduced ourselves. Well as to my impression: I was in tears, because I could not imagine those people to be like that. I was imagining that in front of me might be standing the worst person, from whom only the worst deeds could have been expected.”

At this point interviewer asks: “Why were you thinking so?”

Haik Dilanian: “Everybody thinks so among us.”

The interviewer asks: “In Armenia, they do?”

Haik replies: “The mentality is this way. This requires to be changed”.

The interviewer’s voice comments behind the camera: “Most of them are meeting first time in their life with Azerbaijanis. As soon as they do so, enlightenment comes...”

Haik Dilanian addresses first in Russian and then in Armenian his compatriots, looking straight in the camera. He says in Armenian *(according to subtitles in Russian)*:

“People in whose hands we are now,
they do not know precisely if I myself or someone else from us
might have killed their relative.
For them there is no difference, if that was me or someone else.
I see in their eyes abhorrence, but they understand and they are aware that we are war
prisoners and must be treated with respect,
they do not humiliate us, and this is one of their characteristic qualities.
I speak not only on behalf of myself, but on behalf of all of us.
I am speaking as a witness of what I have experienced and this is a pure truth.”

Haik Dilanian,
November the 2nd 2020. *İctimai TV.*

Source: Interview with captured Armenian soldiers²⁵

²⁵ Ibidem, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vvHYGRtpj5k&feature=youtu.be> (accessed: 31/01/2021) 20:35 – 21:20

INTERVIEW WITH AN EXPERT

In order to investigate probabilities of consolidation of relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia from a point of view of an intellectual, I turned to the possibility of interviewing an expert Mrs. Latifa Aliyeva²⁶ PhD, senior lecturer at Baku State University Department of History, which is presented below:

Question: From the very beginning of the conflict in Nagorno Karabakh, Azerbaijan has dealt and continues to encounter, to a certain extent, distorted representation of reality on the part of majority of international media. How do you personally consider the reasons for such a position of some representatives of mass media outside of Azerbaijan?

Latifa Aliyeva: Media representatives of many countries misinterpret the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The reason for this position is that the Armenian propaganda is very strong. Many of them use half-truth statements. In particular, the Russian media which is strongly influenced by the Armenian lobby (Margarita Simonyan, Tina Kandelaki and others). Facts are often manipulated. What is essential the adequate truth, not unification of opinions around geopolitically desired version, close to Armenian propaganda. Yet, during the second Karabakh war, the truth gradually began to be revealed.

Question: What, in your opinion, are the key difficulties on the way of reconciliation of the two nations?

Latifa Aliyeva: On the way of establishing of favorable relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia in the social and cultural spheres, our countries encounter great difficulties. In fact, there is a nationalist ideology in the Armenian society. Young people and adolescents are taught that there was a great Armenia, while hatred towards Turks is also instilled. At the same time, they rely on the idea of the 1915 so called genocide in the Ottoman Empire during the First World War. This is a controversial issue that is still being studied by historians. Events related to the fate of the Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire are presented to the Armenian people as genocide. On this basis, for more than 100 years, hatred towards Turks and Azerbaijanis has been instilled, depriving generations of Armenians of the will for friendly coexistence in the region. The study of documents and the statement of any other version than the one that asserts that the genocide of the Armenian people took place is strenuously condemned.

²⁶ Latifa Aliyeva, http://history.bsu.edu.az/az/content/latifa_aqakasim_alieva (accessed: 31/01/2021)

Question: What in your opinion needs to be done in this situation, do you see a way out? Many experts state unequivocally that in the current situation there are practically no chances for reconciliation.

Latifa Aliyeva: It is necessary to realize that even if genocide presumably occurred, the minds of young people cannot be poisoned with extreme nationalist ideas. An example can be taken from Jewish people, they experienced genocide during the Second World War. The world community is familiar with facts. The topic is not controversial. Despite this, the Jews have built their own state of Israel, they are building positive relations with many nations and countries including Germany. They are perceiving diligent work in their country and have achieved success in various spheres of life around the world, because they have no ideas of hostile nationalism. In my opinion, Armenians should follow the example of Jewish people, forget their hostility towards Turks and start building relations with Azerbaijanis. In the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh, the Armenians are taught that Karabakh is the ancient land of Armenians, belonging to them since the second millennium. In fact, there are documents that when Russia began to seize the South Caucasus, then in Karabakh in 1805 the Kurekchay agreement was signed between Russia and Azerbaijani Ibrahim Khalil Khan. There are 11 points in this agreement, and none of them even mentions the Armenian population. This historical truth must be conveyed to the Armenian people, not fairytales about the second millennium. By the way, at the times of second millennium there were no nations yet, neither Armenian nor any other, but only tribal unions. Such an incorrect presentation of the history, the artificial glorification of the Armenians and demonization of Turks, prevents Armenians from building relations with the Turks and with their close neighbors Azerbaijanis.

Question: If we take into consideration Azerbaijani people, what aspects can be indicated as positive in the approach to the issue of consolidation?

Latifa Aliyeva: Azerbaijanis have always been distinguished by their tolerance towards all peoples and religions. Before the adoption of Islam, Christianity was widely spread in Northern Azerbaijan. Churches and monasteries of that period on the Azerbaijani territory have survived to this day. The main monastery was the Gandzasar Monastery, the archive of which was entrusted in 1835 to the Armenian Church of Echmyaddin. All these historical facts are hidden to Armenians. Monasteries are presented as Armenian, despite the fact that there are many differences in them (in architecture, types of crosses, etc.). In the religion of Azerbaijanis - precisely in Islam, Christ (*İsa*) is considered a prophet, therefore, there is actually a kind

attitude towards Christianity and other religions. All those facts can help to build friendly relations between Azerbaijanis and their close neighbors, Armenians. A policy of multiculturalism is being pursued in Azerbaijan and this also applies to all Armenians. In fact, Azerbaijani society is more prepared for cooperation than the Armenian. In this situation, it is necessary to eliminate, first of all, the sources of the hostile policy.

OTHER EXPERT OPINIONS REGARDING PROBABILITIES AND GROUNDS FOR RECONCILIATION

Speaking on probabilities of reconciliation historian Farhad Jabbarov, PhD in history, based at Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences, researcher and curator in National Museum of History of Azerbaijan, remarks that the conflict is actually ongoing within debates on historical and political occurrences and it is not over yet. Jabbarov states as follows:

“Today, Germany interacts and is in friendly relations with the countries against which it fought in two wars. However, there is one point that seems to me of a fundamental importance. I think, this did not happen because the countries subjected to German occupation in the past, decided to forget all the bad things that happened and rebuild relations with Germany. It seems to me, this happened mostly due to the fact that Germany condemned herself and abandoned its hegemonic aspirations. While almost two months have passed since the end of hostilities in Karabakh, we do not observe any rethinking within Armenian society, and even some people manage to talk about revenge²⁷.”

The picture would be incomplete without presenting opinion of a military expert. In a statement made in reference to the initiation of the activity of the Turkish-Russian Monitoring Center in Agdam on January 31, 2021. Igor Korotchenko²⁸ indicates crucial points of the situation, saying:

“I cannot exclude the probability of provocations from the side of Armenia. We have seen already intrusions of military sabotage groups from the territory of Armenia, after the military maneuvers were brought to an end, subsequently the peace agreement signed on November the 10th, 2020. Yet, after this date, unjustified presence of Armenian military servicemen on the lands of Azerbaijan,

²⁷ Конфликт в сфере исторических дискуссий еще не закончился, <https://report.az/ru/> (accessed: 26/01/2021)

²⁸ Игорь Юрьевич Коротченко, <https://oborona.ru/pages/mainpage/about/index.shtml> (accessed: 31/01/2021)

resulted in a number of provocations in form of attacks on Azerbaijani military and civilians. In general, Armenia is a significant source of instability. The fact that a Monitoring Center began to function is an important turning point for Armenia to finally realize that armed provocations would not be forgiven or justified. Most important is that there will be a reliable mechanism of control, verification and those responsible will face justice.”²⁹

PAST AND TODAY UNDER FACT CHECK

One of the main arguments of Armenian point of view in reference to the conflict is the matter of numbers of Armenian population in Nagorno-Karabakh. This topic presents various versions deprived of unified data source quoting. Supporters repeat, as the main argument, the number of Armenians³⁰ that “populated Nagorno Karabakh in 1920”, without quoting any sources³¹.

Details on rise of Azerbaijan in the historiography of Caucasus towards the late modern era are as follows. More than twenty independent and sub dependent khanates and sultanates were situated in the territory of Southern Caucasus during the second part of the XVIII – beginning of the XIX century. Those states grew after the death of Nader Shah Afshar and the downfall of his empire in 1747. Those states were *Ardebil, Baku, Gəncə, Derbent, Qarabağ, Qaradağ, Quba, Maki, Marağa, Nahçıvan, Sarab, Talış, Təbriz, Şəki, Şamaxı, Urmiyə, Khoyn and Erivan khanates; Ilisu sultanate* along with the ones dependant from the more powerful neighbours namely *Djavatian Khanate, Ərəş, Borçalı, Qazax, Qutqaşen, Pambaq, Salyan, Şəmşəddil and Şuragəl sultanates*.³²

One of the first references resembling contemporary ethnonym “Azerbaijan” have been officially used by the colonel Stepan Danilovich Burnashev.³³ In his works in which he mentions “Adrebijani khanates” in 1793.

²⁹ Korotchenko on the activity of the Monitoring Center in Agdam: “I cannot exclude armed provocations” https://youtu.be/d_8YZsODYFM (accessed: 31/01/2021)

³⁰ <https://eurasianet.org/explainer-the-nagorno-karabakh-conflict> (accessed: 23/01/2021)

³¹ <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/nagorno-karabakh-conflict> (accessed: 23/01/2021)

³² Э. Исмаилов, *Азербайджанцы в конвое российских императоров*, Москва 2018, p. 10.

³³ Степан Данилович Бурнашев, “*Описание областей Адрибиджанских в Персии и их политического состояния*” (Курск, 1793), “*Описание горских народов*” (Курск, 1794). Cartography works prepared by Burnashev have been defined as “very valuable, being the only detailed and accurate when it refers to the XVIIIth century” (look Военная энциклопедия/ Под ред. К.И. Величко, В.Ф.Новицкого и др.Т. 5. Sankt Petersburg 1911, pp.157-158.)

Partition of Azerbaijan lands by Turkmenchay Treaty on February 10, 1828, started the process of significant demographic movements, one of which was the flow of Sunni population towards Ottoman Empire from northern parts of Azerbaijan and another of Christian population such as Georgian, Russian and Armenian which were crossing established by treaty borders from Iran towards the north-western parts of the country. Initially, before the treaty, the percentage of Shia and Sunni population was almost, with a slight predominance of the latter.³⁴ According to the data presented by Ludwik Widerszal, only between 1863 and 1864 the number of Muslim emigrants reached 220,000.³⁵

The movement of Christian population, particularly Armenians from Iran to Azerbaijan, which by Turkmenchay Treaty then was annexed to Russia, was widely organized and described by the Ambassador of Russian Empire to Persia, writer, poet and diplomat Alexander Griboyedov. Such migration was triggered initially by the understandable will of Christian Armenians to find protection under the rule of Russian Tsar. This idea was supported by Russian authorities without paying any attention on the probable future outcome of the matter.³⁶

In response to the so called “Jihadist” or “Turkish Islam” allegations addressed to Azerbaijan, let us see some historical facts: Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan (1918-1920) was the first sovereign and secular country in the Islamic world, capable of maintaining own priorities in religious and political aspects, not being blindly influenced by Turkey (precisely by the Ottoman Empire) or by any Arabic country, neither in the past nor at the present. On the contrary, Azerbaijan did establish its democratic and secular State before the Republic of Turkey did so in 1923. Azerbaijani intellectuals keen on understanding the universal values, were able to cultivate in themselves ideas of progressive thoughts as early as beginning of the XX century, as an example granting to women right to vote and being elected already in 1918, as a first Muslim country, ahead of many Western ones. While undeniably, Ottoman Empire was the point of reference to all the Muslim world of the time, including Azerbaijan, nevertheless Azerbaijani intellectuals were able to criticize certain occurrences, such as insufficient education of women along with some political processes ongoing in that country.

³⁴ T. Świętochowski, *Russia and Azerbaijan. A Borderland in Transition*. New York 1995, p. 10.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 240-241.

³⁶ See A. С. Грибоедов, *Сочинения в двух томах*, т. 2, Изд-во «Правда», Moscow 1971, pp. 339-341.

Questions on the reasons of tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan will benefit from taking into consideration the following facts: in 1816, Marquise Philippe Paulucci, in his statement regarding the key points of the policy of Russian Empire at Caucasus, underlined the necessity of a “*continuous state of dissension*”³⁷ among the diverse nations of Caucasus.

Importantly to note, despite the surge of social stir caused by ethnical and religious clashes during the ultimate years of history of the Russian Empire, the Muslim community of Azerbaijan did not take part in any terrorist attacks and remained loyal to the Russian authorities.³⁸

Subsequently, when we look at the situation of security in Baku within the end of XIX and the beginning of XX century, we can see that, while the rapidly developing city was growing, safety of masses was poor. From the time perspective, the simplicity of the tool that was used to create particular situations in the region, repeatedly starting from 1905 is striking. Russian State seems not able to or rather not interested in establishing a balanced social existence among middle class and the destitute. Remarkably, while the existence of wealthy people was secured, lower classes were kept in the situation convenient to be stirred. This was possible by simply not fighting crime among Azerbaijanis or between Azerbaijanis and Armenians. As reported by prominent newspaper of the time *Şərg-i Rus*: “The frequent incidents of killings in Baku is a result of Muslim backwardness. There is not a single day without a situation that one Muslim kills another. Sometimes this even raises up to 3-5 killings and deaths.”³⁹

Contrastingly, in order to keep social tensions high, Russian authorities then exploited the multiethnic society living in the region and many gangs as handy tools to provoke social disorders, such as those occurred in 1905-1906 pogroms in Baku. The prominent patriot of Azerbaijan, composer Üzəyir Hacıbəyov was stating: “...Such hostility has been weaved between those two nations by another hands...”⁴⁰

As stated by Nizami İbrahimov, who after deep scrutiny performed on the newspapers of that time, proves plainly that Armenian gangs regrettably had been always instrumental for Tsarist Russia to achieve the goals of convenient policy⁴¹ at the Caucasus.

³⁷ T. Świętochowski, op cit., p. 12.

³⁸ С. Исхаков, *Первая Русская Революция и Мусульмане Российской Империи*, Москва 2007, p. 4.

³⁹ Unknown, *Unknown*, “*Şərg-i Rus*” Newspaper, 9 July 1903, N. 42.

⁴⁰ M. Aslanov, *Üzəyir Hacıbəyov gündəlik yazmış olsaydı*. Baku 1994, p. 23.

⁴¹ N. İbrahimov, *XIX Əsrin sonu XX əsrin əvvəllərində Bakı şəhərinin siyasi və mədəni həyatı*. Baku 1997, pp. 43-45.

As one of the accusations towards Azerbaijan is based on concern for the shrines of Christianity⁴², contribution of Azerbaijan in the restoration of non-Muslim architectural monuments, within cooperation with UNESCO, exemplifies goodwill perfectly implemented. In fact, Azerbaijan already expressed long ago its sensitivity towards cultural heritage by saving monuments disregarding geographical location. We can see that on the side of Azerbaijan there has been an extensive, detailed, well planned and organized continuous work of investments in world cultural heritage. Checking facts will allow more precise evaluation of the extent of achievements. Contributions of Azerbaijan to UNESCO world heritage and references to official legal acts are introduced and specified below:⁴³

In 2007, the Heydar Aliyev Foundation carried out the restoration of two monuments included in the World Heritage List, exhibited in the park of the Versailles Palace in Paris. The Heydar Aliyev Foundation also played a significant role in the creation of new halls dedicated to the Islamic art in the Louvre Museum in Paris, France. Furthermore, The Heydar Aliyev Foundation assisted in the restoration of a number of French Churches dating back to the X-XII centuries in the settlements of Santilly, Fresnet-aux-Sauvage, Saint-Hilaire la Gerard, Tanville, Courjust, Revoyon and Mal of the Orne department, as well as parts of Strasbourg stained glass Cathedral of the XIV century. The Foundation has also implemented a number of projects for the preservation of historical and cultural sites in Italy and the Vatican. In 2016, restoration works in catacombs of St. Sebastian in the Vatican began. Earlier, in 2016, the Heydar Aliyev Foundation restored the catacombs of Saints Marcellino and Pietro, as well as the Hall of Philosophers⁴⁴ in the Capitoline Museum. The Heydar Aliyev Foundation has also joined the initiative to restore the Berlin Castle, destroyed and burned down during the Second World War. On September 29, 2011, Mehriban Aliyeva, during the campaign of collecting donations for the restoration of the Berlin Castle, donated 50 thousand euros as a contribution of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation. The architectural and museum site of "Trapezitsa", located in the Bulgarian city of Veliko Tarnovo, was restored⁴⁵ with the support of the Heydar Aliyev

⁴² <https://heydar-aliyev-foundation.org/az/content/view/136/2986/H%C9%99%C5%9Ft%C9%99rxanda-Knyaz-Vladimirin-abid%C9%99si-> (accessed: 26/01/2021)

⁴³ <https://unesco.preslib.az/en/page/6yZfcYamKh> (accessed: 23/01/2021)

⁴⁴ <https://heydar-aliyev-foundation.org/az/content/view/136/2907/Kapitolini-Muzeyinin-%E2%80%9CFilosoflar-zal%C4%B1%E2%80%9D> (accessed: 26/01/2021)

⁴⁵ <https://heydar-aliyev-foundation.org/az/content/view/136/4374/%E2%80%9CTrapezitsa%E2%80%9D-Memarl%C4%B1q-Muzeyi-Qoru%C4%9Fu> (accessed: 26/01/2021)

Foundation. The Foundation carried out the conservation and restoration of the western wall of the monument with a length of 158 meters, the creation of a tourist alley with a length of 880 meters, the Center for Cultural Heritage, along with repairs and conservation works of 3 medieval churches located on this territory. In addition, the Foundation has supported a large number of social projects to support education, in particular the construction of schools in Pakistan and Vietnam, social cultural centers in Bosnia and Herzegovina, etc.⁴⁶

In 2020, Azerbaijan restored the bas-relief “Meeting of Pope Leo I with Hun Emperor Attila” in the Saint Peter Church in Vatican. This temple is one of the most famous examples of the Italian architecture of the Renaissance era. The Saint Peter Basilica is also a famous place of pilgrimage and ceremonies. In fact, Pope usually holds several religious ceremonies over the course of a year, in the Basilica or on the square in front of it.^{47; 48}.

CONCLUSION

Fighting ignorance and trying to seek alternative ways than political indoctrination, seems the only measure to solve conflicts. International community has to acknowledge that the majority of pro-Armenia points of view do not oppose academic facts or official data, but instead exploit the lack of knowledge of the audience. For this reason, many documents on the matter have been digitalized and are available⁴⁹ on the internet for a thorough research.

Interview with captured soldier Haik Dilanian gives an idea on the emotional state of issues between Azerbaijanis and Armenians. The way Dilanian’s conversation evolved at the moment of being taken into captivity by Azerbaijani army, indicates that the hatred was not present in direct contact. Unprecedented is the detail of addressing the enemy as “brother” or describing the moment of being taken into captivity as “we introduced ourselves”. For those who come from the territories of ex USSR, the meaning of offering a cigarette at the very first encounter is unequivocal as it means friendship! This is why Haik Dilanian gets emotional. He was claiming for his body not being vandalized after death and sent to parents. He was ready to face

⁴⁶<https://media.az/politics/1067754254/yunesko-i-azerbaydzhan-sotrudnichestvo-vo-imya-sohraneniya-vsemirnogo-naslediya/> (accessed: 23/01/2021)

⁴⁷ <https://diplomatomagazine.eu/2021/01/02/contribution-of-azerbaijan-to-the-world-of-christianity/> (accessed: 23/01/2021)

⁴⁸<https://heydar-aliyev-foundation.org/az/content/view/92/5040/M%C3%BCq%C9%99dd%C9%99s-Pyotr-Kils%C9%99sind%C9%99-%E2%80%9CRoma-Papas%C4%B1-l-Leon-il%C9%99-Hun-imperatoru-Atillan%C4%B1n-g%C3%B6r%C3%BC%C5%9F%C3%BC%E2%80%9D-barelyefi-> (accessed: 26/01/2021)

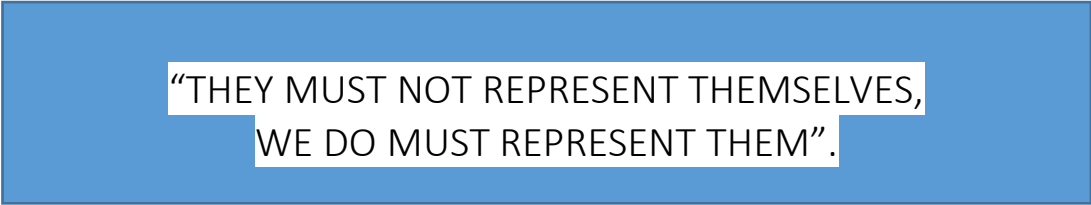
⁴⁹ National Archives of The Republic of Azerbaijan <http://www.milliarxiv.gov.az/> (accessed:28/01/2021)

humiliation and invalidity. Instead, he is offered a cigarette and he is given a right himself to decide if he can kill his disarmed enemy, who puts aside his weapon to show that trust is all what is required between them. Remarkable is the comment made by Dilanian when he states: “Only a strong-willed person can stand in front of an enemy without a weapon...”. This indicates sincere respect, an attitude that is one of the most crucial in cooperation.

Audiovisual material presented in this article, indicates availability of preconditions for a peaceful coexistence between Azerbaijan and Armenia. Such conditions were available earlier, during Soviet era of Azerbaijani and Armenian Republics. Interviews with other two ethnic Armenians: Erik Khachaturov and Irina Berchiyan indicate as well the possibility for reconciliation.

Another aspect is the fact related to Saidian concern to bring awareness in understanding between West and East. Unfortunately it seems outdated, as humanity moved into an era of selective, self-convenient reality, in which knowledge determines the dominance, targeting each who is ignorant, shifting from colonial discourse towards omnipresent priorities of powerful representations. Simultaneously, we can see that concerns about historic recurrence seem likewise pointless, in that the majority of mankind appears careless about learning lessons from the past. Indeed, patterns in geopolitics are repeating themselves, because power prefers to seek its own interest.

Looks like: “If they cannot represent themselves, they must be represented” statement by Karl Marx, gained so far the new dimension, which would be more recognizable through paraphrasing, who knows if applicable to majority of us:



“THEY MUST NOT REPRESENT THEMSELVES,
WE DO MUST REPRESENT THEM”.

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