



FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS, OR GORBACHEV, ARMENIA, AND

PERESTROIKA

Elizabeth Fuller

Summary: The Soviet central press and CPSU General Secretary Gorbachev have repeatedly criticized the failure of the Armenian Communist Party and its first secretary Karen Demirchyan to implement perestroika and crack down on corruption. The replacement of Demirchyan and other leading officials seems virtually inevitable.

Pravda has published an extraordinarily harsh attack on corruption, protectionism, and black-marketeering in Armenia.¹ The attack comes just one week after the "retirement" of the first secretary of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan, Inamzhon Uzmankhodzhaev, for his inability to eradicate rampant corruption in that republic, and it would seem to herald the imminent replacement of Armenia's Party leader, Karen Demirchyan. The fifty-five-year-old Demirchyan, whom Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev criticized by name at a plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU in June, 1987, citing his conspicuous lack of enthusiasm for perestroika, was elected first secretary of the Communist Party of Armenia in November, 1974. He is thus one of three surviving Party chiefs of republics of the USSR to have been elected to office under Brezhnev, the other two being Volodymyr Shcherbitsky of the Ukraine and Semen Grossu of Moldavia.

The article in Pravda follows a similarly outspoken account in Izvestia of the proceedings of a plenum of the Central Committee of the Armenian Communist Party on December 26--the third such plenum in a row to be devoted to the demands of perestroika and an assessment of its progress. According to Izvestia, both at the plenum in December and the previous plenum in July, the first secretary of Hrazdan City Party Committee, Haik Kotan Kotandzhyan, called for the resignation of Armenian Party First Secretary Karen Demirchyan, singling him out as the individual

1. Pravda, January 18, 1988.

ultimately responsible for the economic ills, corruption, and ideological shortcomings that still plagued the republic. This suggestion was overwhelmingly rejected by the plenum.²

Earlier Criticisms of the Armenian Communist Party

The Armenian Party organization has repeatedly been criticized over the past three years--i.e., since before Gorbachev's elevation to the post of general secretary of the CPSU and the launching of his campaign to transform the USSR into a more technologically competent and "democratic" society by means of economic restructuring coupled with glasnost'. In October, 1984, the Central Committee of the CPSU passed a resolution highlighting weaknesses in ideological work in Armenia. The resolution called for measures to counter such phenomena as widespread religious observance, nationalism in history and literature, inadequate use of surplus labor resources, and a less than wholehearted commitment to combating corruption.³

Two years later, in October, 1986, a commentary in Pravda on a plenum of the Central Committee of the Armenian Communist Party evaluated the progress made to date in implementing the directives of the resolution of 1984. The commentary expressed "acute dissatisfaction and concern over the current state of affairs" and noted reprovingly that "a series of substantive omissions in ideological work, to which the Central Committee of the CPSU has more than once drawn attention, has still not been rectified".⁴

The weightiest criticism of the Armenian Party organization in general, and of its first secretary Karen Demirchyan in particular, came from CPSU General Secretary Gorbachev at the plenum of the CPSU Central Committee in June, 1987. In his speech to the plenum Gorbachev charged that the process of perestroika in Armenia was "stuck in a rut."⁵ Gorbachev further claimed that the Armenian population was gravely concerned over the economic situation and particularly the moral climate in the republic. He said that the local Party leadership, Demirchyan

2. Izvestia, January 6, 1988.

3. See Pravda, October 21, 1984; and RL 434/84, "Moscow Critical of Ideological Shortcomings in Armenia," November 14, 1984.

4. See Pravda, October 8, 1986; and RL 406/86, "Ideological Sector in Armenia Under Fire," October 23, 1986.

5. See Pravda, June 26, 1987; and RL 335/87, "Armenia's Demirchyan: Reforming Indifferently?" August 13, 1987.

included, displayed "totally unjustified complacency" in the face of such evils as bribery, protectionism, and speculation, contending that the situation was perfectly satisfactory.

This condemnation of Demirchyan's leadership was reinforced by an article published in Sovetskaya kul'tura a week later. Written by the newspaper's correspondent in Erevan, Iosif Verdyan,⁶ the article disclosed that dissatisfaction with the republic's Party leadership had reached such a pitch that open letters and articles rejected for publication were circulating in the republic's cities protesting such phenomena as militant bureaucracy, the almost total lack of glasnost' in the press, stagnation in the arts, and serious environmental pollution.

This cumulative criticism of Demirchyan gave rise to speculation among foreign observers in Moscow that his dismissal was imminent.⁷ As it turned out, however, Demirchyan was not replaced at the subsequent plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Armenia held in late July, although, as indicated above, Hrazdan City Party Committee First Secretary G. S. Kotandzhyan had called for Demirchyan to step down as Party leader and for changes to be made in the composition of the Buro. In particular, Kotandzhyan charged that the present Party leadership was guilty of protectionism and promoting the careers of individuals implicated in corruption. He himself had, he claimed, been removed in 1977 from the post of first secretary of the Armenian Komsomol for attempting to draw attention to such abuses. (It should be noted that the version of Kotandzhyan's speech that subsequently appeared in print was heavily edited to give the impression that he had merely criticized Demirchyan's leadership.⁸ Kotandzhyan himself was attacked at the plenum in July by the secretary of the Party committee of the Armenian Council of Trade Unions, Zh. S. Arutyunyan for having "abused glasnost' to settle personal scores.")

The December Plenum of the Central Committee of the
Communist Party of Armenia

According to the account in Izvestia of the plenum held in December, 1987, although the lower echelons of the Party organization had responded to the criticism made by Gorbachev

6. Sovetskaya kul'tura, July 4, 1987.

7. See Reuters, from Moscow, July 29, 1987.

8. Kommunist (Armenia), July 29, 1987.

in June with numerous written suggestions on how shortcomings should be overcome, Demirchyan's report to the gathering was both vague and complacent and lacked "the most important thing--a clear answer to the question 'How to take perestroika further.'" The same absence of self-criticism permeated most of the other speeches to the plenum, which would have ended "on a major note" had it not been for two unscheduled pronouncements.

The first of these was by Sarkis Khachatryan, the chairman of the Party Control Commission, which is the supreme disciplinary organ of the Party and, as such, is charged with supervision of members' conduct and observance by them of the Party moral code.⁹ Khachatryan claimed that he had twice been refused permission to speak at the plenum in July. He went on to make charges of extensive bribery within the law enforcement organs, which he said content themselves with arresting petty offenders while large-scale wheeler-dealers escape unpunished. He further claimed that for the past thirteen years the Party Control Commission had not once been called on to investigate charges of improper conduct by members of the administrative organs since such complaints were deliberately not forwarded to the Party commission by the Central Committee.

The second speaker, as noted above, was Haik Kotandzhyan, who reiterated the criticisms he had voiced in July, adding that he had since been subjected to "sanctioned provocations and persecution." He further announced his intention to request the Central Committee of the CPSU to investigate the situation that had arisen within the Armenian Party organization.

Kotandzhyan's speech elicited a torrent of abuse from other participants. Twenty-three persons are said to have accused him of demagogery and schizophrenia and to have demanded his expulsion from the CPSU. The only person who attempted to intervene in his defense was Moscow's representative at the plenum, V. A. Kondrat'ev, who was shouted down. The plenum ended after a commission chaired by Yu. Kochetkov, the second secretary of the Communist Party of Armenia (and one of those who had vilified Kotandzhyan) was set the task of investigating the charges made by Kotandzhyan and reporting its findings to the Buro.

The report of the plenum in Pravda sheds some additional light on the circumstances surrounding Kotandzhyan's attack on Demirchyan. Pravda revealed that Kotandzhyan was in fact a protege of Demirchyan, whom he had until recently regarded "as a father" and of whom Pravda quoted him as saying

9. See Leonard Shapiro, The Government and Politics of the Soviet Union, Hutchinson, 1977, p.66.

For years Demirchyan's authority was unimpeachable. People believed in him and linked the onset of change and hopes with him. I was confident that the Central Committee first secretary was implacable towards shortcomings and negative phenomena and was waging an unceasing struggle against them.

Pravda explained Kotandzhyan's subsequent disillusion in terms of events that took place in the nine-day period between his election as Hrazdan City Party first secretary and the plenum of the Central Committee of the Armenian Party in July. During that period Kotandzhyan had received countless telephone calls from which he built up a picture of "the unofficial tax system" that existed in the town, whereby rank-and-file embezzlers paid bribes to the law enforcement organs, which in turn delivered a cut to Kotandzhyan's predecessor as first secretary, S. Danielyan. Demirchyan had consistently failed to follow up on complaints about Danielyan's activities.

Pravda then addressed the issue of corruption among the law enforcement agencies. While noting that the honesty and principledness of Khachtryan are common knowledge in Armenia, Pravda queries his assertion that the law enforcement agencies have been "placed beyond Party supervision".

It might be argued that those individuals in a position to expose the inefficiency and moral turpitude of certain employees of the administrative organs may well have been deterred from doing so by the fate of Sanasar Kurginyan, the former head of the Criminal Investigation Board of the Armenian SSR Ministry of Internal Affairs. Kurginyan was arrested in February, 1979, on charges of malicious slander and subsequently sentenced to a fourteen-year term of imprisonment. A comparison of the available samizdat materials pertaining to his case with articles in the Soviet press gives the impression that Kurginyan was "over-zealous" in the pursuit of justice and documented offenses by persons who later made use of their influential connections to discredit him, remove him from office, and have him brought to trial. Among the individuals implicated in these machinations were Suren Osipyan, Armenian SSR Procurator since 1970; Mavrik Davtyan, head of the Administrative Organs Department of the Central Committee of the Armenian Party; and Haikaz Shaginyan, a protege of Osipyan, who has headed the Armenian SSR Ministry of Internal Affairs since 1983.¹⁰ It might further be argued that Kurginyan's release is a logical precondition for the success of perestroika in Armenia.

10. See AS 4194 and RL 421/83, "Minister of Internal Affairs Replaced in Armenia," November 8, 1983.

January 19, 1988

Finally, Pravda makes it clear that the blame for the current state of affairs in Armenia lies fairly and squarely with the Party leadership:

In assessing the moral and political situation in the republic, we are a long way from portraying everything in the blackest of colors. The absolute majority of Armenian working people are honest persons who conscientiously their duty, and it is not their fault that the process of democratization and renewal is meeting with fierce resistance from opponents of perestroika. People yearn for genuine changes.

The tone of Pravda's condemnation would seem to indicate that such changes, particularly in the republic's Party leadership, are now imminent.



RL 51/88

February 3, 1988

ARMENIAN WRITERS' UNION ELECTS NEW CHAIRMAN

Elizabeth Fuller

Summary: Vardges Petrosyan has been removed from the post of chairman of the Board of the Armenian Writers' Union following his defense of the republic's Party organization against criticisms by Gorbachev and the central press.

The sixty-eight-year-old poet Hrach'ya Oganessian has been elected chairman of the Board of the Armenian Writers' Union by an extraordinary plenum of that organization.¹ Oganessian replaces the fifty-five-year-old novelist Vardges Petrosyan, who was recently attacked by Izvestia's Armenian correspondents for taking issue with criticisms of the republican Party organization's lack of commitment to perestroika² and by the Russian-language Armenian Party and government newspaper Kommunist for his alleged failure to address relevant and urgent problems in his report to a plenum of the Writers' Union held in late December of last year.³

These changes in the leadership of the Writers' Union should be viewed in the light of the intense debate that has been going on in Armenia in recent months on the need to break free from the corruption and intellectual stagnation that have been hallmarks of Armenian life during the tenure of Karen Demirchyan as republican Party first secretary. In July of last year, for example, Sovetskaya kul'tura's correspondent in Erevan revealed that the proceedings of Party meetings of the Institute of History of the Armenian SSR Academy of Sciences and the Writers' Union were the current hot topic of discussion among the Armenian intelligentsia, in that they embraced such issues as protectionism and bribery in political life, serious ecological problems facing the republic, and "quiet sabotage of restructuring by petty officials".⁴ In the political sphere,

1. TASS, February 2, 1988.
2. Izvestia, October 29, 1987, and December 25, 1987.
3. Kommunist (Armenia), January 23, 1988.
4. See the issue for July 4, 1987.

February 3,

this debate reached its high point to date at a plenum of the Central Committee of the Armenian Communist Party on December 26 at which a local Party official called for the second time for the resignation of Demirchyan as the individual ultimately responsible for the economic ills, corruption, and ideological shortcomings that still plague the republic.⁵

Vardges Petrosyan might, to judge by some of his earlier pronouncements, have been expected to turn up among the ranks of those writers pressing for change. In his novel Odinokaya oreshina, for example, Petrosyan implicitly condemns the official policy of rationalization that gave rise to mass migration from Armenia's mountain villages⁶--a trend that has resulted in one third of Armenia's entire population converging on the capital of Erevan. At the Ninth Congress of the Armenian Writers' Union in May, 1986, Petrosyan delivered a thoughtful analysis not only of the current literary scene but also of key social, moral, and economic problems facing the republic.⁷

Following Gorbachev's criticism of the Armenian Party organization and of Demirchyan personally at the plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU held in June, 1987, Petrosyan, for whatever reasons, took it upon himself to defend the status quo. In his speech to an all-Union writers' gathering in Leningrad in October, Petrosyan accused the Soviet central press of deliberately distorting the situation in his home republic in an attempt to magnify the existing problems.⁸ When Izvestia's Erevan correspondent cast doubts on Petrosyan's objectivity, the latter responded with a letter of complaint.⁹

The most recent criticism of Petrosyan appeared, as indicated above, in Armenia's Russian-language Party and government newspaper Kommunist. In an editorial pegged to a plenum of the Board of the Writers' Union held in late December, the newspaper implied, somewhat unfairly, that the failure of that gathering to address urgent problems was the result of Petrosyan's avoidance of these issues in his report.¹⁰ In fact,

5. See RL 24/88, "For Whom The Bell Tolls, or Gorbachev, Armenia, and Perestroika," January 19, 1988.

6. Druzhba Narodov, No.1, 1981.

7. See RL 258/86, "The Ninth Congress of the Armenian Union of Writers," June 23, 1986.

8. Izvestia, October 29, 1987.

9. Izvestia, December 25, 1987.

10. Kommunist (Armenia), January 23, 1988.

February 3, 1988

Petrosyan had argued with his usual eloquence in favor of "democratization" and greater creativity, collegiality, and professionalism in various spheres of literary life.¹¹

As for Petrosyan's successor as head of the Armenian Writers' Union, Hrach'ya Oganesyanyan, he is a World War II veteran, a major poetic talent, and is known to enjoy the respect of his fellow writers.

11. Gragan tert, January 8, 1988.



RL 95/88

March 8, 1988

ARMENIAN CLAIMS ON NAGORNO-KARABAKH:

THE BACKLASH IN AZERBAIJAN

Elizabeth Fuller

Two weeks of demonstrations by Armenians in Stepanakert, the capital of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast, and in Erevan, the capital of Armenia, have provoked a violent backlash in parts of Azerbaijan. The demonstrators have been pressing for the return of Nagorno-Karabakh from Azerbaijan to Armenia. On February 27, USSR Deputy Procurator Aleksandr Katusev disclosed in an interview on Radio Baku that two young Azerbaijanis from Agdam Raion, which is located on the eastern border of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast, had been killed at some unspecified point during the unrest.

In what may have been a deliberate act of reprisal, on the following day groups of Azerbaijanis attacked Armenians on the streets of Sumgait (population 234,000), a city that is known for its petrochemical industry and that lies some fifteen miles northeast of Baku on the Caspian Sea. A total of thirty-one people, of various nationalities, including women and elderly men, were killed.¹ In a speech broadcast by Radio Baku on February 29, the first secretary of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan, Kiyamran Bagirov, also linked the disturbances in Sumgait to "rumors circulated by irresponsible persons" about events in Nagorno-Karabakh.

The full extent of the bloodshed in Sumgait only became apparent after a period of several days. The original TASS announcement about the unrest merely stated that "a group of hooligans" had resorted to "rampage and violence" and that "measures had been taken to normalize the situation."² A more explicit account was furnished to Western reporters in Moscow on the same day by Sergei Grigoryants, a dissident who revealed that "thugs" had approached people on the streets and inquired whether they were Armenians. Individuals who admitted to being Armenian were beaten up; some were knifed.³

1. TASS, March 4, 1988.
2. TASS, February 29, 1988.
3. AP, Moscow, February 29, 1988.

March 8, 1988

It was again Grigoryants who first alerted Western reporters to the possibility that some of the victims of the violence had died.⁴ An unofficial figure of seventeen persons dead and seventy injured given by Grigoryants was countered by the assertion by Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman Gennadi Gerasimov at a press conference on March 2 that "several, but not many" people had died.⁵

The day before, Gerasimov had revealed that a curfew had been imposed in Sumgait but declined to confirm that troops and armored vehicles were keeping order in the city. On that occasion Gerasimov characterized the situation in Sumgait as "calm but tense."⁶ A death toll of thirty-one was reported by TASS only on March 4, five days after the event.

There are conflicting reports about the identity of the rioters in Sumgait. On March 2, a representative of Azerbaijan television told Western reporters that the perpetrators were young Azerbaijanis who had fled with their parents from the town of Kafan in southeastern Armenia.⁷ One day later, an Azerbaijani government spokesman attributed the disturbances to former criminals who had been sent to Sumgait to work in the oil industry after their release from prison and who had made use of the ethnic unrest as a pretext for violence.⁸ Similarly, the TASS dispatch of March 4 affirmed that "criminal elements had perpetrated bandit actions in a situation of rampant emotions, and this had resulted in loss of life."

Some idea of the material damage incurred during the riots in Sumgait is provided by a Radio Baku broadcast of March 3, in which it was reported that "all problems concerned with...the repairing of residential and communal buildings" were being solved.

There are as yet unconfirmed reports that disturbances also took place in the city of Kirovabad (population 270,000), where troops were reported to be patrolling the streets on March 3⁹; in the town of Shamkhor, to the northwest of Kirova-

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4. Reuters, Moscow, March 2, 1988.
 5. Reuters and AP, Moscow, March 2, 1988.
 6. AFP, Moscow, March 1, 1988.
 7. AFP, Moscow, March 2, 1988.
 8. Reuters, Moscow, March 3, 1988.
 9. Ibid.

bad¹⁰; and in the capital of Azerbaijan, Baku.¹¹ Armenians in Erevan have announced that a funeral march to honor the Sumgait victims will be held on March 8.¹²

As numerous Western observers have been swift to point out, the events of the past three weeks in Armenia and Azerbaijan have placed Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in a virtually impossible predicament. The Central Committee of the CPSU made clear in its resolution of February 21, and Gorbachev again implied in his television address of February 26, that the situation of Nagorno-Karabakh cannot be considered unique and that the existing territorial-administrative borders will not be redrawn. The Armenians, for their part, will apparently settle for nothing less than the incorporation of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast into Armenia; and yet such a concession would almost certainly provoke more violent reprisals in Azerbaijan against Armenians there.

The Armenians have, moreover, signaled that if they are not satisfied with the "just solution" promised by Gorbachev, which is to be announced at some point in late March (the dates March 23, 25, and 26 have all been cited), they will renew their demonstrations and industrial action.

The obvious compromise solution would be increased investment on a massive scale to counter claims by Armenians that the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast is economically disadvantaged, coupled with cultural concessions on the lines of those already announced--in short, a package such as that presented to the Abkhaz in the summer of 1978 after similar demands made by them for secession from the Georgian SSR and incorporation into the RSFSR had been turned down.¹³

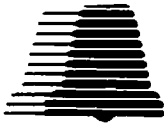
Conservatives and opponents of Gorbachev's policies must be rubbing their hands with glee at the news that the demonstrators in Erevan invoked glasnost and perestroika to support their demands. The fate of both these policies now appears to be far more closely linked to developments in inter-nationality relations than anyone would have believed even a month ago.

10. Reuters, Moscow, March 7, 1988.

11. AFP, Moscow, March 7, 1988.

12. Reuters and AFP, Moscow, March 7, 1988.

13. See RL 141/78, "Recent Events in Abkhazia Mirror the Complexities of National Relations in the USSR," June 26, 1978.



SOVIET MEDIA COVERAGE OF RECENT EVENTS
IN ARMENIA AND AZERBAIJAN

Ann Sheehy

Summary: Reports in the Soviet domestic media on recent nationality unrest in Armenia and Azerbaijan in connection with demands that the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh be transferred from Azerbaijan to Armenia have fallen far short of providing any comprehensive account of the disturbances. At the same time, the reporting has been more open than it would have been only a relatively short time ago, and the limitations seem to have been dictated partly by a desire not to exacerbate a potentially explosive situation. Moscow News has argued, however, that failure to provide enough reliable information fueled rumors and hence caused some of the trouble.

By Western standards, Soviet reporting on recent events in Armenia and Azerbaijan surrounding demands for the transfer of Nagorno-Karabakh from Azerbaijan to Armenia has been extremely inadequate, showing up once again the limits of glasnost'. Compared with the reporting of such events before Mikhail Gorbachev became Party leader, however, the coverage has been considerably more open. For more than a week at the end of February and very beginning of March the central press and electronic media in the USSR carried daily items that, albeit singularly lacking in hard information, must have alerted the reader or listener to the fact that something very much out of the ordinary was going on. To find out exactly what, though, most Soviet citizens would have had to turn to foreign radio stations.

In order to see the gaps in the coverage of the disturbances in Armenia and Azerbaijan in the central Soviet media, it is necessary first of all to give a brief summary of what took place. For Armenians, Nagorno-Karabakh, a territory with a majority Armenian population, has been an issue ever since it was incorporated into the Azerbaijan SSR in the early 1920s. In both the 1960s and 1970s the Armenian inhabitants of Nagorno-

Karabakh raised the question of the transfer of the territory to Armenia. At the end of 1986 they reportedly sent a letter to Gorbachev repeating this request. By the end of 1987 some 75,000 inhabitants of Nagorno-Karabakh are said to have put their signatures to the letter. According to the Moscow-based dissident Sergei Grigoryants, their request was rejected at the end of January, 1988.¹

In mid-February Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh started to protest openly. On February 20 the Nagorno-Karabakh Oblast Soviet adopted a resolution by an overwhelming majority calling for the transfer of the oblast to Armenia. This resolution was supported by demonstrators in the Armenian capital, Erevan, who were already in the streets protesting the construction of a chemical plant. Clearly alarmed at the course that events were taking, the Politburo met in Moscow on Sunday, February 21, and adopted a resolution on the situation that rejected demands for the transfer of Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia and called on the Azerbaijan and Armenian Party Central Committees to take measures "to normalize the situation." Politburo Candidate Members, Georgii Razumovsky and Petr Demichev were dispatched to Nagorno-Karabakh, where the Party first secretary was replaced on February 23. On the same day Politburo Candidate Member Vladimir Dolgikh and CPSU Central Committee Secretary Anatolii Lukyanov arrived in Erevan. They had no success in halting the now huge but entirely peaceable demonstrations.

On February 26 an appeal from Gorbachev was read over radio and television in Erevan and Baku, and the same day Gorbachev met with two leading Armenian writers, Zori Balayan and Silva Kaputikyan, promising that "a just solution" would be found. After Balayan and Kaputikyan reported back to the demonstrators in Erevan the next day, it was decided to suspend protests for one month to allow Moscow time to reach a decision. On February 28 Azerbaijani youths went on a rampage in the Azerbaijani industrial city of Sumgait, attacking Armenians in the street. At least thirty-two people "of various nationalities" were killed. On March 9 Gorbachev addressed a conference in the CPSU Central Committee on the situation in Armenia and Azerbaijan in connection with the Nagorno-Karabakh issue and said that the Central Committee Secretariat had been charged with carrying out a profound study of the whole question.²

1. Frankfurter Rundschau, March 2, 1988.

2. For a much fuller chronology, see RL 101/88, "A Preliminary Chronology of Recent Events in Armenia and Azerbaijan," March 15, 1988.

Coverage in Central Media for Domestic Audiences

The first news that demonstrations were taking place in Erevan for the return of Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia came not from official Soviet sources but from AFP in Moscow on February 21. Soviet central media reported the Nagorno-Karabakh story only on February 23, when Moscow radio and television carried a TASS communique, published in Pravda and Izvestia on February 24, stating that part of the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh had been demonstrating for the transfer of the oblast to Armenia and that violations of public order had occurred. The communique stated further that the Central Committee of the CPSU had rejected the demand for the transfer of the territory and had called on the Armenian and Azerbaijani Parties to "normalize" the situation. The evening edition of Izvestia on February 23 carried a report from one of its correspondents giving some details of the events in Nagorno-Karabakh, but this was omitted from the main, morning edition the next day, and after that the two leading central newspapers used only TASS reports. The same appears to have been broadly true for Moscow radio and television as well.

These reports were clearly designed to give the impression that the necessary measures were being taken and that the situation was not as serious as rumors might have suggested. Brief accounts were given of meetings of the Party aktivs of Nagorno-Karabakh, Azerbaijan, and Armenia, where support was expressed for the resolution of February 21 by the Central Committee of the CPSU. The replacement of the Party first secretary of Nagorno-Karabakh "for shortcomings in his work" was announced. The Deputy Procurator-General of the USSR, A. F. Katusev, who was interviewed in Stepanakert, the capital of Nagorno-Karabakh, on February 25, said that there was no truth in the rumor that sixty Armenians had been killed; indeed not one Armenian had died. Gorbachev's appeal to the workers and peoples of Azerbaijan and Armenia was summarized very briefly, and on that and ensuing days numerous interviews with inhabitants of Armenia and Azerbaijan were published or broadcast in which they expressed support for the sentiments in Gorbachev's appeal and spoke of the longstanding friendship between Armenians and Azerbaijanis.

Apart from this, the brief TASS report of February 29 that "a group of hooligan elements had provoked disorders in Sumgait on February 28" and that "outrages and violence" had occurred was published and broadcast without comment. Later items referred to the situation getting back to normal in the area and workers making up for lost time in Erevan by working Saturday and Sunday. On March 4 Moscow radio and television broadcast the TASS statement that thirty-one people "of various nationalities" had been killed in Sumgait, that those guilty had been arrested, and that a government commission headed by the chairman of the Azerbaijani Council of Ministers had been

set up to deal with the situation. The conference in the Central Committee of the CPSU on March 9 was reported by TASS and Moscow radio the same evening.³

Certainly, as has already been stated, these reports will have given readers and listeners the impression that something serious was amiss, but they will not have received any real idea of what was happening in Nagorno-Karabakh, Erevan, and Sumgait. The central media made no mention, for instance, of the fact that the Nagorno-Karabakh Oblast Soviet had voted overwhelmingly for the transfer of the territory to Armenia⁴ and gave no details of the disturbances there. Nor did they report that four top Kremlin officials had been dispatched to Armenia and Azerbaijan. Only Radio Moscow seems to have carried the remark of Foreign Ministry spokesman Gennadii Gerasimov on February 24 that the demonstrations in Erevan were peaceable--apparently the only time that any of Gerasimov's remarks were carried by the domestic media--and also a later report that a meeting of many thousand people in Erevan on February 27 had sent a letter to Gorbachev thanking him for his attention and saying they would stop holding demonstrations and meetings.⁵ Otherwise, the fact that any demonstrations at all had been taking place in Erevan was only referred to indirectly in one or two of the interviews supporting Gorbachev's appeal.⁶ There was no hint at all that the decision to cease demonstrating had come only after Zori Balayan and Silva Kaputikyan had been received by Gorbachev and that the protests would be resumed in a month if Moscow's answer was deemed unsatisfactory. The fact that a number of Azerbaijanis had fled from Armenia and that a commission had been set up to assist their return was also not mentioned in the central media. Needless to say, no background to the dispute has been given either.

3. The TASS announcements were broadcast the same day on Moscow radio and television, appearing in Pravda the following day, and in the main, morning edition of Izvestia the day after that. See Pravda of February 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, and March 1, 2, 5, and 10, 1988, and Izvestia of February 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, and March 1, 2, 3, 6, and 11, 1988.

4. The resolution was referred to very belatedly only in Moskovskie novosti of March 13, 1988.

5. Radio Moscow, February 24 and 27, 1988.

6. See interviews with S. Petrosyan, a brigade leader in the Nairit works in Erevan, and A. Mezhdumyan, a student of Erevan university (Pravda, February 27 and 28, 1988).

Coverage in Republican Media of Armenia and Azerbaijan

The republican media have devoted significantly more column inches and airtime to the unrest than the central media, but their items have been almost equally short of information on the unrest itself. The republican media carried Gorbachev's appeal in full and also other appeals to the population--by Demichev and Dolgikh; by the republican Party first secretaries Karen Demirchyan and Kyamran Bagirov; and by the two local religious leaders, the Armenian Catholicos Vazgen I and the chairman of the Muslim Religious Board for Transcaucasia Sheikh ul-Islam Allashukur Pashaev.⁷ In addition, they have reported statements by and interviews with USSR First Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs Vasilii P. Trushin (on the situation in Erevan and Nagorno-Karabakh; on the flight of some Azeris from Armenia; and on investigation of the killings in Sumgait);⁸ with USSR Deputy Procurator General A. F. Katusev (a follow-up to his TASS interview);⁹ and with CPSU Central Committee official Valentin A. Kondrat'ev (assuring Azerbaijanis who had fled Armenia that it was safe to return).¹⁰

Other features of the coverage in the republican media have been somewhat fuller but not very informative accounts of the meetings of the republican and Nagorno-Karabakh Oblast Party aktivs and plenums, items on the activities of Demichev and the other Kremlin troubleshooters, and the inevitable article complaining that foreign media have been exploiting the recent events. The clear purpose of all the coverage has been, however, not to inform readers, listeners, and viewers of what has been happening but to persuade the population to stop demonstrating and protesting and not to believe rumors, as well as to reassure them that life is returning to normal and that the authorities are enforcing law and order.

7. The full text of Gorbachev's appeal appears in Kommunist and Bakinsky rabochii of February 27, 1988. Demirchyan's and Dolgikh's appeals were published in Kommunist of February 23 and 25, 1988. The appeals by Demichev were broadcast on Radio Baku on February 23, 1988. The text of Vazgen's appeal on Erevan television was given by Radio Erevan in Arabic on February 26, 1988, and that of Pashaev by Radio Baku on March 5, 1988.

8. Kommunist, February 26, 1988; Radio Baku in Russian, March 2, 1988; and Kommunist, March 8, 1988, cited by Reuters from Moscow, March 10, 1988.

9. Radio Baku, in Russian, February 27, 1988.

10. Radio Baku, in Russian, March 2, 1988.

A Step Backward for Glasnost'?

Some foreign correspondents have tended to see the limited Soviet media coverage of what must have been the most massive and sustained nationality demonstrations in the Soviet period as a step backward for glasnost' or even a "reversal of glasnost'."¹¹ But glasnost' has never meant Western-style reporting, and to date it has certainly not meant full, frank, and objective reporting of nationality protests.

The two-day riots in Alma-Ata in December, 1986, protesting the selection of the Russian Gennadii Kolbin as first secretary of the Kazakh Communist Party were initially reported only by TASS, which gave no details of them.¹² It is true that TASS reported the visit of Politburo Member Mikhail Solomentsev to Alma-Ata, but no connection was made in print between his visit and the riots.¹³ True, some details of the riots were published later, particularly in the Kazakhstan press, but no comprehensive account of the riots has ever been given in the Soviet media, and the riots are still referred to euphemistically as "the Alma-Ata events."

Further, the demonstrations by Crimean Tatars in the center of Moscow in July, 1987, were not reported as such in the Soviet domestic media. The first reaction to them was the announcement by TASS that a commission had been set up under the chairman of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, Andrei Gromyko, to examine their demands.¹⁴ Admittedly, this gave more background to the demands than has been vouchsafed with respect to Nagorno-Karabakh, but again initially the press relied solely on TASS. (The demonstrations in the Baltic republics are not strictly comparable with these others since they have been one-day affairs pegged to anniversaries and scheduled in advance. The Soviet media mounted propaganda campaigns to prevent their taking place and were almost bound after that to give some account of what did or did not happen.)

It is true that foreign correspondents were barred from visiting Armenia and Azerbaijan, but neither were they allowed to go to Alma-Ata after the nationalist riots there. The explanation given by Gerasimov was that their presence might cause

11. The Times, March 11, 1988.

12. Pravda, December 19, 1986.

13. Pravda, December 20, 21, and 22, 1986.

14. Pravda, July 24, 1987.

more trouble.¹⁵ This may not have been the overriding reason, but, given the historical enmity between the Armenians and Azerbaijanis, the authorities were faced with a potentially explosive situation, which must have suggested great caution in reporting events. It has been speculated that it was the revelation on Radio Baku on February 27 that two Azerbaijani youths from Agdam Raion had died as a result of disorders connected with events in Nagorno-Karabakh that sparked off the rampage in Sumgait the following day. The belated TASS report that thirty-one people had died as a result of the disturbances in Sumgait was careful to specify that the victims had been "members of various nationalities."

While the desire not to exacerbate the situation may have been a major factor in the authorities' limiting reporting on the protests in the domestic media, there can also be little doubt that Moscow has wanted to play down the significance of the whole affair. Moscow apparently decided, however, that the cost in adverse publicity abroad of denying foreign correspondents access to unofficial sources of information was too high. At all events there seems to have been no serious attempt to prevent having somewhat fuller information become available to Western correspondents from sources other than the official media. Thus, the correspondents were able to speak to officials and individuals in the two republics by telephone. They were also able to speak with people who had recently been in the two republics, and no effort seems to have been made to stop the dissident Sergei Grigoryants, who has been a major source of information for foreign correspondents, from visiting Armenia and reporting back from there. In addition, Foreign Ministry spokesman Gennadii Gerasimov was at least ready to field questions on Nagorno-Karabakh--something that would not have happened before glasnost--though he was not always willing to give straight answers to them.

Calls for Fuller Reporting

Even if the coverage of recent events in Armenia and Azerbaijan has not been significantly out of line with the reporting of other spontaneous nationality protests in the recent past, this does not of course mean that it could not have been much more open or, indeed, as Moscow News argued last week, that it would have been better if it had been more open. "It is to be noted... that the delay and scantiness of information influenced the very course of the February events," the weekly wrote. "There was no reliable information about the disorders provoked by criminal elements in some regions of Azerbaijan," it added.

15. Reuters, from Moscow, March 4, 1988.

As a result, people heeded rumors. In particular Moscow News blamed absurd and ill-intentioned rumors for some Azerbaijani families leaving Armenia.¹⁶

The independent historian Roy Medvedev has also complained that the Soviet public had no idea from the press about what really happened in Erevan and compared the Soviet authorities' failure to inform the country with the silence that enveloped the Chernobyl' nuclear power station disaster in 1986.¹⁷

Some Armenians are likewise reported to be dissatisfied with the incomplete and "unobjective" reporting of events and are said to have sent telegrams to this effect to Gorbachev.¹⁸ At a demonstration outside an Armenian church in Moscow on March 13, the Armenian film director Boris Baratov is quoted as saying that "our press has been criminally silent."¹⁹

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16. Moskovskie novosti, March 13, 1988.
 17. The Financial Times, March 5, 1988.
 18. AP and AFP, from Moscow, March 8, 1988.
 19. AP, from Moscow, March 13, 1988.



A PRELIMINARY CHRONOLOGY OF RECENT EVENTS IN ARMENIA
AND AZERBAIJAN

Elizabeth Fuller

Note: Given the discrepancies and inconsistencies in various reports relayed to Western news agencies by human-rights activists and dissidents both in Moscow and Erevan and also the likelihood that officials in Erevan, Baku, and Stepanakert who spoke to Western journalists by telephone may not have always been strictly objective in their assessment of the situation, it is virtually impossible to put together a wholly clear picture of the recent events in Armenia and Azerbaijan. The following chronology is therefore intended to be a rough, preliminary guide to what happened when, and no claims to be accurate down to the finest detail are made.

October 18, 1987: Over 1,000 people demonstrate in Erevan for return of Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast and Nakhichevan ASSR to Armenia (AP, Moscow, October 18, 1987; AFP, Moscow, October 19, 1987.)

February 11, 1988: Armenians in Stepanakert put up posters and distribute open letters (Izvestia, February 23, 1988, Evening Edition, as quoted by UPI, Moscow, February 23, 1988. This edition not available in West; TASS announcement printed in edition for export omitted above information.)

February 12 and 13, 1988: Special sessions of raion soviets in Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast adopt individual resolutions calling for its incorporation into Armenian SSR (Frankfurter Rundschau, March 2, 1988).

February 13, 1988: Hundreds of schoolchildren in Stepanakert and some students of Stepanakert Pedagogical Institute boycott classes (Izvestia, February 23, as cited by UPI).

February 18, 1988: Demonstrations begin in Erevan to protest construction of chemical plant in city of Abovyan and to press issue of Nagorno-Karabakh (AFP, Moscow, February 19).

March 15, 1988

February 20, 1988: Armenian deputies to Nagorno-Karabakh Oblast Soviet (110 in all) adopt resolution calling for reunion of oblast with Armenia. Azerbaijani deputies (30) are not present. Resolution is subsequently published in press (see Reuters, AFP, Moscow, February 23). (The New York Times of February 26 reports voting on resolution as 110 for, 7 against, with 13 abstentions.)

February 21, 1988: Politburo of CPSU meets in Moscow to discuss situation in Nagorno-Karabakh, rejects demonstrators' demands for incorporation of Nagorno-Karabakh into Armenia as "contrary to the interests of the workers of Armenia and Azerbaijan," and instructs Central Committees of Azerbaijan and Armenian Communist Parties "to take every measure to normalize the situation", according to Politburo Candidate Member Vladimir Dolgikh in Armenia's Russian-language Party newspaper Kommunist [Armenia] of February 25.

February 22, 1988: Politburo Candidate Members Georgii Razumovsky and Petr Demichev tell Party meeting in Stepanakert there can be no question of changing existing borders (Reuters, UPI, Moscow, February 23, quoting Evening Edition of Izvestia). In evening, between 50,000 (AFP) and 70,000 (AP) people march through streets of Erevan. Armenia's Party First Secretary Karen Demirchyan appears on local television. He reports that CPSU Central Committee has studied demands for incorporation of Nagorno-Karabakh into Armenian SSR and ruled that these are not in interests of workers of Armenia and Azerbaijan, and he appeals to population to show "courage, patience, and political maturity" (Kommunist [Armenia], February 23).

February 23, 1988: Protests continue in Erevan, with number of demonstrators estimated at 100,000 (AP) and 120,000 (AFP). Those taking part chant "One Nation, One Republic" and call for extraordinary session of Armenian SSR Supreme Soviet to be convened to examine issue of Nagorno-Karabakh (AFP, AP). TASS communique reports CPSU Central Committee has rejected demonstrators' demands. Meeting of Party aktiv in Erevan discusses "measures necessary to normalize the situation in the city in connection with events in Nagorno-Karabakh" and expresses support for resolution of February 21 by CPSU Central Committee. Dolgikh and CPSU Central Committee Secretary Anatolii Luk'yanov arrive in Erevan (Kommunist [Armenia], February 25).

February 24, 1988: Between 100,000 and 200,000 people again demonstrate in Erevan. Industrial strikes and school boycotts are reported (AP, February 25 and The Guardian, February 25). Demonstrations spread to other towns in Armenia (The Washington Post, The Baltimore Sun, February 25). Azerbaijan Party First Secretary Kyamran Bagirov addresses meeting of Party aktiv in Baku, which Demichev also attends (Bakinsky rabochii, February 25). Plenum of Central Committee of Nagorno-Karabakh Oblast Party Committee removes obkom first secretary Boris Kevorkov for "shortcomings in his work" and elects in his place Genrikh

Pogosyan, first deputy chairman of oblast Supreme Soviet (TASS). Dolgikh and Luk'yanov speak to demonstrators (AP, February 24; The Washington Post, February 25). Dolgikh appears on Armenian television and appeals for calm. At same time, he reveals there have been "clashes between groups of Armenians and Azerbaijanis in Nagorno-Karabakh" that resulted in "casualties" (Kommunist [Armenia], February 25). Radio Erevan International confirms that demonstrations have been held since February 20 to press for return of Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia. In Moscow, Foreign Ministry spokesman Gennadii Gerasimov reiterates that existing frontiers will not be changed (The Financial Times, February 25) and says number of demonstrators is "many times smaller" than that of Soviet troop contingent in Afghanistan (120,000) (Die Sueddeutsche Zeitung, February 25).

February 25, 1988: Demonstrations, industrial strikes, and school boycotts in Erevan continue. Estimates of numbers of those demonstrating range from "160,000 to 200,000--perhaps even 500,000" (AFP, quoting travelers arriving in Moscow from Erevan) to "over one million" (AP). Villagers are said to be converging on Erevan from outlying areas to join in demonstrations (AP). Demonstrations are also reported in Stepanakert (AP). Presence of troops is reported in Erevan (AP and AFP, also The Washington Post, February 26). USSR Deputy Procurator Aleksandr Katusev reports from Stepanakert that "rumors and inventions" concerning situation in Stepanakert are being circulated. He denies rumor that 60 Armenians have been killed in Karabakh, affirming that "not a single individual of Armenian nationality has died," but concedes that criminal offenses have been committed in the oblast. Armenian Catholicos Vazgen I sends telegram to Gorbachev urging him to "intercede in favor of the aspirations of the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh." (Radio Erevan, in Arabic and Persian).

February 26, 1988: Demonstrations continue in Erevan, with a figure of one million cited as taking part, including foreign students studying in Erevan and members of Armenia's minority Kurdish population (AP, quoting Moscow dissident Sergei Grigoryants, who arrived in Erevan that day). Appeal by Gorbachev to populations of Armenia and Azerbaijan is read over radio and television by Dolgikh in Erevan and by Razumovsky in Baku. Plenum of Central Committee of Armenian Communist Party passes resolution calling on CPSU Central Committee to set up commission to examine whole question of future of Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast. Demirchyan addresses demonstrators in Erevan after plenum (Reuters, also The Washington Post, February 26) and threatens that if they do not stop "things will get much worse." Writers Zori Balayan and Silva Kaputikyan fly to Moscow, where they spend one hour talking to Gorbachev and two hours with CPSU Central Committee Secretary Aleksandr Yakovlev discussing background of campaign for transfer of Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia. Gorbachev complains Armenians are "stabbing pere-

stroika in the back" but promises "a just solution" will be found to problem of Nagorno-Karabakh (AFP, DPA, Reuters, February 27). USSR First Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs Vasilii Trushin commends restraint shown by population of Erevan. He further states that situation in Nagorno-Karabakh "is being normalized" and that no crimes have occurred there "in recent days" (Armenpress)

February 27, 1988: Demonstrations continue in Erevan (Reuters, DPA) until mid- or late afternoon, when Balayan and Kaputikyan inform those taking part in them of their meeting with Gorbachev, after which "organizing committee" headed by Viktor Ambartsumyan, president of Armenian SSR Academy of Sciences, decides to postpone further protests for one month to give the Moscow commission time to reach decision (Reuters). In evening Kaputikyan goes on Armenian television to report on meeting with Gorbachev (Reuters). Meanwhile, demonstrations continue in Stepanakert, according to local officials (Reuters). USSR Deputy Procurator Aleksandr Katusev confirms during interview broadcast by Radio Baku that two Azerbaijani youths from Agdam Raion, which is situated east of Nagorno-Karabakh, were killed "in the course of acts of violence and crimes committed by isolated hooligan elements."

February 28, 1988: 1,800 protest organizers meet at headquarters of Armenian Writers' Union to discuss future strategy and reaffirm decision of previous day to suspend protests for one month (Reuters). Demonstrations continue in Nagorno-Karabakh, according to local officials (Reuters). Amateur video film of demonstrations in Erevan on February 25 and 26 is made available to Western correspondents in Moscow (Reuters, DPA, AFP). Newspaper Izvestia publishes TASS summary of Gorbachev's appeal of February 26, together with approving comments by workers from both republics. Azerbaijani youths in industrial center of Sumgait (population 234,000) northeast of Baku attack Armenians on street and cause damage to public buildings.

February 29, 1988: Demichev and Bagirov address crowds in Stepanakert, where demonstrations continue (UPI, Reuters). In Erevan, businesses, factories, and public transport are back to normal (UPI). TASS and Radio Baku report "disturbances" by "hooligans" in Sumgait without giving details. Human-rights activists in Moscow report announcement of first cultural concessions to Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh (DPA). Demirchyan appears on Armenian television and claims situation has been "normalized." He further discloses that as a result of rumors concerning situation in Nagorno-Karabakh, some Azerbaijani families have left Armenia and crossed border into Azerbaijan. Some of these families had already returned to Armenia (Kommunist [Armenia], March 1, as quoted by Radio Erevan, Domestic Service).

March 15, 1988

March 1, 1988: Radio Baku reports a commission has been formed to assist Azerbaijanis who have fled from Armenia to return to their homes. Troops and armored vehicles are reported to be keeping order in Sumgait (AFP, Reuters). Gerasimov tells Western correspondents that curfew has been imposed in Sumgait and that demonstrations are continuing in Stepanakert (Reuters).

March 2, 1988: Gerasimov confirms that some people were killed in disturbances in Sumgait (Reuters, AP). Grigoryants had earlier informed Reuters that seventeen people had been killed.

March 3, 1988: Troops are reported to be patrolling city of Kirovabad (population 270,000) in Western Azerbaijan, after demonstrations there on February 29 (Reuters, AFP, The Independent). Gerasimov claims situation in Stepanakert is now "normal" (AFP); he further reveals that Bagirov and Demichev have met with residents of Sumgait (The Washington Post, March 4)

March 4, 1988: TASS cites death toll in Sumgait as thirty-one people of various nationalities, including women and old men.

March 5, 1988: Radio Baku in Armenian broadcasts appeal to Armenian and Azerbaijani peoples from Sheikh Ol-Eslam Allashukur Pashaev, chairman of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Transcaucasus, for calm, reason, and restraint.

March 6, 1988: Radio Baku claims "life is returning to normal" in Nagorno-Karabakh. Group of Azerbaijanis sends letter to the USSR Supreme Soviet protesting "attempts to disrupt the friendship of Soviet peoples" (Reuters, Moscow, March 6). Grigoryants cites death toll in Sumgait as being over 100 (AFP, DPA, Moscow, March 6).

March 7, 1988: Austrian Communist Party leader Franz Muhri informs news conference in Vienna Gorbachev told him during talks in Moscow previous week that unrest in Nagorno-Karabakh stems from harsh and insensitive nationality policy in past. Moscow-based dissidents tell Reuters that disturbances also occurred in Azerbaijani town of Shamkhor, northwest of Kirovabad. Rome daily newspaper La Repubblica carries interviews with Silva Kaputikyan and Zori Balayan, who describe their meeting with Gorbachev on February 26. Both state they would be content with compromise solution on Nagorno-Karabakh providing cultural and other concessions and express belief that Armenian people have faith in Gorbachev's word. (RAD/Devlin, March 14)

March 8, 1988: Up to 300,000 Armenians hold funeral demonstration in Erevan for the victims of the Sumgait rioting (The New York Times, Die Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, March 9). In Moscow 300 people gather at Armenian cemetery to hear eye-witness reports of atrocities committed in Sumgait and deplore failure of Soviet media to provide detailed information concerning recent

events and current situation there (AP, AFP). Valerii Senderov tells Western reporters death toll in Sumgait was 180, with 1,000 persons injured. Aleksandr Ogorodnikov cites the figure of 330 dead (Die Sueddeutsche Zeitung, March 9).

March 9, 1988: Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman Gennadii Gerasimov cites revised death toll of 32 in Sumgait; he further states that curfew there has been strengthened and that Soviet constitution stipulates borders between constituent republics can only be changed with consent of both republics in question and of central authorities (UPI, AFP). Meeting is held at CPSU Central Committee attended by Gorbachev, Ligachev, Yakovlev, Ryzhkov, Gromyko and Party and government officials from Armenia and Azerbaijan to discuss situation in Nagorno-Karabakh (AP, Reuters). Gorbachev promises that a special commission will examine the issue (The Washington Post, The Chicago Tribune, March 10). Erevan dissident Hovik Vassilyan tells AP by telephone that Armenian activists have sent telegram to Politburo in Moscow requesting protection from possible further violence by Azerbaijanis during upcoming Iranian New Year celebrations. Radio Budapest broadcasts eyewitness account of the Erevan demonstrations by one of its staff.

March 10, 1988: The European Parliament adopts resolution blaming Soviet suppression of minority rights for recent unrest in Transcaucasus and elsewhere in Soviet Union (CND Special, from Brussels). Reuters quotes Kommunist (Armenia) as reporting that team of investigators has been sent from Moscow to investigate rioting in Sumgait. One-hour protest strike in Armenia is announced for March 11 (DPA; Reuters, Moscow, March 11).

March 11, 1988: Six-hour video tape of disturbances in Stepanakert on February 24-26 is shown to Western correspondents in Moscow (Reuters, AFP). Andrei Shilkov, a dissident who contributes to Sergei Grigoryants's publication Glasnost', informs Western reporters of impressions during six-hour stay in Sumgait on March 9; he speaks of large concentrations of tanks on streets and relays information concerning alleged atrocities committed against Armenians (Reuters, AP, AFP). Gamlet Kocharyan, Party member and municipal official in city of Kafan, tells Western correspondents that planned one-hour strike was canceled to avoid exacerbating situation (AP).

March 12, 1988: Grigoryants informs Western reporters Moscow has dispatched to Armenia team of approximately dozen officials previously involved in attempts to defuse Polish trade-union movement "Solidarity." These officials have apparently been instructed to take action to undermine or compromise unofficial organizing groups set up throughout Armenia to coordinate campaign for Nagorno-Karabakh (Reuters, The Times, March 12). Grigoryants also produces photograph of mass demonstration in Armenian city of Kirovakan on February 25 or 26 (Reuters) and discloses that strong mood of resentment exists in Erevan

March 15, 1988

against Moscow's failure to give adequate press coverage to events in Armenia and Azerbaijan and against Azerbaijan Party authorities (Reuters, Die Sueddeutsche Zeitung, March 12). L'Unita carries article citing Gennadii Glushkov, editor of Azerbaijan Russian-language Party daily Bakinsky rabochii, as stating that situation in Sumgait is normal and that curfew there will be lifted "in the next few days."

March 13, 1988: Hundreds of Armenians gather at Armenian cemetery in Moscow to honor those killed at Sumgait. They protest "criminal silence" of Soviet press over these events (AP). Some participants in meeting press for "action" by Kremlin leadership to resolve Nagorno-Karabakh dispute (Reuters, AP); others advocate caution and avoidance of further strikes or demonstrations that could exacerbate situation (DPA, March 13; The Guardian, March 14). Memorial service for victims in Sumgait is also held in Cathedral of Echmiadzin (Die Sueddeutsche Zeitung, March 14).

March 14, 1988: L'Unita and the Rome daily Il Messagero report that Armenians in Moscow are planning to protest against Soviet media policy over the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute on March 20.

RL 121/88

March 22, 1988

ATTITUDES HARDEN AS GORBACHEV'S NAGORNO-KARABAKH

DEADLINE APPROACHES

Elizabeth Fuller

On February 27 the "organizing committee" representing the thousands of demonstrators who had thronged the streets of Erevan for a week to demand that the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast in neighboring Azerbaijan be made a part of the Armenian SSR agreed to postpone any further public demonstrations for a period of one month. They did so pending the announcement of "the just solution" promised by CPSU General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev during his meeting the previous day with two prominent Armenian writers. With a matter of days to go before this deadline elapses, the attitudes of the various protagonists in Moscow, Erevan, Stepanakert, and Baku appear to be hardening.

On March 21 Pravda published its most detailed account to date of the historical background to the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute and of last month's events in Armenia and Azerbaijan. In a not particularly subtle allusion to the first secretary of the Armenian Communist Party, Karen Demirchyan, the newspaper noted that the question of Nagorno-Karabakh was raised in the past when the republic's Party leadership found it advantageous to distract the public's attention from unresolved economic and social issues and from its own "unsuitable" work style.¹ Pravda further criticized shortcomings in the conduct of "internationalist upbringing" by the Party leadership in both Armenia and Azerbaijan during "the years of stagnation" (i.e., the Brezhnev era). It was as a result of shortcomings in this sphere, Pravda continued, that "feelings of national egoism" emerged that ultimately brought thousands of people onto the streets and squares of Armenia. The Azerbaijani leadership was also criticized for neglect of the socioeconomic development of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast and for infringement of the national rights of the area's Armenian population.

1. For a chronology of criticisms of the Armenian Party organization in general and of Demirchyan in particular, see RL 335/87, "Armenia's Demirchyan: Reforming Indifferently?" August 13, 1987; and RL 24/88 "For Whom the Bell Tolls, or Gorbachev, Armenia, and Perestroika, January 19, 1988.

As for the question of transferring Nagorno-Karabakh from Azerbaijan to Armenia, Pravda explained the rationale for the decision in 1923 to create the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast as lying in the fact that at that time the economy of Azerbaijan was more developed than that of Armenia. The newspaper went on to stress the ties that had developed over the years between Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh. It also implied (as Gorbachev had done in his media address of February 26 to the Armenian and Azerbaijani peoples) that the situation of the Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians was not unique or exceptional and that for Moscow to set a precedent by agreeing to transfer the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast to Armenia would merely encourage other ethnic groups with similar grievances to begin agitating for comparable concessions.

Pravda's most trenchant rhetoric was, however, reserved for the Armenian "organizing committee" that coordinated the peaceful demonstrations that took place in Erevan last month and indeed the entire current campaign for reunification. Whereas Gorbachev had remarked approvingly on the orderly conduct of the mass demonstrations in Erevan, Pravda implied that many of those who had taken part had been indoctrinated, if not bullied, by the organizers into participating. Particular emphasis was laid (as in the case of Literaturnaya gazeta's analysis of the demonstrations in Alma-Ata in December, 1986) on the meticulous organization of the demonstrations: the participants were regularly supplied with food and drink; discipline was enforced; "leaders suddenly turned up at enterprises, establishments, and institutions of higher education who knew in advance where to take people and at what time, and what slogans to chant"; and "substantial funds" were found to be available.

Pravda's conclusion was unequivocal: the whole campaign for the reunification of Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia had "a distinct anti-Socialist tinge"; it gave rise to "nationalist manifestations"; and its organizers, wittingly or unwittingly, were acting in accordance with the theory of "those trans-Atlantic sovietologists who state that socialism in the USSR can be defeated only by breaking it down into national components."

The attack in Pravda was followed by an article in Izvestia on March 22 that accused one of the more moderate members of the Karabakh Committee, the thirty-year-old economist Igor Muradyan, of aspiring to the role of "leader of the people" and quoted him as having asserted that "Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh have faith neither in Moscow, nor the Central Committee, nor supreme justice, nor the Russian people, nor anything else." Izvestia further accused the leadership of the Karabakh Committee of issuing "an ultimatum to Party and Soviet authorities containing a threat to

look for support beyond the country's borders" and of demanding that the Azerbaijan SSR be charged at the International Court in The Hague with "annexing Armenian territories."

In short, the materials that have appeared over the past few days in the central press, while far harsher in tone than the appeal by Gorbachev to the Armenian and Azerbaijani population, essentially carry the same message: while there is a clear need to redress former economic and social neglect by means of increased investment and cultural concessions, there can be no question of transferring Nagorno-Karabakh from Azerbaijan to Armenia. To what extent Moscow's tougher rhetoric reflects a hardening of the position of the Soviet leadership in the wake of the meeting at the Central Committee of the CPSU on March 18 between Ligachev and other top Party leaders (with the notable exception of Gorbachev, who was still in Yugoslavia) and a delegation from Nagorno-Karabakh is a matter for conjecture.

In Azerbaijan, both the Russian and native-language press have carried articles that seek to bolster Azerbaijani claims to territorial and administrative control over Nagorno-Karabakh and to present Azerbaijan as the wronged party in the dispute. These materials include an article on nationality relations that attributes the events in Nagorno-Karabakh in the first instance to shortcomings in planning, administration, cadre policy, and internationalist upbringing²; an article entitled "Who Incites Passions?" condemning the role played by Western radio stations, including the Armenian and Azerbaijani services of Radio Liberty, in exacerbating the dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh³; and an extensive account of the proceedings of a meeting organized on March 9 by the Institute for Management of the Economy of the Azerbaijan SSR Council of Ministers in which comparative statistics on the social development of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and the USSR as a whole are given and plans for the future economic development of Nagorno-Karabakh are summarized.⁴

For its part, the Azerbaijani native-language Komsomol newspaper Azerbaijan gyändzhläri has published what purports to be the transcripts of phone-ins during which the first secretaries of the Central Committee and of the Baku City Committee of the Azerbaijan Komsomol answered such questions as "Will Nagorno-

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2. Bakinsky rabochii, March 3, 1988.
 3. Bakinsky rabochii, March 8, 1988.
 4. Bakinsky rabochii, March 11, 1988.

Karabakh be given to Armenia?" ("No"); "Is it permitted to travel to Sumgait?" ("Yes"); "Were there fatalities in Kafan?"⁵ ("No"); and "What day is March 26?" ("A Saturday").⁶

Meanwhile, the Party leadership in Stepanakert, the capital of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast delivered a clear message of defiance to the Central Committee of the Azerbaijan Communist Party in Baku. At a plenum of the Central Committee of the Oblast Party Committee on March 17, a resolution was passed pressing for the transfer of Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia.⁷ On March 16 and 17, thousands of people were reported to have demonstrated again in Stepanakert, where factories and schools also remained closed.⁸

Reaction to the Nagorno-Karabakh campaign in the Armenian Russian-language press (through March 12, the most recent issue available) has been confined to the publication of letters from workers and members of the intelligentsia who express wholehearted support for the concept of "the brotherhood of peoples." There are, however, grounds for suspecting that not all of these ostensibly spontaneous outpourings are genuine. In an extensive article that was published last week in Sovetskaya kul'tura,⁹ the chairman of the Board of the Union of Armenian Theater Workers, Hrach'ya Kaplanyan, disclosed how he had attempted in vain to protest the appendage of his signature to one of what he termed "the stereotyped, standardized responses in which successive writers give assurances of friendship for the fraternal people." When he telephoned the Armenian press agency to complain, he was asked not to raise a scandal and told: "Otherwise, we'll lose our jobs." Similarly, Pravda's Armenian correspondent, Yu. Arakelyan, is reported to have protested that he had never set eyes on the article in Pravda of March 21, although his name was appended as one of the coauthors of it.¹⁰

5. According to some reports, the responsibility for the riots in Sumgait on February 28 lies with Azerbaijanis who had fled in panic from the city of Kafan in southeast Armenia, just across the border from Azerbaijan.

6. Azerbaijan gyāndzhlāri, March 8 and 12, 1988.

7. Reuters and AFP, Moscow, March 18, 1988; AP, Moscow, March 19, 1988.

8. Il Messagero, March 18, 1988; AFP, Moscow, March 1988.

9. See the issue for March 17.

10. AP, Moscow, March 21 and 22, 1988.

Kaplanyan then proceeded to a cool reappraisal of the cliches that invariably accompany any reference to "the brotherhood of Soviet Peoples" and to a discussion of the relationship between glasnost' and "distortions in national relations." In a formulation that will doubtless strike a chord among other non-Russian cultural figures, Kaplanyan argued that "it is necessary to know how to judge that line beyond which the national develops into the nationalistic." At the recent plenum of the Board of the USSR Writers' Union in Moscow, Kaplanyan's namesake Hrach'ya Ovanessyan, the chairman of the Board of the Union of Armenian Writers, similarly complained:

If you are in a sad mood, that means you're a nationalist; if you talk about raising the level of Lake Sevan, that means you're a nationalist; if you propose the creation of a national circus ensemble, that means you're a nationalist; if you send your child to an Armenian school, then already you are considered politically unreliable.¹¹

In what may have been intended to counter charges that those persons who advocate the return of Nagorno-Karabakh are abusing glasnost', Kaplanyan asserted that

when in an attempt to hold on to his job some functionary responsible for the arts spreads the pathetic and absurd rumor that distortions in national relations are the result of democracy and glasnost', you want to put him right immediately. If there were true glasnost', there would be no place for the kind of rumors to which conditions are so conducive now. (Emphasis supplied here).

Kaplanyan further cites examples of how, in his opinion, the cult of "the brotherhood of peoples" is abused. He points out that, despite the stereotyped assertions that "cultural ties between the Union republics are increasing" the opposite is in fact the case: "cultural weeks and visits by figures from culture and art have disappeared. Increasingly often scientific and literary publications carry debates that do not seek scientific truth but, on the contrary, distort history." (Emphasis supplied here).

Conclusion

The resentment expressed by Kaplanyan in print last week is paralleled by the feelings of anger and disappointment to which the article in Pravda of March 21 has apparently given rise.

11. Literaturnaya gazeta, March 9, 1988.

Western news agencies in Moscow report that demonstrations took place in Erevan on March 21 and 22 to protest Pravda's version of events as "ugly and provocative."

It is conceivable that the media attacks of the past two days on the Karabakh Committee may serve (indeed may have been intended) to intensify the apparent division of its members into a moderate and a radical wing. The position of the "moderates" is exemplified by Silva Kaputikyan, who told the Moscow correspondent of the Rome daily La Repubblica that she would be content with cultural concessions to the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh and that she did not consider "a final solution" a realistic possibility at present.¹² Kaputikyan is also said by Izvestia to have attempted to act as a restraining influence at the meeting of the Committee on March 19.

While wariness is called for with regard to lending any credence to the more vehement charges in the central press concerning the motivation and ultimate aims of the "extremists" within the Committee, it seems clear that at least some members feel strongly enough to continue to defy Moscow by taking to the streets of Erevan. Indeed, Armenian dissident Paruir Airikyan is reported to have told Western journalists that a meeting will be held in Erevan on Saturday, March 26, to decide on "further action" in the campaign for the return of Karabakh.

12. See Kevin Devlin, "Armenian Envoys on Crisis Meeting with Gorbachev," RAD Background Report/42 (USSR), March 14, 1988.



WHITHER THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH CAMPAIGN?

Elizabeth Fuller

Summary: It is difficult to say at this point just what effect either the official measures to prohibit public demonstrations or the arrests of leading campaigners may have on the Armenian movement for the return of Nagorno-Karabakh. Caution and compromise are being urged by some in the interest of not upsetting recent trends towards more openness. Others, while not advocating extremes, are expressing concern about the implications of backing down.

March 26 was the date set by Armenian demonstrators in late February for resuming mass demonstrations to demand the return to Armenia of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast, failing the promulgation by then of "the just solution" of the issue promised by CPSU General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev. In the event, however, tentative plans for a mass meeting on that date to discuss future tactics in the campaign for reunification were thwarted by a combination of official intimidation and reprisals, as well as caution on the part of the "Karabakh Committee" and the population of Erevan.

On March 23 the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet adopted a resolution that rejected as "intolerable" attempts "to resolve complicated national-territorial issues through pressure on state authorities" and further condemned "self-styled formations that declare for the recarving of national-administrative boundaries".¹ On the same day, Radio Erevan warned that the meeting scheduled for March 26 to continue discussion of the Nagorno-Karabakh issue "could have explosive consequences." Troops and police were reported to have been flown to Erevan, and helicopters were said to be circling the city.² Silva Kaputikyan and Zori Balayan, the two writers who had met with Gorbachev in late February to discuss the Karabakh

1. TASS, March 23, 1988.

2. Reuters and AP, from Moscow. March 24, 1988.

March 30, 1988

RL 149/R

situation, made an appeal to the Armenian population on television, asking them to refrain from further demonstrations.³ Late that evening, the Karabakh Committee, which had been savagely attacked in Pravda and Izvestia on March 21 and 22 respectively,⁴ voted to call off the meeting scheduled for March 26. The following day the leadership of the Karabakh Committee issued leaflets calling on the population of Erevan to register continued support for the return of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast to Armenia by remaining in their homes on March 26 and 27 to give the impression that Erevan was "a dead city".⁵

On March 24, the Politburo published a program detailing massive investment in the economic and social sphere in the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast for the period 1988-1995.⁶ On the same day, the Armenian authorities issued a ruling that all plans for spontaneous street demonstrations must be communicated to and cleared by the authorities seven days in advance--a move that would have made the demonstration on March 26 illegal had it taken place.⁷ The republican press also carried a statement that the Armenian SSR Supreme Soviet had banned the Karabakh Committee; its counterpart in Nagorno-Karabakh, the Krunk Committee, was similarly banned by a decree of the Azerbaijan SSR Supreme Soviet.⁸

On the night of March 24, four leading Armenian dissidents were arrested--namely, Paruir Airikyan, Movses Gorgisyan, Mekhak Gabrielyan, and Gevorg Mirzoyan.⁹ According to the Moscow dissident Lev Timofeev of Press Club Glasnost', Airikyan was subsequently charged under Armenia's equivalent of Article 190-1 of the RSFSR Criminal Code ("dissemination of knowingly false fabrications discrediting the the Soviet political and social system"), which provides for a penalty of deprivation of freedom for a term not exceeding three years. Timofeev pointed out that

3. AFP, Moscow, March 24, 1988.

4. See RL 121/88, "Attitudes Harden as Gorbachev's Nagorno-Karabakh Deadline Approaches," March 22, 1988.

5. The New York Times, March 25, 1988.

6. TASS, March 24, 1988.

7. Kommunist (Armenia) March 24, 1988; The Los Angeles Times, March 25, 1988.

8. The New York Times, Reuters, Moscow, March 25, 1988.

9. Reuters, Moscow, March 26, 1988.

this was the first time in some months that a dissident had been charged under this article, which he said was reportedly to have been abolished.¹⁰

There is conflicting information on the circumstances surrounding the arrests of the other three men; it has been variously reported that Gorgisyan was subsequently released¹¹; that two of the three were released and the third sentenced to up to fourteen days¹²; and that two of the three were, like Airikyan, charged under Article 190-1.¹³ Neither is it clear whether the charges of knowingly slandering the Soviet state refer to the role played by Airikyan (and Gorgisyan) in relaying information on events in Armenia and Azerbaijan over the past six weeks to Western reporters in Moscow or whether they are based on materials that have been published in the samizdat journal Angakhutyun (Independence), the organ of the so-called Association for National Self-Determination, which is edited by Airikyan with the help of Gorgisyan and Gabrielyan. There are reports that members of the Armenian independence movement, which numbers approximately 500 persons, sent a telegram to Gorbachev on March 28 protesting the arrest of three of their fellow members, including Airikyan, and maintaining that their activities are not anti-Soviet.¹⁴ There are also reports that demonstrations to protest Airikyan's arrest took place in Erevan.¹⁵

On March 28 the Sueddeutsche Zeitung reported that two of the leaders of the Karabakh Committee in Erevan, the theater director Vache Sarukhanyan and the economist Igor Muradyan, had also been arrested. Sarukhanyan was subsequently reported to have been sentenced to fifteen days of imprisonment for disturbing the public order.¹⁶

The exact status of the Karabakh Committee in Erevan and of subsections of it in enterprises and institutes throughout Armenia also remains unclear in the wake of the ban published

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10. AP, Reuters, Moscow, March 27, 1988.
 11. Frankfurter Rundschau, March 28, 1988.
 12. The Chicago Tribune, March 27, 1988.
 13. AFP, Moscow, March 28, 1988.
 14. DPA, Moscow, March 28, 1988; Frankfurter Rundschau, March 29, 1988.
 15. The New York Times, March 29, 1988; and AP, Moscow, March 29, 1988.
 16. Die Sueddeutsche Zeitung, March 29, 1988.

in the newspapers on March 25. Whereas one Western reporter quotes unidentified officials as having affirmed that the committee and its subsections had voluntarily disbanded,¹⁷ Pravda is said to have revealed on March 27 that the Karabakh Committee in Erevan had distributed leaflets with a message to the effect that it would not discontinue its activities.¹⁸ The Armenian dissident Ambartsum Galstyan, on the other hand, was quoted by the Chicago Tribune as having stated that the Erevan Committee had disbanded after twenty-five to thirty of its members had been summoned by the Public Prosecutor's office and asked to sign statements confessing to anticonstitutional activity.

As for the Krunk Committee in Nagorno-Karabakh, the Moscow dissident Sergei Grigoryants told Western reporters on March 27 that at that juncture the committee was still functioning.¹⁹ The issue of Izvestia for March 30 is reported to mention a final meeting at which the Krunk Committee was dissolved.²⁰

The inhabitants of Stepanakert proved to be less intimidated than the population of Erevan by the official measures intended to prohibit further public gatherings or demonstrations. Dissidents in Moscow told Western journalists that demonstrations had taken place in Stepanakert on March 24 and 25.²¹ On March 26, when the city was overrun by some 15,000 policemen brought in from Baku, residents were reported to have remained in their homes. On March 27, Pravda disclosed that most of the factories in Stepanakert were not functioning. Moscow activists confirmed that strikes had begun in the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast on March 25 and would continue until April 1.²² Two Soviet newspapers have now disclosed that Communist Party activists are visiting the homes of strikers in an attempt to persuade them to return to work.²³

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17. The Christian Science Monitor, March 28, 1988.
 18. UPI, Moscow, March 27, 1988.
 19. Ibid.
 20. AP, Moscow, March 29, 1988.
 21. Reuters, Moscow, March 27, 1988; and The New York Times, March 27, 1988.
 22. AP, UPI, Moscow, March 27; Reuters, Moscow, March 28, 1988.
 23. Reuters, Moscow, March 30, citing Trud and Sovetskaya Rossiya.

30, 1988

March 30, 1988

In the aftermath of the weekend's "silent protest" in Erevan, Armenians involved in the campaign for the return of Nagorno-Karabakh seemed initially to divide into two rough groupings. The one consisted of those who consider that to back down would be a demoralizing defeat for democracy but who at the same time advocate a shift to less dangerous tactics, such as mass resignations from the CPSU or general strikes. The other consisted of those who urge "caution and compromise," fearing that hard-liners within the Soviet leadership might use the Armenian unrest as an excuse to cut short the trend towards liberalization. The latter group includes the journalist Zori Balayan, who is quoted as arguing that "if we believe in glasnost' and perestroika, we must take care not to harm them by our actions."²⁴ The previous day Balayan and the nationalist and literary scholar Rafael Popoyan had expressed the conviction that a positive solution to the controversy surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh was still possible and that the Soviet authorities would return to the issue "when tensions had subsided" and after the Party conference in June.

The arrests in Erevan not only of members of the Association for National Self-Determination but also of leading members of the Karabakh Committee, including such a prominent personality as Vache Sarukhanyan, may, however, have a sobering effect on the thousands of Armenians whose euphoric invocations of glasnost' in support of their demands for the return of Nagorno-Karabakh, as registered on a clandestine amateur video film, impressed on the West the dimensions of the nationality problem facing Gorbachev. On March 28 Paruir Airikyan's friend Karine Stepanyan characterized the general mood in Erevan as "low," and she declined to predict whether the movement for reunification would survive the crackdown of the past few days.²⁵ On March 29, AFP reported that the moderate writer Silva Kaputikyan, one of the two Armenian representatives who discussed Nagorno-Karabakh with Gorbachev in late February, was no longer prepared to give interviews.

Whatever the future course of events in Erevan, the repercussions in neighboring Georgia of the Armenian demands for the return of Nagorno-Karabakh should not pass unmentioned. On March 21 Pravda disclosed that Azerbaijani leaders had raised the possibility of redrawing the frontiers between the three Transcaucasian republics to take into account the ethnic composition of frontier areas. In the admittedly unlikely event of a redrawing of the map of Transcaucasia, the Georgian SSR would stand to lose considerable stretches of its southern territory,

24. The New York Times, March 28, 1988.

25. The Chicago Tribune, The Times, March 28, 1988.

where the population is predominantly Armenian or Azerbaijani. (Both Azerbaijanis and Armenians in Georgia have in recent years expressed economic and social grievances analagous to those raised by the Armenian population of the Nagorno-Karabakh Oblast.²⁶) It should be noted that, of all the resolutions adopted last week by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviets of the various Union republics calling for a solution to the crisis in Nagorno-Karabakh, only that passed by the Georgian body emphasized that a settlement must be in accordance with the constitution of the USSR--the document that stipulates the conditions under which territorial-administrative boundaries between Union republics may be changed.

In Georgia, too, the authorities have issued a ruling banning spontaneous street demonstrations, and the republic's Minister of Internal Affairs is reported to have appeared on television to warn against solidarity demonstrations with the Armenians.²⁷ The West German press has reported rumors of clashes in Georgia between Armenians and Georgians.²⁸ Meanwhile, a small demonstration was reported in Sukhumi, the capital of the Abkhaz ASSR, whose indigenous Abkhaz population demonstrated en masse in the spring of 1978 to back demands for the autonomous republic's transfer from the Georgian SSR to the RSFSR.²⁹

In short, the current situation serves once again to underscore the appositeness of a rueful observation by the nineteenth-century Armenian nobleman and writer Alexander Shirvanzade:

The Transcaucasus is like a tripod: if you remove one of its legs it will fall down.

26. See RL 444/83, "How Serious are Inter-Nationality Tensions in Georgia?" November 25, 1983; and Zarya Vostoka, May 24, 1986.

27. Die Sueddeutsche Zeitung, March 28, 1988.

28. Ibid. and Die Welt, March 28, 1988.

29. The Chicago Tribune, March 28, 1988.



NEW DEMONSTRATIONS IN ARMENIA AND AZERBAIJAN EXEMPLIFY
POLARIZATION OF VIEWS OVER NAGORNO-KARABAKH

Elizabeth Fuller

New demonstrations have been reported over the past two weeks in Erevan, Stepanakert, and Baku. These reports come after a month-long period of calm that inclined some observers to conclude that the passions engendered earlier this year by the campaign for the transfer of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast from Azerbaijan to Armenia had burned themselves out. Three events in particular have served as the catalyst for the renewed protests: a clash between Armenians and Azerbaijanis in Armenia on May 11¹; the death of a young Armenian at the hands of Azerbaijanis in the Shusha Raion of Nagorno-Karabakh on the same day²; and the sentencing on May 16 of the first of the young Azerbaijanis to go on trial for the violence in Sumgait in late February in which twenty-six Armenians and six Azerbaijanis were killed³. The reactions in Armenia and Azerbaijan to these events serve to underscore the considerable differences in popular perceptions of the nature of the Nagorno-Karabakh campaign and Moscow's handling of it that exist between the two ethnic groups involved.

The Most Recent Demonstrations

Demonstrations are reported to have taken place in Erevan on May 7 and 12 to demand the release of Paruir Airikyan, a veteran Armenian human-rights activist.⁴ Airikyan was arrested in Erevan on the night of March 24 and was reported to have been charged under the Armenian equivalent of Article 190-1 of the RSFSR Criminal Code ("Dissemination of knowingly false fabrica-

1. Reuters and AP, from Moscow, May 19, 1988; The New York Times, May 19, 1988.
2. AFP and UPI, from Moscow, May 13, 1988.
3. Reuters and UPI, May 16, 1988.
4. AFP, from Moscow, May 9, 1988; AFP, from Moscow, May 13, 1988.

May 20, 1988

tions discrediting the Soviet political and social system"), which provides for a maximum penalty of up to three years' deprivation of freedom. (Moscow dissident Lev Timofeev of Press Club Glasnost' has pointed out that this is the first time in months that a dissident has been charged under Article 190-1 of the Criminal Code, which is supposed to have been abolished.5)

On May 11, the trial opened in Sumgait of eighty persons charged with participating in the February "pogroms" there.⁶ As noted above, a young Armenian is reported to have died on the same day in the Shusha Raion, of injuries received during a fight with Azerbaijanis.⁷ It is also known that an inter-ethnic clash took place on this day in the Ararat Raion of Armenia, evidently resulting in the home of an Azerbaijani family being burned down and several people being injured. Some 1,000 ethnic Azerbaijanis subsequently fled from Ararat to Azerbaijan.⁸ (Given the paucity of information available it is impossible to determine whether the timing of the two clashes was fortuitous, or whether they were sparked off by the opening of the Sumgait trial.) On May 12 and 13 demonstrations and strikes were reported from Stepanakert to protest the death of the young Armenian and the announcement in the local press that an ethnic Azerbaijani had been appointed deputy procurator of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast.⁹

Finally, the sentencing on May 16 of a twenty-year-old Azerbaijani locksmith, Talekh Ismailov, to fifteen years of imprisonment for the brutal murder of an elderly Armenian in Sumgait gave rise to demonstrations in both Erevan and Baku. In the Azerbaijani capital 5,000 students and faculty members took to the streets for several hours on May 16 and 17 to demand leniency for the accused--in particular, that the death sentence should not be imposed. On May 18 the crowd had grown to 100,000, according to a spokesman of the Azerbaijani Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the demonstrators protested that the fifteen-year sentence was too harsh. They also raised doubts concerning Ismailov's guilt, arguing that he had acted as "one of a crowd"¹⁰ (this apparently despite the fact that Ismailov himself admitted having attacked his victim with an iron bar.¹¹)

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5. AP and Reuters, from Moscow, March 27, 1988.
 6. Reuters, DPA, and UPI, from Moscow, May 11, 1988.
 7. AFP and UPI, from Moscow, May 13, 1988.
 8. Reuters, from Moscow, May 19, 1988.
 9. Reuters and UPI, Moscow, May 13, 1988.
 10. Reuters, from Moscow, May 19, 1988.
 11. AFP, from Moscow, May 18, 1988.

In Erevan, on the other hand, the Karabakh Committee--the body that had organized the week of demonstrations in February to demand the annexation of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast to Armenia and the disbanding of which was called for in late March by the Armenian SSR Supreme Soviet--summoned a meeting on May 17 to protest the sentence given to Ismailov as too lenient and to demand that the Sumgait trial proceedings be televised. (The number of demonstrators is variously estimated at between 20,000 and 200,000.) Some reports quote participants as declaring the proceedings "a show trial" and as maintaining that those ultimately responsible for allowing the situation in Sumgait to get out of hand were not in the dock.¹² A second demonstration, attended by 200,000 people, is reported to have taken place on May 19.

Just How Deep Is Popular Resentment?

The reactions in Erevan and Baku to the sentence passed on Ismailov illustrate the polarization of popular feeling among the population of both Armenia and Azerbaijan in recent months. The mood in Armenia is probably best expressed in a samizdat response by the poetess Silva Kaputikyan (one of the two Armenian intellectuals who met with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in late February to present the case for the annexation of Nagorno-Karabakh by Armenia) to an open letter by four prominent Russian intellectuals that was published in Izvestia.¹³ Kaputikyan makes it clear that the Armenian intelligentsia reacted with shock, anger, despair, and incomprehension to the rejection by the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet of the demands for the annexation of Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia and to what they interpret as a consistently anti-Armenian, pro-Azerbaijani stance by the Moscow authorities, as exemplified by the article in Pravda of March 21 attacking those Armenian activists who were in the forefront of the Nagorno-Karabakh campaign.¹⁴ "One would have to be totally devoid of the ability, or rather the wish, to examine in depth what has happened in order to pour so much filth." (Emphasis supplied here.) In this context she implies that many of her compatriots are inclined to think that this "prejudice" on the part of the central authorities was secured by massive bribes of the sort routinely donated to the elderly Brezhnev by the Azerbaijani leadership.

12. AFP, from Moscow, May 19, 1988; see also The Washington Post, May 20, 1988.

13. Izvestia, March 25, 1988; for the text of Kaputikyan's response, see AS 6192.

14. On the article in Pravda, see RL 121/88, "Attitudes Harden as Gorbachev's Nagorno-Karabakh Deadline Approaches," March 22, 1988.

Kaputikyan contrasts Pravda's charges that the campaign for the reunification of Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia had "a distinct anti-Socialist tinge" and gave rise to "nationalist manifestations" with Gorbachev's assertion during his trip to Yugoslavia that the campaign was neither anti-Socialist nor anti-Soviet in character. She points out that the mood of demoralization in Armenia not only in connection with the failure of the Karabakh campaign but also as a result of the general climate of corruption and the deteriorating ecological situation has led to a dramatic increase in emigration. As for those who choose to remain, she says "it is impossible to say whether our faith in perestroika will ever be restored." On a personal level, Kaputikyan continues, Armenians are painfully aware of a new mutual coldness between them and Azerbaijani colleagues whom they formerly counted as friends.

Similar emotions apparently lay behind the open letter addressed to the chairman of USSR Goskino, Aleksandr Kamshalov, and the first secretary of the Board of the USSR Union of Cinematographers, Elem Klimov, by a group of employees of the Armenian republican film studio, explaining their refusal to travel to Baku to attend the Twenty-first All-Union Film Festival on the grounds that after the Sumgait massacres, to do so would not just be immoral but "an unheard-of betrayal".¹⁵

Dissatisfaction has also been registered by members of the Azerbaijani intelligentsia. Kaputikyan reveals that 250 Azerbaijani scholars addressed a telegram to Viktor Ambartsumyan, the president of the Armenian SSR Academy of Sciences and one of the leading members of the Karabakh Committee, protesting what they apparently termed Armenia's determination "to grab the most appetizing slice of the Azerbaijani pie."

On May 17, Soviet television screened a program in which the first secretary of the Azerbaijan Union of Writers, Anar, complained that the ninety-minute television documentary on Nagorno-Karabakh shown last month had been "tendentious".

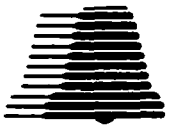
Local Media Coverage

It might be noted that one of the charges made in last month's television documentary was that the Sumgait massacres were a direct consequence of the failure of both the local and central media to provide adequate information on events in Erevan and Nagorno-Karabakh, which would have countered rumors about the scale of the unrest. The Azerbaijani media's prompt reaction to the events of the past week suggests that the local authorities may have taken this criticism to heart: on May 18 Radio Baku

15. See AS 6191.

May 20, 1988

broadcast a joint statement by the Central Committee of the Azerbaijan Communist Party, the Azerbaijan SSR Council of Ministers, and the Presidium of the Azerbaijan Supreme Soviet referring to the clash in Armenia and appealing for calm, reason, and restraint. A further statement, referring to the demonstrations in Baku on May 16 and 18, was broadcast on May 19; this latter announcement stressed: "AzerINFORM has been instructed to report that relevant measures will be taken for questions causing people anxiety. Information will be given to the public periodically about decisions adopted." Whether the Armenian media have commented on the past week's events is not known.



PARTY FIRST SECRETARIES REPLACED IN ARMENIA AND AZERBAIJAN

Elizabeth Fuller

At plenums of the Central Committees of the Communist Parties of Armenia and Azerbaijan on May 21, the respective first secretaries, fifty-six-year old Karen Demirchyan and fifty-year-old Kyamran Bagirov, were simultaneously "retired on grounds of ill health."¹ With these retirements, Moscow seems to have finally delivered an unmistakably clear signal to what the journalist and member of the Central Committee of the CPSU Nikolai Portugalov has called "those temperamental Caucasians."² The message is that unrest and mass demonstrations of the type that took place in February in Erevan in support of demands for the annexation of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast to Armenia and last week in both Erevan and Baku in connection with the sentencing of the first of the young Azerbaijanis to go on trial for the pogroms in Sumgait in late February will no longer be tolerated.

Demirchyan's successor is Suren Gurgenovich Arutyunyan, former first deputy chairman of the Armenian SSR Council of Ministers. Abdul-Rakhman Khalil ogly Vezirov, former Soviet ambassador to Pakistan, was elected the new Party chief in Azerbaijan. The Baku plenum was attended by none other than Egor Ligachev and by Politburo Candidate Member Georgii Razumovsky, who was one of the two Kremlin troubleshooters dispatched to Azerbaijan in February when the campaign for the annexation of Nagorno-Karabakh first threatened to get out of hand. CPSU Central Committee secretary Aleksander Yakovlev, who shares responsibility for ideological affairs with Ligachev, was present at the plenum in Erevan, together with Vladimir Dolgikh. The latter had likewise traveled to Erevan in February as Moscow's representative.³ The choice of both Ligachev, reputed to be the arch-conservative within the Krem-

1. TASS, in English and Russian, May 21, 1988; and Pravda, May 22, 1988.

2. Austrian Television, March 13, 1988.

3. The Baltimore Sun, February 25, 1988, and AP, Moscow, February 25, 1988.

lin leadership, and Yakovlev, conversely regarded as a liberal, might have been intended to demonstrate that the various factions within the overwhelmingly Russian Politburo are unanimous when it comes to quashing unrest among the non-Russian nationalities.

Both Demirchyan and Bagirov have been in disfavor since before the beginning of the Nagorno-Karabakh campaign and its resulting backlash in Sumgait earlier this year. Indeed, some observers have advanced the theory that the two men tacitly encouraged the unrest in order to obstruct perestroika and bolster their own shaky positions.⁴ In the case of Karen Demirchyan, one of the last of the Brezhnev-era republican Party bosses (he has occupied the post since November, 1974), the only surprise with regard to his replacement is why it has taken so long. The Armenian Party organization has been repeatedly criticized over the past three and a half years--i.e., since before the election of Mikhail Gorbachev as general secretary of the CPSU. In October, 1984, the Central Committee of the CPSU passed a resolution highlighting weaknesses in ideological work in Armenia and calling for measures to counter such shortcomings as widespread religious observance, nationalism in historical research and literature, inadequate use of labor resources, and a less than wholehearted commitment to combating corruption.⁵

Two years later, in October, 1986, a commentary in Pravda on a plenum of the Central Committee of the Armenian Communist Party that evaluated the progress made to date in implementing the directives of the resolution of 1984 focused on "acute dissatisfaction over the current state of affairs" and noted that "a series of substantive omissions in ideological work, to which the Central Committee of the CPSU has more than once drawn attention, has still not been rectified."⁶

Even weightier criticism of the Armenian Party organization, and of Demirchyan himself, came from Gorbachev at the plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU in June, 1987. Gorbachev charged that the process of perestroika in Armenia was "stuck in a rut." He further claimed that the Armenian population was gravely concerned about the economic situation and particularly the moral climate in the republic, while the

4. The Los Angeles Times, May 24, 1988.

5. See RL 434/84, "Moscow Critical of Ideological Shortcomings in Armenia," November 14, 1984.

6. See Pravda, October 8, 1986; and RL 406/86, "Ideological Sector in Armenia under Fire," October 23, 1986.

Party leadership, Demirchyan included, demonstrated what the general secretary termed "totally unjustified complacency," contending that the situation was perfectly satisfactory.⁷

This cumulative criticism of Demirchyan led foreign observers to speculate that his removal was imminent. In the event, Demirchyan was not replaced at either of two subsequent plenums of the Armenian Party Central Committee (in July and December of last year), although on both occasions his resignation was called for by Hrazdan City Party First Secretary Haik Kotandzhyan, who was subjected to torrents of abuse by other Party activists for this proposal.⁸

Nor can it be said that Demirchyan distinguished himself in his handling of the demonstrations in Erevan in February: he is reported to have confronted demonstrators on February 26 and threatened that if they did not cease agitating "things will get much worse"; the response was jeers and catcalls.⁹ It was at this juncture that emigre Armenian organizations reported, three months prematurely as it has turned out, that Demirchyan had been replaced as republican Party first secretary by Suren Arutyunyan.¹⁰

Arutyunyan, who is forty-nine years old, is the son of an office worker and a graduate of the Erevan Veterinary Institute. He embarked on full-time Komsomol work at the age of twenty-two, making his way up through the ranks to gain the post of first secretary of the Armenian Komsomol from September, 1967, to June, 1970, when he was elected a secretary of the Central Committee of the All-Union Komsomol--a post he occupied for eight years. In 1978 Arutyunyan transferred to work in the Central Committee of the CPSU; in 1982 he was identified as a sector head within the Propaganda Department. He returned to Armenia as first deputy premier in January, 1986.¹¹

Arutyunyan is the obvious candidate to have succeeded Demirchyan insofar as he spent the greater part of the past two decades in Moscow--i.e., he can be presumed not to have been directly involved in the shortcomings for which Gorbachev

7. Pravda, June 26, 1987.

8. See RL 24/88, "For Whom the Bell Tolls, or, Gorbachev, Armenia, and Perestroika," January 19, 1988.

9. The Washington Post, and Reuters, Moscow, February 26, 1988.

10. UPI, Athens, February 26, 1988.

11. Kommunist (Armenia), January 23, 1986.

criticized the Armenian Party leadership last summer. Indeed, shortly after his return to his home turf in November, 1986, Arutyunyan delivered--in a move that could be interpreted as his distancing himself from Demirchyan--an especially critical assessment of the situation in the republic, and he did so on an occasion (the sixty-sixth anniversary of the establishment of Soviet power in Armenia) which would normally have called for rosy superlatives.¹²

The possibility that Kyanran Bagirov might be replaced as Party chief in neighboring Azerbaijan by Abdul-Rakhman Khalil ogly Vezirov, Soviet Ambassador in Pakistan, was first rumored last year--again, before the eruption of the Nagorno-Karabakh unrest. At that time the most logical explanation for the rumors was the ongoing and chronic corruption in the republic, which Bagirov's predecessor, Geidar Aliev, had fought in vain to eradicate. (That Herculean efforts to reduce economic crime in the republic to acceptable dimensions have not been an unmitigated success is clear--for example, from the published materials of a plenum of the Central Committee of the Azerbaijan Communist Party devoted to this issue in December, 1986. Statements made on that occasion by both Bagirov and Moscow's representative give the impression that very little demonstrable progress in combating economic crime had been attained since Aliev's election as republican Party first secretary seventeen years' previously.¹³) As in the case of Arutyunyan, the circumstance that Vezirov has not been a party to recent negative developments in his native republic can be presumed to have been a major consideration in his election as Bagirov's successor.

Like Arutyunyan, Vezirov, who was born in 1930, began his career as a Komsomol activist: in 1955 he was elected second secretary, and in 1957 identified as first secretary, of the Azerbaijani Komsomol. (At this time the first secretary of the Komsomol in neighboring Georgia was none other than Eduard Shevardnadze.) Vezirov moved to Moscow as a secretary of the All-Union Komsomol in 1959, returning to his native republic in 1970 as first secretary of the City Party Committee of Kirovabad, the second city of the republic. Between 1975 and January, 1978, he was head of the Industry and Transport Department of the Central Committee of the Azerbaijan Communist Party. He then transferred to diplomatic work, serving successively as Consul General in Calcutta, then as ambassador to Nepal and later Pakistan.

12. Kommunist (Armenia), November 29, 1986.

13. See RL 26/87, "The Campaign against Non-Labor Incomes in Azerbaijan," January 14, 1987.



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July 11, 1988

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH DISPUTE

Elizabeth Fuller

The past week has witnessed the deterioration into civil disobedience and violence of the hitherto orderly five-month campaign in Armenia for the transfer of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO) from the Azerbaijan SSR to the Armenian SSR. Reports of recent developments in Armenia suggest that the Armenian "Karabakh Committee," which was the coordinating force behind the exceptionally disciplined mass demonstrations in Erevan in February of this year, is increasingly coming under the control of radical elements.

The failure of the Nineteenth All-Union Party Conference to propose a solution to the deadlock over the administrative-territorial subordination of the NKAO was met with anger, disappointment, and incomprehension in Armenia. On Sunday, July 3, a group of delegates to the conference addressed a mass meeting in front of the opera house in Erevan. Although the delegates are said to have appealed for calm, members of the Karabakh Committee chose to mount a final push for the annexation of Nagorno-Karabakh.¹

The Armenian activists reportedly called for a general strike in support of the following five demands: 1) the separation of Nagorno-Karabakh from Azerbaijan; 2) the transfer of the trial of those accused of participation in the anti-Armenian riots in Sumgait in February from the Azerbaijan SSR Supreme Court to the Supreme Court of the RSFSR; 3) an end to the "blockade" of the NKAO; 4) publication of details of an incident at a garment factory in the town of Masis on June 23, in which fifty-one female employees were exposed to an unidentified toxic substance; and 5) publication of all relevant information concerning events connected with the NKAO.² (Two of these demands have since been partially met. On July 8, it was announced that the trials of those involved in the Sumgait pogroms would be transferred to

1. The Sun (Baltimore), July 7, 1988.

2. Reuters, Moscow, July 8, 1988; Frankfurter Rundschau, July 9, 1988.

regional courts in the RSFSR.³ The following day, Soviet television screened a report on the Masis incident.)

Participants in the mass meeting on July 3 also decided to occupy Zvartnots Airport, from which hundreds of demonstrators were violently evicted by Ministry of Internal Affairs troops on the evening of July 5. In the course of the storming of the airport, one passenger died of a heart attack, and thirty-six people, including several members of the security forces, were injured. A young man who was shot at close range with a plastic bullet when demonstrators attacked security forces on the highway leading to the airport died later in a hospital.⁴ Armenian human rights activists quoted the chairman of the Armenian SSR Council of Ministers, Fadey Sarkisyan, as stating that the order to storm the airport came from Moscow. This statement was subsequently denied by the official Armenian news agency ARMENPRESS.⁵ Tens of thousands of people attended the funeral of the two victims on July 7. The city of Erevan was reported to be bedecked in black flags on the weekend as a sign of mourning.

The violent intervention by troops at the airport has apparently served to compound the general mood of anger and alienation in Armenia. A professor at Erevan State University was quoted as saying that tensions are now running higher than at any point since the campaign began five months ago.⁶ The prominent Armenian journalist Zori Balayan, for his part, characterized the airport confrontation as "the final straw" and expressed concern lest "mistakes breed more mistakes," given the "very complicated psychology" currently prevalent in Erevan.⁷ The mood of alienation is, according to some reports, now manifesting itself for the first time in the form of anti-Soviet or anti-Russian slogans.⁸ According to Moscow dissident Sergei Grigoryants, many Armenian Party members have threatened to hand in their Party membership cards if the republican Party leadership fails to clarify the circumstances surrounding the storming of the airport.⁹

3. Reuters, UPI, Moscow, July 8, 1988.

4. Reuters, AP, Moscow, July 7, 1988.

5. DPA, Moscow, July 8, 1988.

6. The Los Angeles Times, July 7, 1988.

7. The New York Times, July 11, 1988.

8. AFP, Moscow, July 7, 1988; Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, July 9, 1988.

9. DPA, Moscow, July 9, 1988.

In spite of a series of televised appeals for calm and restraint by Armenian Catholicos Vazgen I¹⁰ and by republican Party First Secretary Suren Arutyunyan,¹¹ as of the night of July 10 there was little sign that the tensions were abating. On that evening, more than 120,000 people attended a mass meeting at a sports stadium in Erevan (the square in front of the opera house that had served as the venue for previous meetings having been cordoned off by security forces) and decided to prolong the week-old general strike at least through July 11.¹²

It appears, however, that not all those involved in the Nagorno-Karabakh campaign are in sympathy with the strikers. The poet Silva Kaputikyan, who has been closely connected with the campaign for the annexation of the NKAO since its inception and has served as a moderating influence within the unofficial "Karabakh Committee," has been quoted as disclosing that many Armenian intellectuals have severed their connections with the committee because "the anti-Russian tone that the movement has assumed does not represent Armenians' feelings."¹³

This is not the first time that a split has appeared to be imminent between the moderate and radical wings of the Karabakh Committee. In late February, following the meeting between CPSU General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev and two Armenian cultural figures, the more extreme members of the committee were reluctant to agree to a one-month moratorium on further demonstrations in order to give Moscow time to come up with a solution to the Karabakh problem. Again, in mid-March, Pravda published a vicious attack on the committee in connection with calls by one of its members to take the Karabakh issue to the World Court. It is worth noting that one Armenian representative in Moscow blamed "provocateurs brought in from Azerbaijan" for the call to occupy the airport.¹⁴ The possibility that the Karabakh Committee might be infiltrated and thus manipulated was raised in March, when several Western journalists cited reports that Moscow had dispatched to Armenia a team of approximately a dozen officials who had previously been involved in attempts by Moscow to defuse the Solitarity trade-union movement in Poland.¹⁵

10. Sueddeutsche Zeitung and Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, July 9, 1988.

11. The New York Times, July 11, 1988.

12. Reuters, Moscow, July 11, 1988.

13. AFP, Moscow, July 9, 1988.

14. AP, Moscow, July 6, 1988.

15. Reuters, Moscow, March 11, 1988; The Times, March 12, 1988.

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Whatever the future role of the Karabakh Committee, the events of the past week represent a serious setback for the Armenian authorities--in particular, for Party First Secretary Arutyunyan, whose initial support for the campaign for unification of the NKAO with Armenia earned him the nickname "the Armenian Dubcek."¹⁶ In his media address to the population this weekend, Arutyunyan expressed his conviction that Moscow would soon come up with a solution to the Karabakh crisis.¹⁷ He further stated that the Nagorno-Karabakh issue is on the agenda for discussion at a meeting of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet.¹⁸ The republic's foreign minister, Anatolii Mkrtchyan, went on record last week as stating that he thought Nagorno-Karabakh could be brought under Armenian jurisdiction without the official consent of the Azerbaijan SSR.¹⁹

This statement may prove to be unduly optimistic. CPSU Central Committee Secretary Aleksandr Yakovlev told Italian journalists in Moscow on July 9 that "the frontiers of Armenia and Azerbaijan are not to be touched."²⁰ Azerbaijan remains steadfast in its refusal to consider a compromise solution of any kind, such as the proposed subordination of the NKAO either to the RSFSR or to the USSR Supreme Soviet. What is more, last week's breakdown of law and order in Armenia is likely to add fuel to the arguments of those in Moscow who, like Gorbachev, are opposed to "the abuse of glasnost' in an attempt to recarve internal boundaries."²¹

16. The Daily Telegraph, June 21, 1988.

17. The New York Times, July 11, 1988.

18. Reuters, Moscow, July 11, 1988.

19. Financial Times, July 6, 1988.

20. RFE/RL Special, Rome, July 11, 1988.

21. See Gorbachev's speech to the Party Conference, Pravda, June 29, 1988.



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NAGORNO-KARABAKH: A CONSTITUTIONAL CONUNDRUM

Francis Field

Summary: The aspirations of the population of Nagorno-Karabakh are facing Moscow with a tricky constitutional problem. The constitutional mechanism for resolving territorial disputes does not appear capable of providing a solution that would be acceptable to all the parties involved. The political solutions open to the Soviet government, on the other hand, are likely either to exacerbate existing tensions or to encourage other disgruntled minorities.

The Soviet Federal System

Most federal systems in the world (the United States, or Switzerland, for example) find their origin in a purely historical event: two or more sovereign states join in a new federal structure, simultaneously abandoning some of their original independence. The basis of the Soviet system is quite different: the USSR is composed of discrete ethnic populations whose legal status is determined by their size and concentration. If the appropriate conditions are met, these populations are considered entitled to recognition as sovereign nations. As sovereign nations, they are then presumed to join voluntarily in a union of Soviet republics. It goes without saying that this is constitutional theory, which has little to do with political reality; but even then such theory may acquire a life of its own.

As the sovereign member-states of the USSR are endowed with the right to secede from the USSR, only territories that share a border with a foreign country or that have access to open sea are considered eligible for the status of a sovereign member-state (a good example of a fiction within a fiction). Three general conditions must be met for an ethnic unit to receive recognition as a union republic of the USSR:

1. Numerical strength (one million as a rough figure, although the Estonians do not quite make this);

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2. Concentration: the ethnic group should constitute the majority of the population of the territory in question (this does not apply to the Kazakhs, though they are the most numerous nationality in Kazakhstan);

3. Location at the edge of the USSR, as defined above.

Any nationality that satisfies these conditions will be granted Union republic status. These are not, however, the only criteria. The position of the Estonians, for example, shows that historical developments cannot be completely disregarded. Estonia had been an independent country in the past, like Latvia and Lithuania, and it would obviously not do to deny it the status given to the latter two countries. The Kazakh case relates to another aspect of the system. None of the present five Central Asian republics had ever existed independently as a sovereign state. At the time of their foundation, it was considered undesirable to have a single large union republic that was entirely Muslim and overwhelmingly Turkic. For that reason the area was split up, on questionable ethnographic grounds, into five republics.

There are numerous other nationalities on Soviet territory that do not fulfill the three conditions mentioned above. Depending on how far short they fall of satisfying the conditions, these nationalities may receive constitutional recognition at a lower level. The highest of these is autonomous republic, structured constitutionally as a semi-sovereign state and allotted typically to land-locked populations (the Tatar Autonomous Republic in the east of European Russia, counting several million inhabitants, is the prime example).

The next level is autonomous oblast, where the eponymous nationality is usually outnumbered by other nationalities (especially Russians). At the bottom of the scale is the politically unimportant autonomous okrug, a status normally assigned to small ethnic groups in distant and sparsely inhabited areas.

Other ethnic groups lack a territory of their own, although they may be quite numerous (e. g., the Poles), because they are diffused among the rest of the Soviet population.

This is the general system, but the requirements of practical politics have introduced a number of variations. In the Georgian republic, for instance, there are autonomous republics, of which one, Adzharia, has been given autonomous republic status only because it is populated by Georgians of Muslim origin.

The Status of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast

Nagorno-Karabakh owes its status as an autonomous oblast not to the ethnic uniqueness of its inhabitants (as do most other autonomous oblasts), but to its position as an enclave of ethnic Armenians in the union republic of Azerbaijan. The logic of the Soviet constitutional system suggests two ways of dealing with such a case. The Karabakh area could simply have been made part of the Armenian Union Republic, or it could have been given the status of an autonomous republic within the Armenian republic. There is a clear precedent for the latter solution: the autonomous republic of Nakhichevan is populated by Azeris and separated from Azerbaijan by Armenian territory. The population of Nakhichevan is about one-and-a-half times that of Karabakh.

For political reasons, neither of these solutions was adopted when the present constitutional arrangement took shape in the 1920s.

The Constitutional Framework of the Present Dispute

The present political climate in the USSR allows for the open formulation of demands such as those made by the Armenian majority in the Karabakh Oblast and by the Armenian population generally. There can be little doubt that there is a strong case for changing the constitutional position of the oblast, on the basis of the internal logic of the Soviet constitutional system. It is patently inequitable that Nakhichevan, as a territory inhabited by Azeris separated territorially from Azerbaijan, possess the status of an autonomous republic within Azerbaijan while Karabakh is refused analogous status. If the Soviet authorities take their constitutional system seriously, the Karabakh area should be permitted a status equivalent to that of Nakhichevan (i. e., as an autonomous republic within the Armenian Union Republic).

The dilemma, however, is that the constitutional system provides a clear indication of how to proceed in the event of territorial disputes of the kind now facing the Soviet government. Article 78 of the USSR Constitution stipulates that:

The territory of a union republic may not be altered without its consent. The boundaries between union republics may be altered by mutual agreement of the union republics concerned, subject to confirmation by the USSR.

Although Article 70 of the USSR Constitution recognizes the principle of the free self-determination of nations, it does so only as part of a declaratory statement about the nature of the

Soviet federation. There is no mechanism, other than the right of the union republics to secede, through which to express the right to self-determination, and the prevailing view among Soviet constitutional lawyers has always been that the right to self-determination is exhausted once the nation has voluntarily joined the USSR. It seems, therefore, that the Azerbaijan Union Republic has a constitutional right to veto all constitutional arrangements that would offer significant satisfaction of the Armenian claims. The only possible exception is elevation of the Karabakh Oblast to the status of an autonomous republic within Azerbaijan. The wording of Article 72 (2) of the Azerbaijan Constitution in combination with Article 73 (1) of the USSR Constitution suggests that such a unilateral step by the federal authorities may be constitutionally defensible. It is doubtful, however, whether this solution is of great interest to Armenian public opinion.

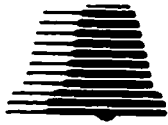
A Political Solution?

As the constitutional approach appears to lead to a dead end, a solution will have to be produced by the political process (no realistic observer of the embryonic Soviet Rechtsstaat would ever have doubted this). The federal government, which caused the problem many years ago, is still in the best position to take the lead and impose its will. The following possibilities are available:

1. To make various minor concessions to the Armenians but to keep the position of Karabakh Oblast unchanged. This has been tried up to now and does not seem to have worked.

2. To transfer Karabakh Oblast, with or without changing its present status, to the Armenian republic. This would solve the present problem but create two new problems: irritation of the Muslim population and a potentially dangerous signal to other national minorities with unsatisfied claims. The first problem is probably manageable for the Soviet leadership, the second is more alarming.

3. To isolate the issue by placing the Karabakh area temporarily under federal jurisdiction or by transferring it to the RSFSR. This solution apportions the pain more or less equally between the Armenians, the Azeris, and the Karabakh population, and may thereby defuse the situation. It does not make sense, however, on the constitutional plane, and it is questionable whether it provides a long-term solution.



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SUPREME SOVIET PRESIDIU DEBATES NAGORNO-KARABAKH

Elizabeth Fuller

In a move clearly aimed at putting an end to five months of sporadic demonstrations and industrial strikes in Transcaucasia, the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet ruled on July 18 that the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast of Azerbaijan should not be ceded to Armenia. The decision followed a heated, and at times acrimonious, eight-hour debate during which speakers from Armenia and Azerbaijan were repeatedly interrupted and accused of irresponsibility and a lack of willingness to compromise by Mikhail Gorbachev himself.

The Soviet domestic media carried detailed coverage of the proceedings only after an interval of twenty-four hours, a circumstance that has elicited pointed remarks from Western commentators about the limits of glasnost and prompted speculation that preparations were being made to clamp down on any violence or other disorders that might stem from the anger and disappointment that the ruling would almost certainly provoke in Stepanakert and Erevan.¹

At a press conference on the evening of July 19, the first deputy chairman of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, Petr Demichev, Soviet General Prosecutor Aleksandr Sukharev, and USSR Minister of Internal Affairs Aleksandr Vlasov outlined possible measures--including the imposition of a curfew and the use of military and special police units--that might be taken to put an end to work stoppages and mass meetings in line with the recommendation contained in the Supreme Soviet Presidium resolution: "to ensure stricter labor discipline and rigid observance of the Constitution of the USSR and Soviet laws, resolutely preventing any activities directed at kindling national enmity and attempts to exploit democratic rights for antidemocratic purposes."

The Debate and the Resolution

In his address to the meeting, Gorbachev traced the roots of the current dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh to past errors in the

1. Reuters, The Chicago Tribune, July 19, 1988; The Times, The Guardian, Stuttgarter Zeitung, July 20, 1988;

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spheres of economic and social development, ecology, personnel policy, and ideological work. The situation had been manipulated by anti-perestroika forces in Armenia and Azerbaijan, he charged, who had abused the "banner of democratization" to exert "shameless pressure" on workers' collectives, the populations of the two republics, and the state organs of power to the point where "passions are now running out of control," and "a threat to the lives and tranquillity of the populations of Armenia and Azerbaijan has emerged." In this situation, Gorbachev argued, it was imperative to find a solution to the dispute that would not be detrimental to the population of either republic. Failure to do so, he implied, would jeopardize the future implementation of perestroika.

Genrikh Pogosyan, the first secretary of the Nagorno-Karabakh Oblast Party Committee, was the only speaker at the session to press the demand that Nagorno-Karabakh be ceded to Armenia. Armenian Central Committee First Secretary Suren Arutyunyan reiterated the proposal that the area be temporarily subordinated to the central authorities. The chairman of the Presidium of the Armenian Supreme Soviet, Grant Voskanyan, argued that the vote of that body on June 15 in favor of the unification of Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia should not be interpreted as constituting any territorial claim on Azerbaijan but was based on the constitutional right of the people of the oblast to self-determination. Predictably, Suleiman Tatliev, Voskanyan's Azerbaijani counterpart, rejected this argument, accusing the people of the oblast of "total insubordination" and asserting that there were no economic, political, or legal grounds for the transfer of Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia.

The majority of speakers from other Union republics were no more sympathetic to the Armenian case. Pavel Gilashvili, chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Georgian SSR, which has a sizable Armenian minority, argued that "it is clear that we must resolve the nationality question, but we have to combat nationalism. In the conditions of our multinational country, all problems should be resolved taking into account the interests of all peoples." Other speakers were more categorical. Chairman of the Presidium of the Kazakh Supreme Soviet Zakash Kamalidenov, Moscow City Party First Secretary Lev Zaikov, and Vladimir Orlov, chairman of the Presidium of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet, all referred to the role played by "anti-perestroika forces." Belorussian Party First Secretary Efrem Sokolov depicted the Transcaucasian crisis as "an encroachment on what is most sacred...[an attempt to] undermine the unity of [our] country... to put the brakes on perestroika," while Uzbek First Secretary Rafik Nishanov asserted that "outright diktat, the use of force and unconstitutional measures are unacceptable in resolving national-territorial questions." For his part, Ukrainian First Secretary Vladimir Shcherbitsky must have been expressing misgivings shared by his counterparts in other Union republics when

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he pointed out that "what happens in Transcaucasia has a tendency to spread across the whole country". In an atmosphere of mutual recrimination, a solitary conciliatory note was struck by the Dagestani poet Rasul Gamzatov. Referring to the crisis as "a spiritual Chernobyl'" (the metaphor was originally coined by the Armenian poet Silva Kaputikyan in a samizdat open letter discussing the long-term implications of Moscow's refusal in March to yield to demands for the incorporation of Nagorno-Karabakh in Armenia),² Gamzatov remarked that, "while a great deal of criticism has been heard in this hall today, I have heard no self-criticism at all. Can it really be that no one is to blame for what has happened?"

According to TASS, the final resolution ruling that the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast should remain a constituent part of Azerbaijan was adopted unanimously (edinoglasno)--a formulation implying that the Armenian representative in the Presidium, Grant Voskanyan, did not dissent. (It is, of course, possible that Moscow foresaw that the present Armenian Party first secretary, Suren Arutyunyan, whose initial wholehearted support for the Nagorno-Karabakh campaign earned him the nickname of "the Armenian Dubcek,"³ might be unable to control the anticipated backlash at home when the rejection of the Armenian demands became known. Voskanyan may have been persuaded to vote in favor of the resolution by being promised that he was in line to succeed Arutyunyan, should the latter's removal become necessary.)

The only concessions to Armenian demands contained in the resolution were recommendations that implementation of existing plans for the economic, social, and cultural development of the oblast be accelerated; that the process be monitored by representatives from Moscow; and that a special commission be created to study "related issues." It appears that no decision has yet been made on the possibility of granting the oblast the status of an autonomous republic within the Azerbaijan SSR, which would give marginally greater independence from Baku. This proposal was put forward during the debate on July 18 by Evgenii Primakov, director of the Institute of World Economics and International Relations of the USSR Academy of Sciences, and raised again by Petr Demichev at the press conference the following evening.

Was the Outcome of the Debate Predictable?

While the unconditional rejection of demands for the incorporation of Nagorno-Karabakh in the Armenian SSR will undoubtedly

2. AS 6192.

3. The Daily Telegraph, June 21, 1988.

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engender considerable bitterness among the thousands of Armenians both in the disputed area and within Armenia who had pinned their hopes for what they considered "a just solution" of a decades-old problem on Gorbachev's proclaimed policies of glasnost' and democratization, the final ruling is entirely consistent with pronouncements emanating from Moscow since the campaign was launched in mid-February. What is more, taken in conjunction with the actual proceedings at the meeting of the Presidium, statements made by two Soviet officials in the past week suggest that the decision to preserve the status quo was taken well in advance of the meeting and that the ensuing debate was no more than a formality to give the appearance of glasnost'.

The first indication that the case of Nagorno-Karabakh could not be considered exceptional or unique was contained in the message Gorbachev addressed on February 26 to the populations of Armenia and Azerbaijan. On that occasion, he emphasized that "all the republics, many oblasts, and even some of our towns... are multinational," thus implicitly rejecting the argument that the oblast should be transferred to Armenia on the grounds that 75 percent of its population are ethnic Armenians. At the end of March, when the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet convened for the first time to consider the issue, it rejected as "intolerable" attempts "to resolve complicated national-territorial issues by exerting pressure on state authorities" and condemned what it termed "self-styled formations that call for the recarving of national-administrative boundaries." Finally, in his address to the Nineteenth All-Union Party Conference, Gorbachev specifically condemned what he described as "attempts to abuse glasnost' with the aim of recarving state borders."

It could be argued that, given the gravity of the situation, the Supreme Soviet Presidium might theoretically have proposed a compromise such as the temporary subordination of the oblast to the RSFSR. (This solution was advanced by Armenian delegates to the Party Conference but was rejected categorically within hours by Azerbaijani representatives.) Two statements by Soviet officials indicate, however, that it had already been decided that a compromise was not acceptable. First, CPSU Central Committee Secretary Aleksandr Yakovlev told a group of Italian journalists in Moscow on July 9 that "the frontiers of Armenia and Azerbaijan are not to be touched."⁴ Second, on July 18, the Istanbul newspaper Tercuman printed an interview with a deputy chairman of the Presidium of the Azerbaijan Supreme Soviet, Naim Fataliev, who asserted that Nagorno-Karabakh belonged to Azerbaijan and "no one can take this land away from us."

A further factor of crucial significance is that Abdul-Rakhman Vezirov, who was elected first secretary of the Central

4. RFE/RL Special, July 11, 1988.

Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan on May 21, is himself a native of Nagorno-Karabakh.⁵ It seems inconceivable that he would have accepted his new post without assurances from Moscow that his homeland would on no account be ceded to Armenia. This hypothesis would, moreover, tally with reports that Egor Ligachev told the plenum of the Azerbaijan Central Committee at which Vezirov was elected that the Nagorno-Karabakh question "has been solved." (It would also explain why Vezirov felt himself on sure ground when he told participants in a meeting in Baku on June 13 that he would sooner give up his wife than condone the transfer of Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia.)⁶

What Were the Alternatives?

At this juncture, it is worth reviewing the various options that were open to Moscow and the factors that led to their rejection.

The first option was to cede the oblast to Armenia. The primary objection to this course of action was that advanced by the Azerbaijan Supreme Soviet in June and reiterated by Chairman of the Azerbaijan Supreme Soviet Presidium Suleiman Tatliev at the USSR Supreme Soviet Presidium meeting--namely, that it would contravene Article 78 of the USSR Constitution, which stipulates that the boundary between two Union republics can be changed only with the agreement of both republics involved. In view of the fact that the initial reaction of the Politburo in February had been to resist pressure for the incorporation of Nagorno-Karabakh in Armenia, a complete reversal of Moscow's position could have been interpreted by other ethnic groups with similar grievances (the Abkhaz, the Soviet Germans, and the Crimean Tatars, for example) as a sign of weakness and might have given rise to a "domino effect." Finally, some Western observers have theorized that Moscow may have feared that to cede Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia would provoke the wrath not merely of the 6 million Azerbaijanis but of the entire Muslim population of the USSR, which numbers some 40 million.⁷

The second option was to transfer Nagorno-Karabakh at least temporarily to the RSFSR or to impose some form of direct rule from Moscow. This again would have been unconstitutional without the prior consent of Azerbaijan. In addition to alienating the Azerbaijanis, who would have regarded such a decision as a defeat, it would not necessarily have satisfied the entire Armenian

5. Central Television, July 11, 1988.

6. The Daily Telegraph, June 21, 1988.

7. See, for example, The Guardian, June 15, 1988.

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population of Nagorno-Karabakh (although many moderate Armenians considered this alternative preferable to leaving the oblast within Azerbaijan). Such a decision would, moreover, have been exceptionally difficult to implement in view of the existing economic links between Nagorno-Karabakh and the remainder of Azerbaijan.

A third, admittedly somewhat utopian, proposal, which was advocated by Armenian Party First Secretary Arutyunyan at the Party Conference last month, was to rewrite the USSR Constitution in such a way as to eliminate the existing ambiguities.

What Happens Now?

The first indications are that the Armenians, although reported to be "despondent" at the ruling of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, are unwilling to take "no" for an answer: it is planned to hold a rally in Erevan on the night of July 20 at which future action will presumably be debated. The TASS announcement that veteran Armenian dissident Paruir Airikyan is to be stripped of his Soviet citizenship and expelled from the USSR⁸ may be intended not merely to deprive the extremist Union for National Self-Determination of its head but also to serve as a warning to the leadership of the Karabakh Committee, which has coordinated the five-month campaign for the incorporation of Nagorno-Karabakh in Armenia.

One British commentator has written that "the Armenians have a great ability to dwell on the past and nurture grievance".⁹ Whatever the next move in the Armenian campaign to regain control of Nagorno-Karabakh, the emotions aroused over the past five months will not be quickly stilled. More ominously, Gorbachev's peremptory, if not downright rude, treatment of Armenian speakers in the course of the debate in the Supreme Soviet Presidium can only serve to compound the inevitable feeling of betrayal among the many intellectuals who had pinned their hopes for Nagorno-Karabakh to the banner of perestroika.

8. TASS, July 20, 1988.

9. The Guardian, July 20, 1988.



RL 295/88

June 30, 1988

NAGORNO-KARABAKH--NO CLOSER TO A COMPROMISE

Elizabeth Fuller

Summary: Compromise proposals that would involve removing the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast from the Azerbaijan SSR without annexing it to Armenia were put forward at a news conference by Armenian delegates to the Nineteenth Party Conference. These proposals were swiftly rejected by the Azerbaijani delegates.

In the course of his keynote speech to the Nineteenth Party Conference on June 28, CPSU General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev specifically condemned what he termed "attempts to abuse glasnost' with the aim of recarving state borders." This statement was widely interpreted by Western observers as a clear indication that Moscow will not yield to demands for the annexation of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast to Armenia.¹ Speeches by the recently elected Party first secretaries of both Armenia and Azerbaijan on the second day of the conference, viewed in conjunction with statements made at a press conference by members of the Armenian delegation on June 30, seemed to suggest that various compromise solutions were under discussion that would entail removing the disputed area from Azerbaijan's jurisdiction without annexing it to Armenia. These compromise proposals were, however, rejected within hours by members of the Azerbaijani delegation.²

On the eve of the Party conference, the four-month-old dispute over the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast appeared to be deadlocked. On June 15, the Supreme Soviet of the Armenian SSR enacted a resolution that called on the USSR Supreme Soviet to approve the annexation of the area to Armenia in accordance with a resolution to that effect that had been adopted by the Nagorno-Karabakh Oblast Soviet on February 20. On June 17, or just two days later, the Azerbaijan SSR Supreme Soviet categorically re-

1. The Los Angeles Times and Financial Times, June 29, 1988.

2. Soviet Central Television, June 29, 1988; and Pravda, June 30, 1988.

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jected this demand as "unconstitutional" and as "interference in the internal affairs of Azerbaijan." Despite a plea for them to return to work made at a public rally on June 25 by the first secretary of the city Party committee of Stepanakert, the capital of Nagorno-Karabakh, at least part of the population were continuing their five-week-old general strike on the eve of the Party conference. The strike had been called on May 23 to protest a statement allegedly made in Baku two days previously by CPSU Central Committee Egor Ligachev. Speaking at the plenum of the Central Committee of the Azerbaijan Communist Party that elected the former Soviet Ambassador to Pakistan, Abdul-Rakhman Vezirov, as republican Party first secretary to replace Kyamran Bagirov, Ligachev is said to have asserted that the Nagorno-Karabakh question "was solved", and that the situation there was calm.³

In view of the existing tensions, a clash at the conference between delegates from the two republics involved might have been expected. In the event, the speeches on June 29 by both Azerbaijan Party first secretary Vezirov and Armenian Party first secretary Suren Arutyunyan were reasonably measured. Both men stressed the seriousness of the problems engendered by the four-month-old Nagorno-Karabakh campaign, which they attributed in the first instance to the dissatisfaction of the local population as a result of years of neglect of social, economic, and cultural development by the former Party leadership of Azerbaijan (i.e., Geidar Aliev and, from 1982, Kyamran Bagirov) and of Armenia (i.e. Karen Demirchyan) and of the oblast itself. As Vezirov sarcastically remarked:

I cannot understand how a situation could come about in which leaders of two neighboring fraternal republics who had for years seen the situation deteriorate not only did not bother to seek a way out together but even failed to acknowledge each other.

Arutyunyan took pains to make it clear that "it is blasphemous to maintain that restructuring, democratization, and glasnost' are the cause of these events" and that to attribute the unrest in Nagorno-Karabakh to "extremist groups that have got out of control" was "a very simplified version." Vezirov for his part conceded that the Karabakh campaign had been manipulated by "influential antirestructuring forces, corrupt clans, and black-market dealers who have joined forces with criminal elements." This latter statement is a clear modification of the Azerbaijani position as expounded until recently in the

3. AFP, Moscow, May 24, 1988; The Washington Post, May 30, 1988.

republic's press, which tended to depict the campaign as the work of Armenian nationalist extremists, egged on by Western centers of subversion.

Both speakers advocated increased attention to problems in the sphere of nationality relations, Vezirov going so far as to propose the creation of an all-Union ministry or state committee for ethnic affairs. In a statement that may have been intended to pave the way for and facilitate a possible future decision on the status of Nagorno-Karabakh, Arutyunyan suggested that the conference consider drawing up a new USSR constitution. The Armenian Supreme Soviet based its demand for the transfer of Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia on Article 70 of the existing constitution, which guarantees the right to self-determination of the peoples of the USSR. The Azerbaijanis, on the other hand, have consistently referred to Article 78, which stipulates that boundaries between Union republics can only be changed with the agreement of both republics involved. Thus there is, as USSR Foreign Ministry spokesman Gerasimov conceded, a "collision" between the two articles of the existing constitution.⁴

After the ruling of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet in March that dismissed as "intolerable" attempts to "resolve complicated national-territorial problems by bringing pressure to bear on the organs of state power," the Armenian poetess Silva Kaputikyan raised the possibility of making the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast a constituent part of the RSFSR, if it was considered impossible for whatever reasons to cede to demands for its annexation to Armenia.⁵ This possibility was debated anew by a number of Western journalists in the wake of the conflicting votes of the two republican Supreme Soviets.⁶ On the eve of the Party conference, however, USSR Deputy Minister of Justice Vyshinsky appeared to rule out such a compromise by reiterating that the final decision on the status of Nagorno-Karabakh lay with Azerbaijan, although that decision would have to be ratified by the USSR Supreme Soviet.⁷

Notwithstanding Vyshinsky's statement, on June 30 several Armenian delegates to the conference outlined three alternative compromise proposals. These were: (1) to make the region a part of Stavropol Krai; (2) to make it part of the RSFSR; and (3) to place the area under the direct control of the USSR

4. AP, Moscow, June 18, 1988.

5. See AS 6192.

6. The Sun (Baltimore), The Independent, Le Soir, June 16, 1988.

7. TASS, in English, Moscow, June 26, 1988.

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Supreme Soviet. The rector of Erevan State University, Sergei Ambartsumyan, who put forward the proposals at a news conference, argued that they were not in conflict with Gorbachev's assertion on June 28 concerning the redrawing of internal borders.⁸ In addition, the Czechoslovak news agency Ceteka quoted Armenian president Grant Voskanyan as disclosing that Armenian and Azerbaijani officials are in contact seeking a compromise solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh impasse.

The Armenian compromise proposals, were, however, rejected out of hand within hours by Azerbaijani delegates to the Party conference. The chairman of the Azerbaijan SSR Supreme Soviet, Suleiman Tatliev, stated that the attempt to decouple Nagorno-Karabakh from Azerbaijan was unjustified⁹ and further argued that the solution to the impasse lay in closer cooperation with the Armenian authorities to defuse ethnic tensions.¹⁰ The head of the Propaganda and Agitation Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan, Afrand Dashdamirov, for his part told reporters that the proposed Armenian compromises "would lead to the disintegration of Azerbaijan".¹¹

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8. Reuters, AFP, Moscow, June 30, 1988.
 9. AP, AFP, Moscow, June 30, 1988.
 10. AP, Moscow, June 30, 1988.
 11. Ibid.



THE ROLE OF THE RELIGIOUS REVIVAL AND NATIONALISM
IN TRANSCAUCASIA

William Reese

Although events in Azerbaijan have not yet run their course, it is interesting to note the new and burgeoning manifestations of Islam that have emerged there in the past two weeks. The Soviet press seems to have been slow to mention these religious manifestations. On November 27, however, a TASS report described events in Baku as "a scenario in which the authors' true aims are masked by slogans about 'infringement of democracy' and the need to 'defend restructuring' wrapped up in a nationalist, religious package."

On November 28, a correspondent for Izvestia, R. Lynev, interviewed one of the leaders of the demonstrations on Lenin Square in Baku, Nemat Panakhov, who is known to the people of Baku as Vatan Oglu. In the interview, Panakhov was asked, "What is your explanation for the appearance in the square of the green flag and the portrait of Khomeini that we saw?" "Yes," he replied, "that did happen. But those are minor details and we resolutely condemn them."

According to a report by Robert Evans, on November 29 a Soviet journalist reported that a crescent and star flag and green Islamic banners were flown in the center of Baku.¹ A photograph appearing in the weekly Moscow News shows protesters in Baku waving banners and what appears to be the Turkish national flag.² The newspaper reported what amounted to a resurgence of national sentiment with the protesters wanting "their history returned to them, the history hacked up in the textbooks of the Stalinist era." It was also reported in the newspaper that the younger demonstrators were complaining that they had been cut off from their past by the two reforms of the alphabet of their language introduced under Stalin. According to the demonstrators, the two changes meant that few Azerbaijanis could read books printed early in the century "or even the inscriptions on their grandfathers' gravestones."

1. Reuters, November 30, 1988.

2. Moscow News, No. 49, 1988.

By November 30, Soviet officials thought the situation serious enough to broadcast an appeal on the republican television by Sheykh-ul Islam Aliashakur Pashazade, the chairman of the spiritual administration of Muslims in the Transcaucasus. Izvestia reported that he had "interrupted a visit to India and returned to Baku."

There are numerous nationalist and religious pamphlets and leaflets being circulated in Azerbaijan, and the central press often criticizes them for being "anti-Soviet and nationalistic in content." There are also frequent attacks on the local press for "pouring oil on the flames."³ On December 1, Komsomol'skaya pravda cited an article in Pioner Azerbaidzhana of November 25 that appealed to nationalistic sentiments by invoking Turkic epic heroes:

We were shaken by one item in the newspaper Pioner Azerbaidzhana subtitled "The Resolution of the Sons of the Land of Fires" [The ancient meaning of Azar is "fire"]....Then comes a plainly inflammatory passage: "When the homeland is in distress and its soil encroached upon, the descendants of Babek, Koer-oglu, Dzhevanshir, Nabi, and Khadzhar are ready to fight and perform heroic deeds in the name of their people."

Another manifestation of Islam that much of the Western press seems to be overlooking, is the wearing of red headbands, which can be seen in pictures published in the press. In Iran, the red headband is a symbol of the holy martyr, and was worn by the young soldiers going off to fight in the Iran-Iraq war. In its issue of December 1, Pravda described them as "red ribbons" --"a symbol of union," its correspondents were told.

The Iranian News Agency (IRNA) reported on December 1 that "for the first time in living memory the 'Azan,' or Islamic call to daily prayer, was heard to boom from Communist Russia. Last Tuesday [November 29], Baku television broadcast the 'Azan' and screened a film on congregational prayers in one of the mosques in Soviet Astarra." According to IRNA, the broadcast, monitored in Rasht, was in Azeri.

The Turkish Radio and Television Network (TRT) has reported that the Soviet Radio Peace and Progress has begun, in its Azeri broadcasts to Iran, to preface its programs with a reading from the Koran.

3. TASS, December 1, 1988.

These expressions of Islamic faith, coupled with the display of portraits of Khomeini, came as no surprise to many analysts, who had been speculating about what effect the Iranian Islamic revolution might have on the Muslims in Azerbaijan. The peoples of the two countries share the Shi'a creed, Soviet Azerbaijan being 70-75 percent Shi'a and only 25-30 percent Sunni. Shi'a Islam is particularly dominant in southwestern Azerbaijan in the Nakhichevan ASSR, and along the Iranian border in towns such as Astara, Lenkoran, and Zangelan. Heavy concentrations of Shi'a believers are also found in Baku, Kirovabad, Geokchai, and elsewhere. Sunni Islam dominates the northern part of the republic.⁴

In his book The Islamic Threat to the Soviet Union, Alexandre Bennigsen predicted that "the influence on Soviet Islam of the events in Iran may be deeper and, in the long run, more dangerous than the guerrilla war in Afghanistan." Among the aspects of the Iranian revolution he thought might appeal to the Soviet Azeris is "the anti-imperialist aspect," since it is easy to draw a parallel between "the imperialism of the Americans in Iran" and "the imperialism of the Russians in the Caucasus." There is also "the populist character of Khomeinism," with its promise "to replace the old corrupt bureaucracy and to bring to power a new category of younger leaders of more popular origin."⁵

Apart from the Islamic aspect, there is another major factor playing a role in the events in Azerbaijan and Armenia: Mikhail Gorbachev's policy of perestroika. To what extent the Iranian revolution and perestroika are influencing religious and nationalistic feeling in the Caucasus remains to be fully documented.

4. A. Bennigsen and S. Enders Wimbush, Muslims of the Soviet Empire. A Guide., London, 1985, p. 139.

5. A. Bennigsen and M. Broxup, The Islamic Threat to the Soviet State, London, 1983, pp. 115-17.



December 9, 1988

RL 558/88

FORMATION OF POPULAR FRONT IN AZERBAIJAN

Mirza Michaeli

On November 25, 1988, the Azerbaijani-language literary weekly Edebiyyat ve indjesenat published an article in which it was stated that a group of Azerbaijani intellectuals had decided to set up a national popular front in the republic. The author of the article, Babek Adalatli, indicated that the aim of the National Popular Front was to facilitate perestroika in Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan has hitherto not been in the mainstream of the popular front movement, which originated in the Baltic republics. Since the start of Mikhail Gorbachev's campaign for perestroika and glasnost, Azerbaijani intellectuals have formed a number of societies designed to promote the national language, traditions, and cultural and ecological interests in the republic. Such bodies as the Gaygy (Care) Society and the informal youth group Varlyg (Existence) have, however, had fairly limited objectives.

The first reference to a popular front in Azerbaijan came in a broadcast of Radio Baku on November 23, 1988. In its report on events connected with Nagorno-Karabakh in its morning newscast, the radio stated that "some young people are telephoning industrial and other organizations in the name of a 'nonexistent' National Popular Front. They are forcing people to stop work and to take part in meetings and demonstrations."

Adalatli's article shows that the movement did indeed exist and indicates that the decision to set up a national popular front had been provoked by events surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh--in particular, by the mass meetings and demonstrations in Azerbaijan. Adalatli raises a number of ecological issues and also the question of relations between Soviet and Iranian Azerbaijan. In his view, it is high time to improve economic and cultural ties with Southern Azerbaijan. He proposes that the border be opened "on certain days of the week" so that people with relatives on the other side of the border may visit them. It was, Adalatli adds, questions such as these, as well as the Karabakh problem, that impelled him and his colleagues to set up a national popular front in Azerbaijan:

I and my sympathizers see hope in pere-stroika. In order to assist perestroika, we have decided to create a popular front. Our draft program also proves that aim.

According to Adalatli, the draft program of the Azerbaijani National Popular Front calls for "the protection of social justice and human rights," and its goal is "the observance of international norms in this field." It states:

We support freedom of religion and the preservation of the native language, culture, and traditions of every nationality through interethnic relations.

The full text of the draft program will, Adalatli says, be published shortly.

In his article, Adalatli also attacks the central Soviet media for what he terms their biased reporting of events in Azerbaijan and takes particular exception to the performance of one of their most prominent representatives:

The chief editor of the newspaper Izvestia was elected a deputy to the USSR Supreme Soviet from the Tauz Raion of Azerbaijan. Yet now the newspaper speaks out against the just demands of the Azerbaijani people. This outrages us. Is it not possible to recall a deputy like him?

The decision to create a popular front in Azerbaijan is an important development at a time when mass demonstrations and protests are taking place in connection with the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute. The appearance of Adalatli's article in an official Azerbaijani newspaper seems to indicate that the republican leadership does not object to the creation of the National Popular Front or to its activities. Moreover, that the article was printed in Edebiyyat ve indjesenat, the organ of Azerbaijani writers, suggests that the idea of creating a popular front has gained the support of many Azerbaijani intellectuals.



NAGORNO-KARABAKH: AN ULSTER IN THE CAUCASUS?

Elizabeth Fuller

The wave of ethnic unrest that has swept across the southern republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan during the past three weeks represents a new phase in the ten-month dispute over the territorial affiliation of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast. As inter-ethnic clashes occurred spontaneously in a number of cities in both republics, the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh itself seems to have retreated into the background, while ethnic and religious prejudices that had lain more or less dormant for decades erupted into violence and mutual retribution. The situation was then aggravated by rumors, by a new flood of refugees in both directions, and by tendentious and inflammatory reporting in the media of the two republics.

A number of circumstances combined to fuel the tensions that gave rise to the latest violence. In Armenia, there appears to have been a widespread belief that Moscow was searching for ways to remove Nagorno-Karabakh from Azerbaijani jurisdiction and subordinate it, at least temporarily, to the RSFSR.¹ One event that may have contributed to this belief was an interview given by the Nagorno-Karabakh Oblast Party Committee First Secretary, Genrikh Pogosyan, to the Armenian Party and government paper Kommunist.² Pogosyan stated that the "complications" that had arisen out of the campaign for Nagorno-Karabakh's incorporation in the Armenian SSR had "constrained us to pose the question from a somewhat different angle," i.e., to demand merely that the area be detached from Azerbaijan--a compromise that, according to Pogosyan, would "eliminate most of the problems on the agenda." Pogosyan further affirmed that he had just returned from Moscow, where "the legal and just demand of the majority of the population of the oblast is viewed with understanding, and a persistent search is going on to find a political solution to this problem."

The case for a compromise solution of the Karabakh question is sensitively and persuasively argued in an article in the issue

1. Le Monde, November 22 and 23, 1988.

2. Kommunist (Armenia), November 4, 1988.

of the journal Vek XX i mir for October, 1988, that has been reprinted in the Armenian republican press. V. Sheynis, the author of the article, expresses the view that

the right of a nation to self-determination is superior and, in principle, more significant than state sovereignty, and this should be reflected in the revamped Constitution.... We are told that what is needed today is not emotions, not an arbitrary recarving of frontiers, but an appeal to reason. But reason cannot fail to take emotions into consideration, and in the Karabakh dispute the insulted and alarmed national feeling of a nation with a difficult historical fate has collided with territorial ambitions and falsely understood concepts of prestige. I profoundly believe that the Azerbaijani people is capable of realizing how unequal these values are and that it is better to have a friend next door to your house rather than to detain another people within it by force.

In mid-November, at the time of the nationwide discussion of the draft law on the new USSR Constitution, the Presidium of the Armenian Supreme Soviet agreed to transmit to the USSR Supreme Soviet a request by the Nagorno-Karabakh Oblast Soviet that the draft be changed "in order to protect the legal status of Union and autonomous formations and to protect their constitutional rights and guarantees."³ (In the context of the Nagorno-Karabakh deadlock, such a formulation is virtually tantamount to a demand for a resolution of the existing contradiction between two articles of the USSR Constitution--the one guaranteeing the right of self-determination and the other specifying that boundaries of Union republics may be revised only with the consent of both the republics concerned.)

On November 18, a one-day strike was staged in Erevan to lend emphasis to Armenian demands for the annexation of Nagorno-Karabakh.⁴ Four days later, on November 22, the Armenian Supreme Soviet met. On the agenda were four items of business, including discussion of the draft law on the constitution and a proposal that the Soviet government make April 24 a day of remembrance for the genocide of 1915. The work of the session was prematurely adjourned on news of the deteriorating situation in Azerbaijan,

3. Kommunist (Armenia), November 13, 1988.

4. AFP, DPA, November 18, 1988.

but not before Arkadii Vol'sky, Moscow's emissary to Nagorno-Karabakh, is said to have told delegates that the NKAO was to be made part of the RSFSR.⁵

A further factor that may have engendered bitterness on the Armenian side was the progress of the trial in Moscow of three young Azerbaijanis accused of participating in the anti-Armenian pogrom in Sumgait in February. The trial was, understandably, reported in detail in the Armenian press. (The literary weekly Gragan tert devoted the entire back pages of six consecutive issues to it.) Despite the imposition of the death sentence on one of the accused on November 18, there appears to have been a mood of betrayal and disappointment among many Armenians that only three of several hundred participants were in the dock and that the charges against them were formulated only as "deliberate murder from hooliganistic motives in conjunction with mass disorders," rather than "genocide" (the RSFSR Criminal Code contains no article on genocide, although the USSR has ratified the United Nations Convention on Genocide), or even "violation of national or racial equality."⁶

In Azerbaijan, mass demonstrations began on November 17 in Baku in protest against the construction in woodland near Shusha, the second largest town in the NKAO, of what was alleged to be a cooperative workshop and rest home for workers of the Kanaker Aluminum Plant in Armenia. The project was supposedly part of the development package announced for the NKAO in the spring when the demand for the area's attachment to Armenia was originally rejected. In fact, as Radio Moscow subsequently disclosed, only the foundations for two small cottages had been excavated. The area in question is, however, not only a nature reserve but also the site of a historic battle against the Iranians in the eighteenth century, and is therefore considered "sacred" by Azerbaijanis. Initial Azerbaijani press coverage of the demonstrations, while declaring that "Topkhana was the final drop that made the cup of patience overflow," did concede, however, that "Topkhana was only a pretext"--i.e., that passions were already running so high as a result of the unceasing Armenian campaign for the annexation of Nagorno-Karabakh that the slightest incident was likely to provoke a conflagration.⁷

In the event, irate naturalists demonstrating for the rights of the endangered creatures that inhabit the woods of Topkhana can have accounted for only very few of the hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijanis who occupied Lenin Square in Baku for more than

5. Sueddeutsche Zeitung, November 24, 1988; Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, November 26, 1988.

6. Kommunist (Armenia), November 15, 1988.

7. Bakinsky rabochii, November 23, 1988.

two weeks--particularly since Radio Baku reported on November 23 that all construction at Topkhana had been halted. The majority of them were clearly inspired by anti-Armenian or anti-Russian sentiments and, to judge from reports of sightings of Turkish and green Islamic flags and portraits of the Ayatollah Khomeini,⁸ by religious feelings.

The death sentence handed down in Moscow on the young Azerbaijani Akhmedov for his role in the Sumgait pogrom also evidently played its part; some demonstrators are cited as demanding "freedom for the heroes of Sumgait."⁹ (The apparent absence of any sense either of shame or even corporate responsibility for what had happened in Sumgait was remarked upon in October by the Azerbaijani philologist Gyul'rukh Alibekova. "We must find the courage to embark upon a sober evaluation and analysis of everything that happened during those tragic two days.")¹⁰ Azerbaijani President Suleiman Tatliev met with the Baku demonstrators during the first few days of protests,¹¹ but neither this meeting nor subsequent television appeals for calm and restraint by the republican Party first secretary, Abdul-Rakhman Vezirov, had the desired effect. A further measure of the depth of Azerbaijani feelings of alienation from the Communist authorities is the emergence of an acknowledged "popular leader" of the demonstrators in the person of the twenty-six-year-old lathe operator Nemat Panakhov, nicknamed "Son of the People."¹²

It was on November 22, five days after the beginning of the Baku demonstrations, that the first violent incidents took place. In Kirovabad, three Soviet soldiers were killed and 126 people, mainly Azerbaijanis, injured when troops struggled to protect Armenians from an Azerbaijani mob. In Nakhichevan, Azerbaijanis attacked public and administrative buildings.¹³ In all clashes involving fatalities in both Armenia and Azerbaijan it was Azerbaijanis who were said to be the aggressors.¹⁴

8. See William Reese: RL 535/88, "The Role of the Religious Revival and Nationalism in Transcaucasia," December 5, 1988.

9. Knight-Ridder Newspapers, The Financial Times, and Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, November 24, 1988.

10. Bakinsky rabochii, October 9, 1988.

11. Bakinsky rabochii, November 23, 1988.

12. Izvestia, November 28, 1988; Stuttgarter Zeitung, November 29, 1988.

13. The Los Angeles Times, November 24, 1988.

14. AP, AFP, UPI, November 23, 1988; AP, November 26, 1988; Reuters, AP, November 30, 1988.

The situation was exacerbated initially by an almost total absence of glasnost' on the part of the media in both republics and of the central press. This led to the emergence of such unfounded rumors as one circulating in Baku that Nagorno-Karabakh was to be handed over to the RSFSR at the session of the USSR Supreme Soviet on November 29.¹⁵ When the local media did begin to comment on events, objectivity frequently lost out to emotion. An editor of the official Azerbaijani news agency Azerinform was quoted by AP as speculating "I even wonder if the [Topkhana] construction wasn't begun with the aim of inciting violence." A second Azerbaijani commentary claimed that "the mass media of Armenia are methodically, day by day, pouring oil on the fire and turning it into the rampant flame of extremism."¹⁶ The Armenian television retaliated with the observation that "these meetings have shown the true nature, the psychology of the Azerbaijanis. There is nothing in their souls besides murder and bestiality."¹⁷

Meanwhile, for more than three weeks the Soviet media have maintained total silence on the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh itself, where another strike was launched in early November to back renewed demands for the annexation of the oblast to Armenia. At the same time, a large question mark hangs over the person of Oblast Party First Secretary Genrikh Pogosyan, whose removal was called for by the Baku demonstrators on the grounds that he was "inciting ethnic strife."¹⁸ (On December 5, AFP reported that Pogosyan had indeed been dismissed; the following day, Reuters made the point that he had abruptly canceled a scheduled press conference during the USSR Supreme Soviet session.)

On December 1, Mikhail Gorbachev met with the Party first secretaries of Armenia and Azerbaijan in Moscow to discuss the latest round of Transcaucasian unrest. (Significantly, Pogosyan was not listed as being among those present.) The TASS summary of the proceedings and of Gorbachev's speech differs little from earlier analyses of the situation. The former leaderships of the two republics are blamed for shortcomings in the fields of nationality relations and economic development, thus giving rise to a situation that is now being exploited by corrupt and anti-perestroika forces; the present leaders in Armenia and Azerbaijan are

15. Sueddeutsche Zeitung, November 28, 1988.

16. Kommunist, November 25, 1988; Bakinsky rabochii, November 26, 1988.

17. As cited by Arkadii Vol'sky to the USSR Supreme Soviet on December 1 in the course of his condemnation of the overreaction of the media in both republics.

18. AFP, November 21, 1988; The Independent, November 23, 1988.

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accused of not even attempting to reach a compromise or cooperate and of substituting rhetoric for concrete measures to defuse tensions. Rather than spell out new measures to cope with a situation that Western correspondents have described as "open civil war," the communique proposes only fresh purges of ineffective cadres, appeals to reason (which have failed dismally in the past), financial help for the up to 200,000 refugees who have fled the current turmoil, and the creation of yet another commission charged with "finding, in the shortest possible time, an optimal and truly internationalist solution to the problems without changing the NKAO's territorial attachment to the Azerbaijan SSR."

No mention is made in the TASS communique of the original resolution on the economic and social development of Nagorno-Karabakh, of which Sheynis observed in his article:

Although the conflict situation was created to a considerable degree by the defects of past economic and social policy, there can be no counting on the published decisions on the socioeconomic development of the NKAO to contain all the necessary preconditions for rectifying it. The program itself lacks political guarantees for its implementation. The search for these guarantees is the nucleus of the problem. It would be an error to believe that aggravated inter-ethnic collisions can be resolved by additional resources.

In one key respect, however, the wording of the TASS communique can be construed as a concession to the Armenians: it states that "the redrawing of borders in the present conditions is impermissible." Moscow has thus, wittingly or unwittingly, conveyed a signal to the warring factions that the Karabakh question is not closed.

Even without such a loophole, the earthquake that devastated northwestern Armenia on December 7, far from overshadowing the Karabakh conflict, has served to polarize attitudes even further. There is widespread Armenian bitterness about the substandard apartment blocks that became mass graves and the almost total lack of coordination of what painfully inadequate rescue services were available.¹⁹ In Azerbaijan, conversely, news of the earthquake is said to have "engendered a holiday atmosphere,"²⁰ with

19. The New York Times, Knight-Ridder Newspapers, December 12, 1988.

20. The Baltimore Sun, December 10, 1988.

bands of young men marching through the streets of Baku celebrating "Allah's punishment of the Armenians."²¹ While the earthquake may at best signify a temporary cessation of hostilities, it would seem unrealistic to regard it as marking the final chapter in the saga of what threatens to become "an Ulster in the Caucasus."

21. AFP, December 9, 1988.