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Understanding Armenian Narratives

An Azerbaijani Perspective on A Shared Post-conflict Future

Rovshan Ibrahimov and Murad Muradov

On September 27th, 2020, a fierce new war between Azerbaijan and Armenia erupted over the region of Nagorno-Karabakh and seven adjacent districts that constitute the internationally recognized territory of Azerbaijan but had long been under Armenian occupation. A period of 44 days of uncompromised fighting ended with the Russian-negotiated tripartite ceasefire statement signed on November 10th, 2020, by which time Azerbaijan had already restored its sovereignty over the Fizuli, Jabrayil, Zangilan, and Qubadly districts

as well as the southern part of the former Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO) that had existed during the Soviet period, including its symbolic and strategic heartland—the city of Shusha.

The tripartite agreement stipulated the complete withdrawal of Armenian forces from the remaining three occupied districts (Kalbajar, Lachin, and Aghdam), while the remaining part of the former NKAO, together with the narrow corridor around Lachin that connects the former NKAO to Armenia, were to constitute a

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special zone guarded by a 1,960-strong Russian peacekeeping force for a period of at least five years. Both Azerbaijani and Armenian refugees and IDPs are to be returned to the conflict zone under the supervision of the UNHCR, and all transport communications between the countries are supposed to be re-opened.

The armistice agreement is the first step, not the end of the journey: the deep conflict around Nagorno-Karabakh still remains unresolved. The Second Karabakh War may have come to an end, but a lasting, sustainable peace still remains to be secured.

This essay aims to understand Armenian claims over Nagorno-Karabakh in light of both history and international law. It also aims to consider possible trajectories of the negotiation process to come and lays out proposals for building an alternative, non-conflict vision for the future of both peoples and countries. Engagement is hard, objectivity harder, introspection harder still. But both sides

need to start doing more of each for lasting peace to take hold. This essay, which is far from perfect, represents our initial thoughts and reflections on this critically important subject for both nations.

Politics and History

The First Karabakh War was fought in the shadow of the break-up of the Soviet Union. It started from an appeal by activists of the “Karabakh committee”—a proto-democratic nationalistic organization that had just emerged—to the Soviet leadership to conduct “reunification” of the NKAO—an autonomous region of Soviet Azerbaijan predominantly populated by ethnic Armenians—with Armenia.

From the very beginning, the historic aspect played a crucial role in the narrative the Armenian side was carefully building and using to justify its claims over territories belonging de jure to Azerbaijan. This narrative rested on the three major arguments: the ancient history and ethnography

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of Nagorno-Karabakh; the trauma of the 1915 Armenian “genocide” that took place on the territory of the Ottoman Empire; and the allegedly unfair inclusion of the region into the borders of the Azerbaijan SSR by the Soviet government.

The first argument stipulates that Karabakh—or “Artsakh,” as the Armenian side would start to call it later (ironically, this very name is most probably not of Armenian origin but is the aberration of the initial name “Orkhistena”)—is the historic cradle of the Armenian nation and the only place in which Armenian statehood flourished virtually uninterrupted. These claims are predominantly based on the strong concentration of medieval Christian monuments in Nagorno-Karabakh, as well as on several written sources (many of which turn out to be rather dubious after being closely scrutinized).

This argument has been instrumentalized by Armenians in order to claim “moral rights” over this land. For most of its ancient history, however, Karabakh was populated by various tribes that trace their origins back to the

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Caucasian Albanian people that inhabited a continuous stretch of territory that included other parts of northern Azerbaijan. The peculiar and somewhat isolated development of Karabakh from the eighth century onwards is related to the fact that its mountainous parts remained mostly Christian for many centuries afterwards, while the surrounding regions underwent deep Islamization.

However—and this is a crucial moment for dispelling the Armenian narrative—the Christians of Karabakh were predominantly of Caucasian Albanian origin. As a matter of historical record, the Caucasian Albanian (or Aghvank) Church preserved its ecclesiastical distinctiveness from the Echmiadzin Catholicosate until 1836—that is to say, decades into imperial Russian rule over the Caucasus; for some time, the two churches even had separate seats within the territory of the Gandzasar monastery—the best evidence that they had been clearly distinct from each other. However, growing theological similarity as well as the gradual displacement of the original Caucasian Albanian script by the more widely used

Armenian one, led to a creeping Armenisation of the Christian population of Nagorno-Karabakh, which was finalized after Russia consolidated its conquest of the region. Afterwards, Caucasian Albanian heritage was mostly erased and forgotten, which paved the way for the general acceptance of the Armenian narrative as regards local history.

However, since claims based on ancient history are hardly enough to justify ethnic separatism in the twenty-first century, the proponents of Armenian irredentist claims (it has a special term, *miatzum*, in the Armenian language) also eagerly pointed to the traumatic events of the twentieth century that, as they believe, constitute irrefutable evidence about the primordial and intractable character of the Armenian-Turkish/Azerbaijani conflict.

This narrative is based, first, on the 1915 events in the Ottoman Empire that are recognized as the “genocide” of Armenians by the parliaments of several dozen countries around the world. It must be noted that the “genocide” issue is viewed by official Yerevan largely through a political, not historical lens—one reason why Armenia has consistently referred to Turkey’s offer to establish a

joint fact-finding commission of historians as unacceptable. The “genocide” issue is a “sacred cow” of contemporary Armenian statehood, which has defined its strategy and political orientation since its onset. The cultivated memory of the “genocide” has also instilled a semi-official Turkophobia in Armenia, which is most vividly expressed in Armenia’s unconcealed hostility to Azerbaijan and Azerbaijanis, who are often referred to derogatively as “Turks.”

Thus, prior to and especially during the Second Karabakh War, Armenian state propagandists constantly referred not only to 1915 but also engaged in baseless and unfounded speculation about the imminent launch of an ethnic cleansing campaign against Armenians living in Azerbaijan—proper as well as in Nagorno-Karabakh. The point, of course, was to claim that the independence of “Artsakh” represented the sine qua non for the security of Armenians.

At the same time, in order to delegitimize the Soviet period in the history of Nagorno-Karabakh, the Armenian side has claimed that Moscow—through a 1920 decision of the Caucasian Bureau of the Communist Party—*handed over* this region to Azerbaijan. However, the

Russian original of the text unequivocally states, “Nagorno-Karabakh shall be *retained* within the borders of the Azerbaijan SSR,” which reinforced the unbreakable political but also socio-economic ties between this region and the rest of Azerbaijan.

Based on this narrative, the irredentism advocates claim that Karabakh has never been part of an officially recognized independent state named Azerbaijan and hence had no obligation to respect the latter’s territorial integrity. This view, while disguised in the parlance of international law, is in fact purely political—ideological, really—and simply tries to paint over a “moral right” claim that has no credence in the liberal international order.

This historical-political narrative in favor of Armenian irredentism has had recourse to randomly-selected and sometimes false or misrepresented chunks of history to establish an artificial security dilemma that precludes the peaceful existence of an Armenian community within Azerbaijan (the fact that more than 30,000 ethnic Armenians live in Azerbaijan—or, for that matter, more than 100,000 ethnic Armenians still live in Turkey—is conveniently ignored). With very few exceptions,

Armenian politicians have consistently insisted that the security of Armenians is predicated on the grant of self-determination—understood in its extreme form as independence—for the “people of Karabakh,” defined exclusively as ethnic Armenians from Karabakh, thus excluding the Azerbaijani population from the narrative, which is consistent with the awful fact that they were ethnically cleansed down to zero in the First Karabakh War by Armenian forces.

The issue of the cultural ownership and heritage of Nagorno-Karabakh and the seven surrounding territories is today subject to widespread debate—but not widespread appreciation of the historical facts. It cannot be disputed that both Azerbaijani and Armenian, Christian and Muslim, history and culture have run deep across this region for a millennia and a half. Naturally, the farther back we delve into history, the more likely that it becomes subject to mythmaking.

Unfortunately, unbiased scholarship and thinking have fallen prey to the politicians’ desire to heavily load the discourse of Armenian nationalism with a narrative of a historic injustice and conspiracy, helping to radicalize and mobilize Armenians against numerous “enemies.”

Legality

The Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict has been historically so laden with bitter inter-ethnic and personal hostilities that its international law aspect has been inevitably pushed to the back burner. Since it was the Armenian side that, beginning in 1988, committed an actual aggression against the legally recognized status quo, this omission served to create the false impression of “equating” both sides—the aggressor and the victim—which suited Yerevan very well.

The new rules of interstate behavior that were elaborated during, and entered into force after, World War II prohibited the “use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state”—to quote from Article 2 of the UN Charter—and excluded war-making as a legitimate instrument of international politics. At the same time, in order to prevent possible future aggression against any member state, the “inherent right of individual or collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations” was clearly spelled out in Article 51.

On this basis, various UN organs, including the General Assembly and the Trusteeship Council, made it clear that only former colonies

have the right to achieve independent statehood through a process of what the UN Charter called “self-determination.” To avoid any possible ambiguity, the UN even issued a list of territories that were supposed to enjoy this right, many of whom have since become independent states. Nagorno-Karabakh was not on that list, or any similar one. Thus, from the point of view of this cornerstone document of international law—namely the UN Charter—Nagorno-Karabakh does not have the right to independence, since it was not listed by the UN as ever having been a colony.

Moreover, international law does not provide for any other legal option for the emergence of new states. In present times, the emergence of new states can be possible only if such a possibility is provided by the state itself (within the framework of domestic law), as has been the case of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia with respect to their constituent republics, or on the basis of a state’s consent to self-disintegration, as was the case with Czechoslovakia and Sudan (with respect to South Sudan but not, notably, Darfur).

As this essay concerns itself with the topic of the possible legality of the self-determination of the former NKAO, the legal framework of the Soviet Union must be

considered. According to Article 72 of the USSR Constitution, the right to self-determination was given to the 15 Union Republics, including Azerbaijan SSR and Armenia SSR. Using this right, Azerbaijan and Armenia ultimately became independent and sovereign subjects of international law. They were recognized as independent states by the international community and became UN member states. It is a simple matter of legal fact that Nagorno-Karabakh, which was nothing more than an autonomous region (*oblast*) within Azerbaijan, did not enjoy such a right under the USSR Constitution.

The Armenian position runs contrary to this. According to this narrative, the acquisition of independence by Nagorno-Karabakh was in fact achieved in accordance with the Law on Procedure for Resolving Questions Connected with a Union Republic's Secession from the USSR, which was adopted by the Supreme Soviet on April 3rd, 1990. On the basis of this Law, NKAO's ethnic Armenian authorities announced that a referendum on independence would be held on December 10th, 1991.

However, the holding of such a referendum at the *oblast* level was not envisaged either in the USSR Constitution or the Constitution

of SSR Azerbaijan. Thus, the April 1990 Law was unconstitutional, and on more than one ground. For instance, Article 3 of the Law grants the right of autonomous entities within Union Republics to hold a referendum separately on "remaining [...] within the USSR or within the seceding Union Republic, and also to raise the question of their own state-legal status." This directly contradicts Article 78 of the USSR Constitution, which states that the "territory of a Union Republic may not be altered without its consent" and thus made Article 3 of the aforementioned Law unconstitutional. If an appeal had been made to the Soviet Constitutional Court (Committee for Constitutional Supervision of the USSR), then it would have determined the unconstitutionality of this Law. But no such appeal was made, the Armenians point out.

Fine. But two weeks before the referendum in NKAO was to be held, Azerbaijan's Supreme Council passed a law abolishing the NKAO as an administrative-territorial unit. This legislative act was made in accordance with Article 79 of the USSR Constitution, which states that a Union Republic "shall determine its divisions into territories, regions, areas, and districts, and decide other matter relating to its administrative and territorial

structure" (there are corresponding articles in the Constitution of the Azerbaijan SSR, as well). Thus, even if one (a dubious proposition, at best) interprets the April 1990 Law to be compatible with the USSR Constitution, no referendum could have been legally held on the territory of NKAO on December 10th, 1991, for the simple reason that NKAO had ceased to exist legally a fortnight prior to that date.

After Azerbaijan and Armenia both regained their independence, each was recognized by the international community within the borders in which the countries existed as part of the Soviet Union on the basis of the international law principle of *uti possidetis juris*, which provides that emerging sovereign states should retain the borders that their preceding dependent area had before their independence. That is why— notwithstanding the former NKAO's unilateral declaration of independence and the result of its illegal referendum— Nagorno-Karabakh has not been recognized by a single UN member-state, including its sponsor and defender Armenia.

The armistice agreement is neither a peace treaty nor a blueprint for reconciliation. It leaves open the major issue of peacebuilding and normalization between the two rival states.

There is, therefore, only one legal route by which Nagorno-Karabakh could become an independent state, and that is by securing the consent of Azerbaijan. Given the bloody history of Armenian occupation over the past thirty years, it is hard to imagine a situation in which that consent could be forthcoming.

Post-conflict Trajectories

The November 10th Russia-brokered trilateral armistice agreement managed to effectively put a stop to the armed hostilities. While Azerbaijanis celebrated their military and diplomatic triumph, the mood in Armenia was understandably dour. Armenians were initially shocked by what they felt was a national humiliation, but seem to be gradually coming to terms with the new situation.

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What could be the further development of events in the Karabakh conflict? Various hypotheticals rise to the mind.

One option for maintaining a version of stability would be the continuation of the “renouncing relations with the other” policy, which has been the prevailing reality since the 1994 ceasefire. Given both societies’ deep trauma and mutual mistrust—and the fact they see each other almost exclusively as sworn enemies—this solution does appear attractive at first glance. It would enable both Yerevan and Baku to remain within their comfort zones whilst abstaining from hard peace-building work.

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However, objective circumstances make this scenario hardly plausible. Should relations remain in deep freeze, Azerbaijan and Armenia would each feel compelled to fortify their thousand kilometer long border, which mostly runs across high, mountainous, and difficult terrain.

In some places, one side or the other could even opt to build a wall like the one the Trump

Administration began constructing along its border with Mexico or Israel did with its security barrier. Enormous costs aside, total isolation would be impossible anyway because of the Lachin corridor issue. This strip of Azerbaijani land, located in the narrowest place between Armenia and the former NKAO territory, has always been a key issue in all the peace-resolution plans and today is within the Russian peacekeeping zone. The

corridor’s long-term status will inevitably be one of the major topics in future talks. So, the option of burning all the bridges is hardly viable. Similar arguments could be made with respect to the other one envisioned to link Nakhichevan

and the rest of Azerbaijan across Armenian territory along the Aras river, just north of Iran.

So what is the alternative? Since signing the November 10th agreement, Azerbaijan’s President Ilham Aliyev has repeatedly stressed in interviews and public statements that sustainable peace with Armenia is both a desirable outcome and the best security

guarantee for Azerbaijan in future. He has also underscored the point that Azerbaijan concentrated its fighting on the battlefield, neither intentionally striking Armenian civilian targets nor retaliating against population centers in the wake of repeated shelling by Armenian forces of Azerbaijani cities like Ganja and Barda, located far from the combat theater of operations. Aliyev also stressed that ethnic-Armenian citizens of Azerbaijan should be able to peacefully to live in their places of residence, like all other citizens of the country.

The contrast between the actual conduct of the Azerbaijani military and the public messaging of the country’s leadership, on the one hand, and the baseless and often quite feverish predictions by some international media outlets and expert analysts of the “inevitability of ethnic cleansing” of Karabakh Armenians, on the other hand, is quite striking.

The contrast between the actual conduct of the Azerbaijani military and the public messaging of the country’s leadership, on the one hand, and the baseless and often quite feverish predictions by some international media outlets and expert analysts of the “inevitability of ethnic cleansing” of Karabakh Armenians, on the other hand, is quite striking. Baku consistently demonstrated strategic

restraint and made a conscious choice to abstain from pursuing military operations beyond those that involved the liberation of the symbolic city of Shusha. Unlike the hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijanis who remained refugees or IDPs as a result of the First Karabakh War for nearly 30 years, the Armenians from Karabakh who left their homes during the Second Karabakh War are already returning without impediment. All this provides hope that a full-fledged peace process will be possible in the foreseeable future.

Of course, mutual material interest is most often the best element that helps to surpass deep enmities and guarantees the rejection of violence. The November 10th agreement thus contains an important clause about the unblocking of all the regional communications, including the aforementioned overland corridor between mainland Azerbaijan and Nakhichevan through the territory of Armenia.

This is without doubt a very significant declaration of intent that will need to be followed up with a detailed roadmap on restoring cooperation. For example, Armenia could finally become a part of lucrative regional energy and transport projects, or purchase natural gas from an alternative source at more affordable prices. This economic integration argument was extensively made by President Heydar Aliyev during his negotiations with Yerevan in the 1990s when the Baku-Tbilisi-Jeyhan pipeline project was still under discussion, but back then Armenian society was too overwhelmed with its military victory in the First Karabakh War to agree on compromises.

It seems that the Armenian leadership has begun to understand the opportunities opening up by the end of the Second Karabakh War. It is encouraging that a recent speech by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan emphasized that the opening of communication will activate the route from Armenia to Iran via Nakhichevan. Equally encouraging is the fact that the newly-appointed Minister of Economy, Vahan Kerobyan, has begun to hint at an opportunity to export Armenian goods to Azerbaijan and Turkey in the (near) future.

The resolution of the conflict can thus become the basis for opening two critical borders of Armenia: the one with Azerbaijan and the one with Turkey (Ankara closed borders with Armenia in April 1993, after the occupation of Kalbajar, falling just short of an agreement in 2009).

In order to develop peaceful neighborly relations, it will be necessary to conclude a long-term agreement. The agenda forming the basis of such an agreement will need to be determined, as the previous one—centered on the Madrid Principles established by the Co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group—has been largely overtaken by events and is thus no longer relevant.

In other words, the outcome of the Second Karabakh War is such that the Madrid Principles have either already been implemented—whether through gains on the battlefield or by the terms of the trilateral agreement—or are no longer applicable. Thus, a new basis for negotiations will need to be conceived and a new roadmap to peace will need to be established. This time, it will be impossible for Armenia to continue challenging the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan.

Not only has the Azerbaijani side repeatedly continued to stress the inadmissibility of discussing

the independence of the former NKAO in any negotiating context, but so has the guarantor of the November 10th agreement, Russian president Vladimir Putin: “Karabakh is the internationally recognized territory of Azerbaijan,” he stated in an interview in the wake of the armistice. Moreover, it would be absurd now for Armenia to continue insisting on old solutions, since it was the Armenian foreign minister who, in April 2020, had refuted Russia’s Sergey Lavrov by confessing that there was no real conflict-resolution plan on the table back then; or, to go back a little further, given that Pashinyan had explicitly rejected the “land for peace” formula by publicly proclaiming that “Karabakh is Armenia. Period.”

However, should the question of status for Karabakh again arise in the negotiations to come, Armenia will need to develop new proposals that may be attractive to Azerbaijan. Therefore, if Yerevan insists on championing enhanced political autonomy for the ethnic Armenian citizens of Azerbaijan, what can Armenia offer in return?

A substantive proposal could include, for example, the offer of a symmetric status for Azerbaijani refugees from the Zangezur region

of Armenia, which is administratively divided into two sparsely-inhabited provinces (Syunik and Vayots Dzor) that together separate mainland Azerbaijan and Nakhichevan. This would accord with one of the November 10th agreement’s principles guaranteeing the right of return of IDPs and refugees, and is also consistent with the Madrid Principles.

Consider in this context the fate of Azerbaijanis who were forcibly removed from Armenia in 1988 and thus became refugees at the very start of the conflict (this includes the aforementioned Zangezur region). Throughout the Minsk Group-led talks, their status was not considered in detail. Yet, until that year, 182,000 ethnic Azerbaijanis, 18,000 ethnic Kurds, and 1,000 ethnic Russians lived in a territory of about 8,000 square kilometers in 261 settlements, of which 172 were exclusively populated by ethnic Azerbaijanis. The number of Azerbaijani refugees from Armenia was, by the most conservative figure, 250,000. By 2015, that number, according to the same source, had grown to 350,000 (taking into account demographic growth). To this day, many settlements in Zangezur are virtually empty, since Armenia does not have sufficient human resources to populate these lands.

Thus, Azerbaijan could make it clear that a discussion on the status and level of autonomy for Armenians in Karabakh can be considered only in the context of the return of Azerbaijani refugees to Zangezur (coupled, perhaps, with a consideration of their status). Such a solution could stimulate the formation of vested interests in both countries for peaceful coexistence. It would also meet the interests of Armenia itself, as Azerbaijan would surely be ready to underwrite the restoration of the settlements where Azerbaijanis lived compactly before the conflict and decrease infrastructure costs by creating shared facilities, and so on. Finally, should such a self-reinforcing positive feedback cycle be established, the return to Azerbaijan of Armenian refugees could be guaranteed at a later stage.

Another important item on the agenda for peace is the issue of compensation and reparations from Armenia for the cities, towns, and villages that were destroyed during the occupation of

Azerbaijani territories. The Armenian side left virtually no stone undisturbed in the occupied territories. A demonstration of peacemaking goodwill in the form of extending an offer to compensate Azerbaijan for damages incurred during thirty years of occupation would go a long way towards indicating Yerevan's true intentions of goodwill and contribute to broader reconciliation efforts.

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The issue of reparations and compensation must also be considered both within the framework of international common law, at the interstate level, and through international private law: in the latter category, reference is made to the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights in *Chiragov and Others v. Armenia* (2015). The case involved the forced eviction of Azerbaijani Kurds from their places of residence, with the Strasbourg Court holding that Armenia "exercises effective control over Nagorno-Karabakh and the surrounding territories" and is thus responsible for the "flight of practically all Azerbaijani citizens,

presumably most of them Muslims, from Nagorno-Karabakh and the surrounding territories, and their inability to return to these territories." Naturally, the European Court of Rights thus ordered Armenia to pay pecuniary and non-pecuniary damages to cover legal costs and expenses to each plaintiff involved in the case.

Finally, for a conflict resolution process to succeed and reconciliation to take hold, a change of narrative must be pursued. In this essay we have engaged with the major arguments to which the Armenian side has appealed in order to defend its claim over the territories of Azerbaijan, which built heavily on an allegedly perennial security dilemma, as we have seen. For a long time, Yerevan has been caught in a trap of a self-centered, maximalist view of its position and interests in its neighborhood. As recently stated by the reputable historian and former senior adviser to Armenia's then-President Levon Ter-Petrosyan, Gerard Jirair Libaridian:

Our problem is the way we looked at the Karabakh conflict and the way we framed the questions related to its resolution: we started by the conclusion that corresponded to our dreams, and then asked only those questions that con-

firmed our conclusions and did not challenge our assumptions and logic. Our problem is our political culture that relies on dreams rather than hard facts; the way we strategize, the way we easily set aside what the outside world and our antagonists say and do if these disturb any of our prejudices and predetermined beliefs. We adjust political strategy to our wishes, to what will make us feel good about ourselves rather than take into consideration the simple facts that collectively make up the reality around us. Our problem is the way we allow our judgment to be obscured by the highest, noblest and ideal solutions of our problems, our illusions. Our problem is the way we insist on overestimating our capabilities so that we would not question our strategy and compromise our dreams. We thought that our strategy "not give an inch back" was the right one because our cause was just. And we believed we could bend the will of the enemy and of the international community and have them think and feel the way we do.

In order to overcome the sort of harmful ways of thinking identified by Libaridian, new regional arrangements must be fixed in such a way that would bind the countries of South Caucasus to the existing security order and promote the inclusive vision of their history and identity.

At the dawn of the independence of Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia in the early twentieth century, each state was fortunate to have produced visionary leaders like Alimardan Topchubashov—he served as ambassador to Armenia and Georgia, then foreign minister, and then speaker of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic’s parliament—who championed the idea of a united Caucasus as the guarantee of its independent and successful development.

We could draw on positive examples in the two nations’ history as well: stress the legacy of Armenian-Azerbaijani co-existence in Karabakh in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; emphasize the intensive cultural exchanges and intellectual enrichment that took place in Tbilisi (the traditional cultural capital of the Caucasus); and champion the thinking of prominent figures in

Armenian history like Hovhannes Katchaznoui, the first prime minister of the first Republic of Armenia who, in his memoirs, warned his nation against waging conflicts with neighbors and underscored how this mistake had already cost the young nations of the South Caucasus their independence.

Although conditions on the ground are obviously very different after more than thirty years of hostility—and much time will be needed to heal the wounds caused by conflict—the latest events in the region demonstrate convincingly that Armenia’s aggressive nationalism has only brought war and destruction, ultimately failing to deliver on the promises made in a time no longer suited to present realities and future possibilities. Truly, it is time to start writing a new chapter in our common history. **BD**



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