

**THE SOUTH CAUCASUS
AND TURKEY:
HISTORY LESSONS OF THE 20TH CENTURY**

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The South Caucasus and Turkey: History Lessons of the 20th Century

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Editor in Chief: Sergey Rumyantsev

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38, Zovreti st., Tbilisi 0160, Georgia

T +995 32 238 04 67/68, +995 32 291 37 39 | F +995 32 291 28 97

E info@ge.boell.org | W www.ge.boell.org | F www.facebook.com/hbf.caucasus

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FROM THE PUBLISHER

Considering the idea of the regional cooperation among countries of South Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia) and possible rapprochement in Turkish-Armenian relations, the future dialogue among the societies of these countries becomes more and more important.

The publication – “The South Caucasus and Turkey: History Lessons of the 20th Century” introduced by the South Caucasus Regional Office of the Heinrich Boell Foundation, is the collection of scientific articles prepared by authors from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey presenting the research and analytical materials on the key issues regarding history lessons in the South Caucasus and Turkey. The analyses of the educational systems of these countries, in particular the textbooks on national and international histories in the context of collective memory, will contribute to the future discussions on the quality, aims and ideological content of the history courses in the South Caucasus and Turkey.

Since 2006, the South Caucasus Regional Office of the Heinrich Boell Foundation promotes dialogue between the societies of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey. As a result of the various activities of many actors in the civil society and scientific community in Turkey and South Caucasus, we can observe rising interest in mutual understanding and exchange. To further support the process, the South Caucasus Regional Office of the Heinrich Boell Foundation and the Heinrich Boell Foundation Turkey decided to establish Ani Dialogue – a forum for further exchange on areas of common interest between civil societies in Armenia and Turkey and thereby providing further possibilities.

The aim of the Ani Dialogue is to foster rapprochement between the civil societies of Armenia and Turkey, thus also contributing to reconciliation and normalization of mutual ties on the state level. To achieve this, the Ani Dialogue, on the one hand, encourages endeavors of the societies of Armenia and Turkey to cope with the burden of historical legacies, and on the other hand, promotes efforts contributing to the sustainable democratic development of both countries. The Ani Dialogue aims for a synergy with other civil society initiatives in this field.

In October 2009, supported by the US government, the foreign ministries of both countries have signed a historic accord normalizing relations after a

century of hostility. However, ratification of the bilateral Protocols, indicating the establishment of diplomatic relations and agreeing on the opening of borders, has stalled in 2010 and the improvement in relations between the Armenian and Turkish governments has come to a standstill.

Meanwhile, the two societies are increasingly interested in knowing about each other, starting to open mental borders and establishing ties. In Turkey, we can observe an increasing activity of civil society actors to cope with the historical burden as well as to search for possibilities to build a common future with the society of Armenia. The contacts on civil society level have begun even prior to the official rapprochement and have continued after its suspension. This process has become a ground for the idea to establish the Ani Dialogue by the Heinrich Boell Foundation and thus further support the cooperation between the two societies. The Ani Dialogue is built on this interest in mutual understanding, exchange and co-operation of the societies.

This publication presents one more contribution and effort of the South Caucasus Regional Office of the Heinrich Boell Foundation to continue supporting the process of understanding, experience-sharing and establishment of mutual ties in the South Caucasus and Turkey.

Nino Lejava
Director

Khatuna Samnidze
Programme Coordinator

South Caucasus Regional Office
of the Heinrich Boell Foundation

INTRODUCTION

“HISTORY LESSONS” IN THE YEAR OF “ANNIVERSARY”

Sergey Rumyantsev

Our preparation of the present collection of articles coincided with the 20th anniversary of the collapse of the Soviet Union. During this anniversary year, numerous conferences, public discussions, and expert round tables were conducted around the post-Soviet space. The majority of these events were marked by ambitious attempts to summarize various public and political processes that have taken place in these countries. This book does not have the same aim. The timing of the appearance of this publication during the 20th anniversary is a coincidence. However, this fortuitous concurrence still serves as an effort to summarize the results of the implementation of transnational projects and attempts to create a network of academic researchers in the countries of the South Caucasus.

Nevertheless, we must note that we should be talking not about possible results, but rather about the current state of affairs, as the process of forming a transnational network of researchers continues to evolve. In a sense, the roots of the process lie in the collapse of the Soviet Union itself. The relatively holistic system of research institutes of the Soviet academies of science fell apart together with the USSR. This process resulted in the abandonment of the policy of supporting and expanding contacts among specialists of the different Soviet national republics. However, the contacts that existed during the Soviet period connected the “periphery” (the national republics) and the “center” (the Academy of Science of the USSR), rather than the specialists of the various neighbouring republics.

As a result, paradoxically, the breakdown of the USSR itself contributed to the strengthening of contacts among specialists of the different republics of the South Caucasus. The interest towards the “center” has decreased significantly, while the focus on the realization of regional research projects has grown. While the state policy of supporting links and contacts has faded, it has been replaced by a more flexible system of support for transnational projects offered by various international funds and organizations.

It is relevant to consider the present state of affairs and broader perspectives. During the last 20 years, researchers from the post-Soviet space have had a chance to study, retrain, practice and even conduct their research abroad, in the countries of the “non-Soviet camp.” In addition to different foundations and universities supporting various educational and integration programmes¹ and sending students and post-graduates abroad, the governments of all South Caucasus countries have also been involved. Although to a differing extent, state officials also support the idea of studying in the “West.” Regardless of these opportunities, the effect of such trips and studies abroad still remains insignificant and varies for each of the three South Caucasus republics.

One of the main problems was that few of the former Soviet experts managed to adjust to the new rules of their organizations related to conducting research projects. As a result, only a few of them seem to have joined transnational research networks. Quite a narrow circle of such specialists was established by the mid-nineties, and it has changed and expanded only very slowly. Still, by the early 2000s, a post-Soviet generation of young experts emerged in the region and was ready to challenge the generation of the 1990s.

The present collection of articles demonstrates current results and the potential of the programmes aimed at supporting this new generation² of researchers and their integration into the transnational networks created by the specialists in the field of social sciences and humanities. Therefore, instead of this quite conventional anniversary, favoured solely because of its round number, for the purposes of introducing the present collection of articles we deal with a more concrete date, the year 2004. During this year, a programme supporting young researchers and implemented by the Heinrich Boell Foundation (Germany) began operation in the republics of the South Caucasus.

Surely, before the realization of this programme, other projects aimed to create academic research networks that also included representatives of civil society. Social researchers often become activists of non-governmental movements and organizations. However, none of the projects pursuing these

¹ By “integration”, I refer to those programmes that aimed to establish contacts between post-Soviet researchers and their colleagues from the EU and USA.

² Regarding the “new generation”, I refer to primarily to specialist researchers in the field of social sciences and the humanities who have had their professional socialization in the post-Soviet period. In addition, I also include those who have some work experience in transnational research networks, studied or practiced in the EU or USA, etc. Not all specialists with diplomas of the post-Soviet generation have such experience.

goals was as long-term as the Scholarship Programme of the South Caucasus Regional Office of the Heinrich Boell Foundation. For ten years now (another potential anniversary), young researchers and civil society activists have had the opportunity to engage with transnational networks. Herein, the format of the scholarship programme itself consists of working meetings and also significantly timed summer schools that provide the possibility to establish not only formal contacts but also working networks of young researchers.

Within the framework of the programme, various individual research projects are supported, allowing researchers to distance themselves from discussions that are not sufficiently concrete. Young specialists together with influential experts in the social sciences and humanities and also former scholars participate in discussions regarding all research activities undertaken within the programme. This style of work facilitates involvement in the process of establishing contacts and links through open and free discussions.

At this point, on the threshold of the programme's approaching anniversary, we can state that it is functioning successfully, an achievement that is demonstrated by the publication of this collection of articles. Almost all researchers from the South Caucasus (except for Nino Chikovani), including the author of these lines, are former scholars of the Heinrich Boell Foundation at various times. It should be highlighted that in 2005, the programme supported the first regional revision of Azerbaijani history textbooks aimed at researching the means and practice of representing the image of "historical enemies." Ilham Abbasov is the author of this work (Abbasov, 2006)³, and the results of his research are presented in the present volume⁴.

A project supported by the International Visegrad Fund served as another attempt by a specialist of the South Caucasus countries to conduct a joint analysis of images of "the other/enemy" in history textbooks⁵. Other former scholars of the Heinrich Boell Foundation, Mikayel Zolyan and Tigran Zakaryan

³ This type of research may be considered as an important contribution to the understanding of the roles and importance of history education in the development or resolution of conflicts. See, for example, Lall, 2008; Xochellis & Toloudi, eds., 2001; Crawford, 2008). To my knowledge, Abbasov's work represents the first example of this type of research in the countries of the South Caucasus conducted by a representative of the region itself. With regards to some earlier works, Victor Shnirelman's monograph "Wars of Memory" has to be noted. This fundamental work still remains the most serious contribution to the understanding of historians' role and place in the conflicts in the South Caucasus.

⁴ Later, I. Abbasov published a number of articles on the results of his research (Abbasov, 2006, History Textbooks in the Epoch of Independence, pp. 153-162; Abbasov 2006, History of Inclusion of Azerbaijani Khanates, pp. 46-57; Abbasov 2006, To Be Azeri, pp. 60-71).

⁵ This fund was established in 2000 by several Eastern European states (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia).

of Armenia, along with the editor of this publication (Veseli, 2006) participated in this project with Abbasov⁶. Their research proved that a network created in the framework of the Heinrich Boell Foundation Regional Scholarship Programme is expanding and functioning successfully. Nino Chikovani participated in this project as well, and this collection also includes her new article.

A collection of articles published in one of the thematic issues of the journal of the Georg Eckert Institute For International Textbooks Research (Braunschweig, Germany) resulted in another attempt at joint analysis by South Caucasus specialists (see "Textbooks in post-Soviet Caucasus and Central Asia," 2008)⁷. This institute actively supports programmes aimed at the formation of transnational networks of researchers and history teachers.

At the same time, this collection of articles seeks to go beyond the borders of regional research. This regionalism is created not only at the level of international policies but also through the practice of various foundations and international organizations. Therefore, the traditional view of the South Caucasus as a region consisting of three republics was established under different bureaucratic formalities and rules. The resulting boundaries have become serious obstacles for the development of links and contacts among academic societies from countries that in fact neighbour one another. The paradox of the situation lies in the fact that on one hand, conditions exist that could foster the development of such links between specialists of the three South Caucasus republics. On the other hand, however, opportunities for the construction of broader networks of specialists from neighbouring countries are limited.

This collection also includes several articles by Turkish researchers. However, certain bureaucratic challenges jeopardized the possibility of participation of Russian specialists in the project. Russia is one of the neighbouring countries broadly discussed in the textbooks of the three South Caucasus republics. Regardless of these circumstances, the logic of the present book still

⁶ See "Images of the 'self' and images of the 'other' in Armenian history textbooks", by Mikayel Zolyan and Tigran Zakaryan and "Means immortalize the past: analysis of images in other Azerbaijani history textbooks", by Ilham Abbasov and Sergey Romyantsev. Finally, see the analysis of Georgian history books conducted by Nino Chikovani and Ketevan Kakhitlashvili, who titled their research "Images of 'others' in secondary school history textbooks."

⁷ Referring to the reforms in the sphere of teaching of Georgian history and world history, Oliver Reisner contends that "we should strive for cooperation and discussions between Western scientists and specialists from CIS countries" (Reisner 1998, p. 423). The institute named after Georg Eckert is an important scientific center that makes such cooperation and discussion possible. A well-known academic magazine *Ab Imperio* is another significant periodic publication available for researchers of educational narratives (see, for example, Aklar, 2005; Romyantsev, 2005).

encompasses the idea of overcoming the conventional and rigid frameworks of regionalism in research.

This assertion is true although the history of the three South Caucasus republics remains the central subject in this collection of articles⁸. Here we have to emphasize that contacts with Turkey after the breakup of the Soviet Union also became the norm for specialists from all three South Caucasus republics. But here we also see how interstate relations influence the dynamics of forming transnational research networks and the possibilities for implementing international projects. Close relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan have allowed for long-term cooperation in the field of education and enabled the development of networks of social researchers. In the case of Armenia, the conflicting relationship with Turkey significantly hinders the development of such contacts. The Georgian civil, political and academic elites are also more inclined towards cooperation with the EU and USA. Turkey is not a priority partner for Georgia in the field of education and the formation of academic research networks. Yet, unlike during the Soviet period, such contacts are now possible in principle.

However, even from the perspective of close relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey, no interesting joint works have been concluded in the twenty years since the fall of the Soviet Union. The present collection of articles attempts to go beyond this conventional and very real regional relativism. Moreover, the articles by Turkish authors cover acute, polemic issues that help to better understand specificities of history education in this neighbouring republic of the South Caucasus countries.

In sum, it is clear that a network of specialists working on analysis of history textbooks in the South Caucasus region has been established. Although the network has functioned for only a few years now, several interesting projects have already been implemented. Still we can assert that the topic selected for the present collection of articles remains relevant, as it has not yet been fully explored. Despite the large number of research texts, the problem of representation of “images of neighbours” in textbooks has not been duly addressed. This topic, however, remains central to historical narratives on national and world history.

The genre of narratives about “one’s own place” in history often includes descriptions of the relationships with “our neighbours.” Historical narratives in the republics of the South Caucasus during the USSR, when textbooks were

⁸ The articles by Turkish specialists published in this collection concern the perspective of representation of the image of neighbours from the South Caucasus republics in Turkish history textbooks.

first created, still focus mainly on the events of political history. According to Michel Foucault, the histories in textbooks to a great extent remain confused, containing mostly political history of “rulers, wars and periods of famine” (Foucault 2004, p. 36). In this narrative, “neighbours” are, of course, important, as seen in the articles included in this collection.

It is now worth saying a few words about why these particular history textbooks were chosen for analysis. School textbooks serve as one of the most important means of nation building. We can assert therefore that during the Soviet period the “production of history and geography textbooks used to be an integral part of ethnic differentiation in the Caucasus” (Rouvinski 2007, p. 244). This function of textbooks in the context of the Soviet nationalities policy still plays an important role.

According to the German researcher Reiner Ohliger, “cultural hegemony and political power over national educational programs provides a tool for definition of the nation’s identity. Textbooks not only reflect a state culture of education but also are the main and complex tool of its formation, construction and reproduction” (Ohliger 1999, p. 109). History textbooks in the countries of the South Caucasus and Turkey in the 20th century are exactly these types of tools.

Of course, at the same time we should not overestimate the importance of textbooks. Christina Koulouri, having criticized the researchers’ approaches, discusses situations in which we start to examine the influence of teaching interethnic conflicts (or, we should add, nation building). The tendency to consider only school programmes or textbooks arises, under the presumption that their content quickly enters children’s minds and transforms their historical consciousness. However, we know that this process is not so simple.

Textbooks are not the only force that creates national stereotypes, and their revision will not eliminate an ethnocentric or nationalistic interpretation of the past. Still, the content of textbooks and dominating ideology, as well as a vision of the past, encompass and connect with much broader frameworks. Textbooks, in particular, cannot be innovative if the state controls the system of their preparation <...>. Also, textbooks cannot serve as an innovative force if the content is free of stereotypes, but teachers are not adequately trained (Koulouri 2001, p. 15).

Undoubtedly, the above point is true. The authors of this collection of articles strove to research the extent to which textbooks, as an important part of a broader

set of tools of nation building, are free (or not) from stereotypes concerning the “neighbours.” They examine the influence of the modern social and political context on the representation of historical relations with “neighbours” in historical narratives. At the same time, considering history textbooks only as a part of a much broader set of nation building tools, we should not forget that, according to Mikayel Zolyan, the school textbook remains the most widely disseminated narrative. The history course is obligatory for all schoolchildren. According to many authors in this collection (Nino Chikovani, Sevil Huseynova, et al), the state’s monopoly over the production of textbooks and their acknowledgement of certain issues shows the high status of history as a school subject and the importance of textbooks.

Ethnocentricity becomes another important and constant sign of nation building. Analysis of history textbooks gives us the opportunity to observe this “mark of the time” in its fullest scale. Now as before, the center of any historical narrative is “our” nation – the state. From this angle, the authors of the textbooks offer their respective evaluations of relationships with neighbouring nations and states. This approach to history writing should not be considered unique. As Mark Ferro justifiably notes, one of the representations of ethnocentrism that one sees in practically all history books is “revealed through the relationships with neighbours” (Ferro, 1992, p.12).

The authors of the articles in this book discuss degrees of ethnocentrism. At the same time, in order to deepen the analysis of the textbooks’ narratives and make them more comprehensive, the authors examine the modern social and political contexts that define the content of history courses. In this case, we have to understand that we are talking about a region torn apart by several ongoing conflicts. This aspect of context greatly defines interpretations of “the past” in each imaginary community. Not only the events of the most recent post-Soviet conflicts, but also those that took place a century ago, are retrospectively interpreted through the lens of the present situation. This interpretation allows us to bring the past close to the present. As a result, in some cases we observe a process of transformation of the perspective of the modern conflict into a long-standing and permanent “ethno-national” confrontation.

The events of the 20th century, when the first attempts of nation building in the region took place, constitute an important part of this confrontation. The collapse of the USSR and formation of independent states represent a second stage. This is the period when new interpretations are being sought, involving

definitions of details that serve to revise the whole course of history of each imagined society.

Therefore, the authors of the articles focus on these two modern periods. The first part is dedicated to the representation of the events of the 20th century in post-Soviet textbooks, while the second deals with the collapse of the USSR and the post-Soviet period. In this way, the materials presented in this collection follow a common idea that facilitates drawing parallels throughout the analysis. At the same time, the authors were free to select their genres. In this collection, one can see articles in which the analysis focuses on a symbolic event (i.e., a case study), through which we can observe the specificity of how relationships with the “neighbours” are represented (Ilham Abbasov, Ruslan Baramidze). Other authors appeal to a broader analysis of the content of history books (Ceyhan Suvari, Satenik Mkrtchyan, Sevil Huseynova).

Finally, we have to note that the participation of the authors from different republics, parties to long-standing conflicts, and their collaboration on a single collection of articles may be a worthwhile goal of the project in and of itself. Every such project, however small, is nevertheless an important step towards engagement that seeks resolution of regional conflicts. The present collection once again demonstrates that cooperation is not only possible, but also fruitful. This kind of a joint work is not purely a collection of research articles that may be of interest only to a narrow circle of experts. It is also a shared path for social researchers to demonstrate examples of successful cooperation and another attempt aimed at dissolving assumptions about the inevitability of conflict between citizens of these countries.

Of course, the specialists working on this collection of articles were far from thinking that the analysis offered could serve as sufficient grounds for a serious revision of history courses, at least, in cases when such revisions as the authors suggest is required. The present collection undoubtedly strives to promote a critical perspective on the content of historical narratives. Therefore, in analyzing history lessons, we do not focus on what “history has taught us” or “is teaching us.” Authors discuss the lessons that can be drawn from the process of analyzing modern historical narratives, looking at the results of critical readings of history textbooks. We think that this approach should contribute to the improvement of the quality of textbooks and ultimately to influence the resolution of conflicts. In the end, we seek to encourage the establishment of friendly relations among neighbouring countries.

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PART 1.
BEGINNING OF THE 20TH CENTURY:
“RECENT” PAST



THE HISTORY OF AZERBAIJAN: DECONSTRUCTING THE “AGE-OLD FRIENDSHIP” AND THE “DEADLY FEUD” MYTHS

Ilham Abbasov

Introduction

On May 28, 1918 in the city of Tiflis, the temporary National Council of Transcaucasia Muslims proclaimed the independent Azerbaijani Democratic Republic (ADR). The republic lasted two years before becoming Sovietized. During that time, the Musavat (Azeri for “equality”) party majority, Muslim Turkish nationalists who controlled government institutions, made their first attempts to establish political, cultural and other relations with Neighbouring countries. It is in this regard that I have specifically singled out the May 1918 - April 1920 time frame from the totality of numerous historical events that took place in the beginning of the 20th century. In this article, I wish to demonstrate the representation of the Neighbouring republics’ images in the overall historical narrative.

However, limited as I am by the article's confines, I will cover only a few key events: those that took place in Baku in March and September 1918. The March-September 1918 period is known as the Battle of Baku, the battle for control over the city that has been the capital of Azerbaijan since September 1918. These events have formed the basis of many historical myths and have taken a special place in different versions (both Soviet and post-Soviet) of the history of Azerbaijan. Therefore the article is concerned with one of the pivotal periods in the history of the Republic and the Azerbaijani nation as a whole, serving as a cornerstone of both Soviet and post-Soviet national memory politics.

Analyzing representation of these events in the general historical narrative informs an understanding of the relations with Neighbouring republics, Armenia and Turkey, which have been crucial to post-Soviet Azerbaijan. Relations with two other adjacent countries, Russia and Iran, are also very important to modern day Azerbaijan, as are its allied relations with Georgia. However, I focus almost exclusively on relations with Armenia and Turkey. I will touch upon relations with three other Neighbouring countries only when describing the overall socio-political context.

Political Controversy and Interstate Relations

In 1918-1920, violence and conflicts were widespread and inter-republic relations were constituted first and foremost by the prospects for military alliance or confrontation. Nevertheless, no total ethnic separation existed at that time. There was little to no disruption in diplomatic relations between the governments of the three South Caucasian republics. Thus, besides violence and controversy, the Neighbours maintained close contact and cooperation, taking steps to manage emerging conflicts through negotiations and compromise. In the Soviet version of Azerbaijani history, this delicate canvas of various complex relations has been reduced primarily to class struggle¹. Soviet historiography commemorated Bolshevik internationalists, the 26 Baku Commissars. Their story was essential to the

¹ I must note that this aspect should be the subject of a separate research and I practically cannot cover it in my article. However, I should emphasize that Sheila Fitzpatrick presents a substantiated approach to researching the specifics of Soviet class ideology. She talks about the "Bolshevik invention of class." In the context of this article, it is important to highlight that, as Fitzpatrick duly notes, the Bolshevik method involved more than just ascribing different social statuses – it allowed them to distinguish their allies from their enemies (see Fitzpatrick, 2005, pp. 29-50). Jorg Baberowski (2003, pp. 553-668) further elaborates on how this system identifying allies and enemies worked in the 1920-1930s in Azerbaijan.

Communist heroes cult and Soviet memory policy implemented in Transcaucasia. In this version, the “Bourgeois nationalists” were the “enemy” and the events (as well as their heroes, Bolsheviks) took on the halo of “internationalism.” This version of the Azerbaijani historical narrative served both Soviet national politics and the political myth of “peoples’ friendship.” In addition, the narrative contained the enemy image made up not only of specific “Bourgeois leaders” (e.g., Musavatists) but also whole “capitalist countries” (e.g., Turkey or Iran).

The demise of the USSR signified the need to construct a new version of national history, one that also would not ignore the events of 1918-1920. Thus historical narrative became a part of the ideology of conflict and “nationalizing nationalism” (this term is explained in more detail below), focusing on presenting the Azeri nation as a victim and survivor of genocide. The post-Soviet interpretation of the events in question is heavily influenced by the history of modern day 1988-1994 Armenian-Azerbaijani Karabakh conflict. The events of 1918 are being incorporated in retrospect into the ideology or the ethno-centric political and historical myth about the ongoing and “eternal” feud between Azerbaijani and Armenian peoples². The same events are used as proof of the unbroken age-old friendship with Turkish “people.”³ This ideology also contains the myth about uncompromising struggle with the Russian Empire and the Soviets, as well as Iran, for the national independence of the Azerbaijani. Therefore, since their actual occurrence, the events of 1918 have always been interpreted through the context of different ideological frames, becoming an integral part of different historical myths. Official interpretations of these events have always been influenced by certain political agendas (either Soviet national politics or post-Soviet “nationalizing nationalism”⁴). Depending on the context of these political agendas, the Azerbaijani nation has been either friends or enemies with their Neighbours.

This article seeks to integrate the analysis of textbooks into the wider context

² Viktor Shnirelmann gives a comprehensive description of such myths. Singling out aspects relating directly to the subject of this article, one would certainly highlight the compensatory function of a myth, or its absolute necessity in a situation when “new states are born in the ruins of an empire” (see Shnirelmann, 2000, pp. 12-18).

³ I find Benedict Anderson’s concept of “imagined communities” (Anderson 1998, p. 6) the most convincing. The notion of “people” is rather vague, yet it is frequently used in political speeches and educational or academic narratives published in South Caucasian countries. In this article, the term “people” as it relates to any mentioned imagined community will be put in quotation marks in order to highlight the fact that I am talking only about the representation of a historical or political discourse.

⁴ I point out these two versions (Soviet and post-Soviet) but for the purpose of this article have to ignore the pre-Soviet version. This is mainly because school history textbooks began to be written and used en masse in Azerbaijan only with the start of the Soviet regime (Rumyantsev, 2010, pp. 435-436).

of both Soviet and post-Soviet memory policy, Soviet nationalities policy and post-Soviet “nationalizing nationalism.” The article’s key argument can be summed up as follows: the events of the confrontation that took place in the beginning of the 20th century have not played a central role in the collective memory of Soviet Baku’s Azerbaijani or Armenian residents. Ideologists of Soviet memory policy managed to create a favourable environment for “forgetting”⁵ the conflicts in question and to construct quite a viable international heroic cult of the 26 Baku Commissars.

When the situation changed due to the collapse of the USSR and the new Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict sprang up, there appeared the need for other cults – the cults of victims and heroes. As a result, the post-Soviet era saw numerous attempts to reconstruct in retrospect the events of March and September 1918. Those events were being radically interpreted through the context of genocide⁶, the age-old ongoing Armenian-Azerbaijani confrontation, and the fight for national freedom, thus assigning to those events a meaning that had neither been previously ascribed to them by their direct participants (e.g., nationalists from the Musavat and Dashnaksutyun political parties) nor by the Communists. In the new post-Soviet environment, in the context of new and not “recurring, old” conflict, as well as in the context of new Azerbaijani and Armenian nationalisms, the events of 1918 have received their second actualization⁷.

⁵ One could argue that the experience and consequences of Soviet nationalities politics make one reconsider Ernest Renan’s well-known saying, “Forgetting, I would even go so far as to say historical error, is a crucial factor in the creation of a nation.” In the USSR “forgetting” was rather a condition for creating an übernational “Soviet nation.” This community consisted of various “biological nations” and the borders between them were not diminished but strengthened instead. To paraphrase Renan, one could say that, in a way, post-Soviet “progress” in historical research studies that selectively focus on facts of violence and conflicts does not pose any threat to different nationalities but mobilizes and consolidates them. This happens because these studies are centered on the facts of “violence towards us” and not the violence that has led to the creation of South Caucasian imagined communities (i.e., “us”). At the same time one should detect another possible threat in this case. Such an approach supports conflicts and tensions among different imagined communities (Renan, 1996, p. 45).

⁶ The term “genocide” was first used in legal practice in 1944 by Raphael Lemkin. The UN General Assembly unanimously adopted the Convention on the Punishment and Prevention of Genocide only in 1948.

⁷ Here I follow in the footsteps of Ronald Suny and use the term “new nationalism” to identify the particular environment that existed in Armenia in the 1960s-1970s and, to a lesser degree, was developing in the Soviet Azerbaijan during the same time (Suny, 1997, pp. 374-378). This “new nationalism” is a product of the Soviet nationalities policy. Its characteristic features include its fast dissemination made possible to Soviet national politics (and first of all Soviet “localization” policy), the Soviet system of mass education, and accelerated urbanization policy. Soviet nationalities policy - and educational policy as an integral part - was solely responsible for “new nationalism” as a mass phenomenon. In Yuri Slezkine’s words, as a result of this policy “when the non-national Soviet state (the USSR, I. A.) had lost its Soviet meaning, the national non-states (Soviet national republics, I. A.) were the only possible heirs” (Slezkine, 1996, p. 229). The second most important feature of “new nationalism” is its potential for accelerated radicalization in the course of the Armenian-Azerbaijani Karabakh conflict. In the context of this article it is important to note that “new nationalism” has become the basis for development and distribution of official post-Soviet ideologies in Azerbaijan and Armenia.

Methodology

In this article I attempt to deconstruct official interpretations or myths (those supported by the authorities and government institutions) of the events that took place in Baku in March and September 1918⁸. I deconstruct both the “deadly feud” and the “age-old friendship” myths. In both cases we can observe the process of essentializing the “enemy” and “friend” images, of social “classes,” interethnic relations, and so forth. The nations are essentialized and turned into some type of collective homogeneous communities that are always either “eternal” / “age-old friends” or “eternal” / “age-old enemies.”

Taking into account the specific nature of analysis of educational historical narratives, I apply Norman Fairclough’s method of critical discourse analysis. I also include a few of Michel Foucault’s hypotheses into this methodology. So I will use a combined approach that stems from the social constructivist perspective to explain the use of the “enemy” and “friend” images in the context of social practices of constructing historical narratives. Or, in the words of Fairclough himself, “It is a commonplace in non-positivist social science that social phenomena are socially constructed” (Fairclough, 2007, p. 10). In summary, based on both Foucault’s and Fairclough’s approaches, I see my task in “studying [discourses] as practices that are systematically shaping the objects they describe” (Foucault, 2004, p. 112). And in the long run, these discourses are power-wielding practices that create the images of “historical enemies” or “allies” and “eternal friends.” The power or the right to form these images belongs first and foremost to professional historians. Authorities, namely various government institutions and ministries, further confirm this right and provide it with additional power through recognition and acknowledgement.

Nationalism, Historical Narrative and Myths

Before commencing analysis of narratives and myths, I wish to touch upon several important subjects. Schwartz rightfully denotes, “As a policy instrument, historiography is a technique for managing ethnic relations and mobilizing ethnic and nationalist resources” (Schwartz, 1994, p. 3). He stresses the fact that Soviet history served exactly these purposes. However, not much has changed

⁸ Conflicts and confrontation did not only take place in Baku (Swietochowski, 1985, pp. 38-46; Altstadt, 1992, pp. 40-43; Swietochowski, 1995, pp. 25-36). However, the Baku events evoked the widest response and took a special place in the overall historical narrative and memory policy.

in the post-Soviet era. Both in Soviet times and today, “different peoples use similar strategies when searching for historical arguments to legitimate their modern political claims” (Smith, et al., 1998, p. 64).

Rogers Brubaker points out “six ‘pernicious postulates’, six myths and misconceptions” (Brubaker 1998, p. 272). He defines one of these “accounts of the sources and dynamics of nationalist resurgence” as the “‘return of the repressed’ view. The gist of this account is that national identities and national conflicts were deeply rooted in the procommunist history of Eastern Europe, but then frozen or repressed by [the] ruthlessly anti-national communist regime” (Brubaker 1998, p. 285). Brubaker demonstrates that this approach is fundamentally flawed and emphasizes that:

Nationhood and nationalism flourish today largely because of the regime’s policies. Although anti-nationalist, those policies were anything but anti-national. Far from ruthlessly suppressing nationhood, the Soviet regime pervasively institutionalized it. The regime repressed nationalism, of course; but at the same time, it went further than any other state before or since in institutionalizing territorial nationhood and ethnic nationality as fundamental social categories. In doing so it inadvertently created a political field supremely conducive to nationalism (Brubaker 1998, p. 286).

It is precisely in this new political environment that new nationalisms appear, serving as a powerful mobilizing force in the beginning of the modern-day Karabakh conflict.

At the same time, Brubaker rightly mentions that modern specifics of nationalism should be reconsidered. According to Ernst Gellner’s dominant hypothesis, the political principle of nationalism “holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent” (Gellner 1983, p. 1). This cannot explain why nationalistic ideologies live on in already formed states. Brubaker coins a “triadic nexus” concept to explain this phenomenon. In the context of this article I am interested only in the first type of nationalism described by that concept - “‘nationalizing’ nationalisms of newly independent (or newly reconfigured) states”:

Nationalizing nationalisms involve claims made in the name of a “core nation” or nationality, defined in ethno cultural terms, and sharply distinguished of the

citizenry as a whole. The core nation is understood as a legitimate “owner” of the state, which is conceived as the state of and for the core nation. Despite having “its own” state, however, the core nation is conceived as being in a weak cultural, economic, or demographic position within the state. This weak position [...] is held to justify the “remedial” or “compensatory” project of using state power to promote the specific (and previously inadequately served) interests of the core nation (Brubaker 2000, pp. 4-5).

In this case I wish to emphasize that a new version of history not only sets the ideological frame for the conflicts that have already occurred, but also serves as a significant integral part of post-Soviet “nationalizing nationalism.” The new historical narrative thus serves the independent Azerbaijan’s homogenization policy and aids in construction and maintenance of national boundaries. This policy undoubtedly contains important guidance as to how to treat and view Neighbouring countries. In particular, it defines which country should be considered friendly (or “brotherly”) and which should be branded as hostile. Incidentally, these two perspectives on relationships (friendly/hostile) also point to the level of significance assigned to a particular Neighbourhood. Here is where one could observe a certain hierarchy of images of Neighbouring countries.

Images of Neighbours: Socio-Political Context

This hierarchy of Neighbouring countries has been constructed to fit the allies – friendship-feud scale. It certainly has gone through significant changes in the context of post-Soviet transition. During the USSR, the image of Russia (the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic) and the “Russian people” was by all means positive. It was also the image of the “Big Brother.” Since the collapse of the Soviet Empire (in the history of post-Soviet Azerbaijan), however, the Russians and Russia have taken center stage as negative images in the discourse about heroic struggle for independence from the Empire. The post-Soviet situation is drastically different from the Soviet in such a way that it has produced a far greater variety of opinions having the right to exist in the public domain. Russia and “Russian people” are ascribed both positive and negative characteristics in this discourse. On the one hand, Russia is seen as the heiress to the Empire that deprived Azerbaijan of independence and

exploited the “Azeri people” and the country itself as a colony for nearly two centuries. Russia is also seen as an ally of Armenia, with which Azerbaijan has an ongoing confrontation. On the other hand, official (state) relations with the Russian Federation (especially after first Geidar Aliev’s and then Vladimir Putin’s rise to power) have improved continuously and have remained quite tight throughout the post-Soviet times. This goes to show the dual nature of the relationships with Russia. At the interstate and diplomatic level, these relations can be considered friendly and stable. However, within Azerbaijan, Russia becomes elemental to the enemy image. It is precisely this aspect of “Russia’s image” that is represented in history textbooks. Arif Yunusov, a well-known political scientist and historian in Azerbaijan, has dubbed this somewhat paradoxical situation “friendship and collaboration based on suspiciousness and distrust” (Yunusov, 2007, pp. 35-59).

The representation of Azerbaijan’s relationship with Turkey displays a different tone. With the collapse of the USSR, Turkey began to claim the role of the “fraternal people.” And as a matter of fact, in all post-Soviet years there has been only one serious disruption in Azerbaijan’s relations with Turkey. After the signing of the Turkey-Armenia protocols in October 2009, doubts in allied and “fraternal” relations began to appear⁹. In fact, immediately after those protocols were signed, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan issued a statement proclaiming that normalization of relations between Turkey and Armenia ahead of resolution to the Karabakh conflict clashed with Azerbaijan’s interests and went against the “spirit of brotherly relations” between the two republics. Afterwards Turkish-Azerbaijani relations remained rather tense for quite some time and led to the events that the media dubbed “the war of the flags”¹⁰. However, those relations normalized as the protocols’ ratification was further and further delayed, gradually becoming less and less likely (see Abdulayev, 2009, pp. 19-23).

⁹ I mean the “Protocol on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations Between the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Turkey” and the “Protocol on Development of Relations Between the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Turkey,” signed by Ahmet Davutoglu and Eduard Nalbandian on October 10 in Zurich.

¹⁰ It all started with the Turkey-Armenia soccer match in Bursa on October 14, which Serzh Sarkisyan and Abdullah Gül attended and where Azerbaijani flags were prohibited from being displayed. Several days after the match, the Turkish authorities received official note of protest claiming disrespect to the Azerbaijani national flag. Moreover, to make their point, Baku officials went further and took down Turkey national flags that were on display in the Baku’s Martyrs’ Alley (Shekhidiyar Khiyabany) in commemoration of Turkish soldiers who had died in the course of the 1918 events. These are the events that I have selected for analysis in this article. The official version was that the flags were taken down because their display contradicted the “Regulations on use and display of flags of foreign countries and international organizations in the Republic of Azerbaijan.” Naturally, this explanation was not convincing, especially since later on the flags were returned to the Alley despite those regulations.

Therefore, the confrontation with Turkey did not go beyond a few symbolic walkouts, statements, and some picketing by radicals in Baku. Throughout the post-Soviet years, Turkey has always taken Azerbaijan's side in the Karabakh conflict. In return it was promised official support and acknowledgement of Cyprus as a Turkish Republic. However, this promise has never been realized and support has never been provided. Such recognition could have challenged Azerbaijan's relations with the European Union, and so instead Turkey was made an important partner in the transit of Azerbaijani oil. Besides, in Azerbaijan the Turkish authorities always find full support in their confrontation with Armenia and the Armenian diaspora on the interpretation of the alleged genocide, the events in Anatolia in 1915. It could be said that opposition to this policy finds rare unanimity and agreement among the Azerbaijani political establishment, intellectual milieu and general public as a whole. In this particular case the Azerbaijanis demonstrate not only amazing unity of opinions but full agreement with the Turkish authorities and most of the Turkish community.

In turn, for Armenian politicians and intellectuals the conflict with the Azerbaijanis becomes elemental to a wider confrontation with the Turks who can be rightly described, in Ronald Suny's opinion, as their "traditional enemy" (1997, p. 376). This ascriptive tendency on the part of Armenians to attribute the Azerbaijanis and the Turks to one nation or people becomes just another resource that fuels the former President of Azerbaijan's concept of "one nation – two states."

At the same time the 1988-1994 Karabakh conflict defines not only the relations with Neighbouring Armenia but also the atmosphere in Azerbaijan itself. It goes without saying that throughout the post-Soviet years, this conflict has been the most relevant and widely discussed subject (for more on the conflict see Cornell, 2001, pp. 61-141; de Waal, 2003, pp. 159-240; Shnirelmann, 2003, pp. 33-255; de Waal, 2009). Armenia is not just a hostile country. In the Azerbaijani social discourse Armenians are also seen as the agents of Russian, occupational and colonial politics (imperial and Soviet). Azerbaijani historians mark a significant part of this Neighbouring republic's territory as "historical Azerbaijan."

The same goes for a significant part of modern day Iran. Complex relationships with Iran are by and large a product of the fact that many Azerbaijanis (or Azerbaijani-speaking) people live there. (Shaffer, 2002, pp.

1-3). The northwestern areas of Iran, where they predominantly live, are also considered a part of “historical Azerbaijan” (Rumyantsev, 2008, pp. 813-819; Rumyantsev, 2010, pp. 438-439). The Azerbaijani who live in Iran are viewed as a discriminated ethnic minority. There are some concerns regarding speculations about possible export of radical Shiite Islam to secular Azerbaijan¹¹. At the same time the borders between the two countries are open. Moreover, the post-Soviet years have brought active proliferation of business contacts between the two states (Yunusov, 2007, pp. 60-86).

Last but not least, Georgia, a part of whose territory is also described by Azerbaijani historians as an “historically Azerbaijani” region, is also a strategic ally. Various emerging issues (e.g., disputes over the border, problems regarding the treatment of the Azerbaijani minority in the country, etc.) do not lead to any serious confrontations, let alone interstate conflicts. Obviously, both parties are pleased with such relations. The main project that creates unity of interests is the oil pipeline Baku-Tbilisi-Jeikhan which carries Azerbaijani oil through Georgia to Turkey and beyond.

March 1918

These broadly outlined events and relations between countries construct the socio-political context in which history textbooks for schools are currently written. Next I will analyze the texts themselves, focusing on Azerbaijan’s pivotal relations with Armenia and Turkey. As I have already mentioned above, the Baku events of March 1918 have become one of the most significant sites of commemoration actualized in the years of Azerbaijan’s independence. This period proved the bloodiest in the city’s history. This, while in the beginning of the 20th century Baku was already known as the city where violence had become the norm of everyday life: “Baku was a violent city. Simply brigandage was common. Serious conflict erupted in two forms – class conflict, as embodied in the labour movement, and ethno religious conflict. The former made Baku a major center of the Empire’s revolutionary movement. The latter made it one of the bloodiest” (Altstadt-Mirhadi 1986, pp. 303-304).

¹¹ Tadeusz Swietochowski points out, “In relations with other Muslim nations Azerbaijan goes to great lengths to emphasize the unique nature of Azerbaijani Islam, thus striving to emancipate from foreign and first of all Iranian religious centers. ‘National Islam’ is seen as a step on the long historical road to independence from Iran’s religious dominance. Still, at the same time this concept highlights the necessity for unity among the Shi’ite and Sunni and thus rejection of any confrontational, violent or uncompromising positions” (Swietochowski, 2004, p. 27). For further reading on the role of Islam in high-school history textbooks see Huseynova, 2008.

The struggle for full control over the city between Bolsheviks, who had managed to engage support of Armenian nationalists (the Dashnaks), and those usually referred to as Muslims (and/or Musavatists) resulted in the latter's absolute loss. The conflict had long been brewing but Bolsheviks' disarming Muslim officers of the "Wild Division" spurred it on. They were returning to the city of Lenkoran on board of "Evelina" ship following the funeral of the Baku millionaire Gadji Zeinalabdin Tagiev's son, a soldier in that division. The powers were unequal from the start. Street fighting in Baku in March 1918 brought about massive civilian casualties among the city's Muslims. It was followed by continued massacre and bashing in the city's Muslim quarters¹².

It should be noted that as Tadeusz Swietochowski points out (1985, p. 113), bloody Armenian-Muslim conflicts on the territory of modern day Armenia and Azerbaijan had occurred long before the March Days in Baku. Evidently those events in Baku were the most gruesome and painful judging by their consequences. However, they fit into the overall situation of general confrontation and unrest that had been brought about by the collapse of the Empire. Muslim Turks regularly attacked pro-Bolshevik soldiers coming home from the trenches of the Ottoman front in order to seize their firearms. Clashes between Russian settlers and the Azerbaijani occurred in Mugani and other regions of Azerbaijan (Swietochowski, 1985, pp. 112-114). Interference on the part of Ottoman military forces, Germans and later the British worsened the situation. The power struggle made the region's political future unclear.

By 1918 all parties made their bet on armed seizure and retention of power. The strategy was the same for everybody, further proven by the fact that fighting for weapons, a much-needed resource, had greatly intensified by that time. Their tactic involved taking the arms and then taking power. The legitimate nature of such actions for Muslim Turks stems from the concept of the nation state. However, none of the Transcaucasian republics had been recognized *de jure* at that time. Specifically in the case of Azerbaijan, the future capital Baku was placed under Musavat control only in the fall of 1918 after Ottoman military

¹² Stepan Shahumyan, the head of the Baku Commune, confirmed the fact that military units responsible for bashings in Baku consisted of ethnic Armenians, the Dashnak, in his dispatches to Moscow (Shahumyan, 1978, p. 463). Suny points out that, "The dictator of Erevan, Aram Manukian, did not hesitate to use violence against Muslim peasants. About the same time in Baku, Armenians joined with the Bolsheviks and other Soviet parties to put down a Muslim attempt to take over the city. Armenian soldiers used the occasion to take revenge on the Muslims for earlier atrocities" (1993, p. 124).

forces had taken control of the city that September. But at that moment, as the Turks were still expanding the boundaries of the Ottoman (Turan) empire, they were not eager to construct the nation state of Azerbaijani Turks¹³.

In retrospect all the events of that time period are being depicted as a significant milestone in the national history of the Azerbaijani, Armenians or Georgians. These models of history are being directly associated with modern day conflicts between already formed, recognized and accomplished independent national states. In 1918 such a political system was still the subject of local nationalists' hopes and dreams. The key question for all the parties involved in the political process in the South Caucasus was first and foremost that of seizing and retaining power. At some point in time Bolsheviks, supported by the Dashnaks, enjoyed greater success¹⁴. Then it was Muslims, supported by the Ottoman military forces, who took the upper hand. In the end Soviet Russia prevailed. And while those clashes at the time were indeed of inter-ethnic and inter-confessional nature, they were still for the most part a fragment of a bigger conflict – a civil war.

Many contemporaries upheld this perspective on those events. We can easily see the evidence of that in the memorandum written by one of the most prominent political leaders of that time, Ali Mardan-bek Topchibashev, and addressed to the Triple Entente. For some time in the years of the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic Topchibashev served as minister of foreign affairs and represented the Republic at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919-1920. As he mentions in the memorandum, "we must note that Baku Bolshevism was elemental to Russian Bolshevism: Russian blue-collar and white-collar workers, soldiers and sailors were its leaders and an Armenian and a Georgian were at its head" (Topchibashev, 1993, p. 28). The "Armenian" is Stepan Shahumyan, Commissar Extraordinary for the Caucasus and, after April 1918, Chairman of the Baku Council of People's Commissars and Commissar for External Affairs. Incidentally, the "Georgian" is Prokofy (Alyosha) Dzaparidze, the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Baku Council of workers', soldiers' and sailors' deputies and, also after April 1918, the Commissar for Internal Affairs

¹³ "The Ottomans clearly regarded Eastern Transcaucasia as a part of the Turanian empire-in-the-making, which was also to include the North Caucasus, northern Persia, and Turkestan" (Swietochowski, 1985, p. 130).

¹⁴ Baku Commissars were supported by Moscow, and the Soviet government had in fact never abandoned their claims to Baku. When the city fell under the Turkish military forces in September of that year, the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs G.V. Chicherin stated that the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk between Turkey and Russia was no longer valid. As the future would show, there was no alternative to the power of Soviet Russia in the region at that time (Kireev, 2007, pp. 110-111, 448).

of the Baku Council of People's Commissars. Dzaparidze was the member of the Committee of Revolutionary Defense, which led the suppression of the counterrevolutionary Musavat mutiny, to use the term common during Soviet times, in Baku in March 1918. Stepan Shahumyan headed this Committee.

The situation quickly spun out of control in the spring of 1918, and then an incident occurred in Baku, one that would later be described as a clash between the officers of the "Wild Division" and Bolsheviks on board the ship "Evelina." Here is how Topchibashev describes this landmark event:

The Bolsheviks came under the pretense of seizing a shipment of arms that was allegedly being transported by a small group of Muslims from Baku to Lenkoran. The Bolsheviks demanded to surrender the arms immediately, and when that request was met with flat refusal they opened rifle and machine gun fire right away. Violent shooting on both sides resulted in multiple casualties (Topchibashev, 1993, p. 30).

The situation began to escalate, and on March 17, 1918 "both sides started shooting." In the long run, due to Bolsheviks' significant preponderance of forces, "the monstrous **civil war**¹⁵ that went on in Baku for four days (March 18-22 of that year¹⁶) led to large-scale pillage and slayings of civilian Muslims, sanctioned by Bolsheviks with their characteristic hatred and instinct of destruction. The only reason behind that was to gain power" (Topchibashev, 1993, p. 30). The Azerbaijani Democratic Republic government's minister considered "March events" a civil war. In Topchibashev's words, this definition doesn't contradict the acknowledgement of the fact that "direct participation on the part of the Armenian element played an unsightly role in those events that brought about the death of the city's Muslim population" (Topchibashev, 1993, p. 30).

Topchibashev asks once again, "What really caused the Baku events? Was it Armenians' wish to rein on a par with Bolsheviks or interethnic vengeance or perhaps a well-orchestrated unrest that was created by interruptions in train transportation and consequent shortage of food supplies? In any case, in the duration of those four nightmarish days involving numerous attacks on Muslim

¹⁵ Emphasis added.

¹⁶ Of old style.

quarters, perpetrated by the city's Armenian population, 6000 people died, including many women, elderly, and children. Without a doubt, future historians will uncover the ultimate truth about the Baku tragedy but already today we can say with assurance that Armenians who live outside Baku have distinctly denounced the actions of their compatriots" (Topchibashev, 1993, p. 31). Topchibashev could not have defined those events as genocide. Such a notion simply did not exist in international law at that time. However, this text indicates that Topchibashev was not striving for such a dramatic judgment. This politician, who was quite an authority figure of that time, characterized the events as a civil war and interethnic clashes were central. In addition, Armenians were less to blame than the Dashnaks and Bolsheviks, that is, representatives of political parties. Topchibashev sees the strengthening of the Bolshevik regime as the key outcome of the March events.

Taking an opposite look from the perspective of those who were endowed with the unique characteristics of *hatred* and *instinct of destruction* will allow us to compare viewpoints of contemporaries and participants in those events. Narimanov Nariman Kerbalai Najaf Oglu was a prominent activist in the pro-Communist party "Gummet" (Azeri for "energy"), and he was in Baku at the time of March events. In the spring of 1918 he was the Commissar for Municipal Services at the Baku Council of People's Commissars. Contrary to the 26 Baku Commissars executed by a firing squad (there was one Azerbaijani among them, Meshadi Azizbekov), he lived to see the Soviet regime establish itself in Azerbaijan and to hold important positions in the Bolshevik hierarchy. It is worth mentioning that after monuments to Dzhaparidze and Azizbekov were dismantled in April 2009, the monument to Narimanov remained in Baku. It is now the only monument to a Soviet leader still standing.

Narimanov, in his turn, has spoken about the March 1918 events on numerous occasions. According to him, the culprits of the tragedy were corporate industrialists¹⁷ and Musavat supporters. He calls them intriguers, a

¹⁷ It is interesting to see how Narimanov's memoirs intersect with those of Banin (Um el Banu), the granddaughter of two of the largest petroleum producers of that time, Musa Nagiev and Shamsy Asadullaev: "To quote one British writer, the people became the victims of political scheming. Representatives of the elite stood by each other during the time of political turmoil and bashings regardless of their ethnic background. They were united by common interests. And the massacre was instigated in turns by both sides depending on which one of them had the upper hand at the moment and would benefit most from the situation. If in Turkey Christians were being killed and deported (excesses of World War I), then in Azerbaijan, Armenians were killing the Azerbaijani. The Russian government observed that tragedy with calm indifference, sticking to the "Divide and conquer!" principle. This was an opportunity for the two republics to deplete each other" (Banin, 2006, pp. 97-98).

handful of executioners, the rich who take advantage of the poor (Narimanov, 1989, pp. 118-122). Narimanov also says that the fight to establish the Soviet system turned into interethnic confrontations. It is in the definition of the events' instigators that Narimanov disagrees with Topchibashev. However, both call the Baku March 1918 events a civil war. "On March 18, 1918, a civil war broke in Baku and lasted four days. The 'Wild Division' attempt to smuggle firearms to Lenkoran caused the war. Both sides had been getting ready for the war" (Narimanov, 1925, p. 176).

In later years Narimanov revisited this topic in his internal memo to Joseph Stalin, then already the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks). In this memo he poses the question again, "What happened in 1918?" The memo's text vividly demonstrates that using violence as a means to gain control over the city and its surrounding areas was believed to be quite substantiated. The only problem was that none of the sides had an obvious preponderance of forces. "Since we didn't have enough resources, in the time of need comrade Shahumyan agreed that Armenian forces would act in defense of Soviet power. The right **civil war** had been proceeding as planned until noon the following day, but that afternoon I began to get reports that the war was turning into an ethnic massacre. A lot of characteristic scenes followed, but I shall remain silent on this subject" (Narimanov, 1990, p. 59). The right civil war means armed class struggle. Its transition to ethnic massacre – and this transition alone – is what changed the situation.

In summary, his worst fears came true:

Finally a Muslim delegation comes to me, and they ask to stop the war admitting their defeat. I call comrade Dzhaparidze right away. He promises to send deputies. At this very moment the Dashnaks hit on my apartment. I go into hiding. They take my brother. In an hour my family and I are rescued from the Dashnaks, "defenders of Soviet power," by comrade Shahumyan. After that the Dashnaks ran wild in the city of Baku for three days. Those "defenders of Soviet power" took a lot of Muslim women with children hostage (Narimanov, 1990, pp. 59-60).

In Narimanov's opinion (and to that effect in Topchibashev's opinion as well), violence was a necessary evil, but it could have and should have been confined to class struggle. His memoirs demonstrate the situation's ambiguity.

Shahumyan asks the Dashnaks for help, knowing all too well that it would lead to the massacre of Muslim Turks, and he is also the one who rescues his comrade-in-arms¹⁸.

Politicians from opposing political camps of that time held this perspective on the situation. During Soviet years, those events were dubbed “March combat.” It would be an obvious exaggeration to claim that that subject was taboo. Rather, interpretation of those events was very careful and heavily influenced by the prevailing ideology. The winners – Bolsheviks – have chosen the only version appropriate for the new regime. Here is what was written on the subject in the first Azerbaijani history school textbook:

When the forces of revolution and counterrevolution clashed in Baku the Dashnakist fighting squads that remained in the city massacred people. Soviet troops promptly eradicated those provocative acts on the part of the Dashnaks. <> The Red Army troops led by M. Mamedjarov and A. I. Mikoyan especially distinguished themselves in fighting Musavat troops. As a result of the Soviet forces' fierce attack, the Musavat gangs were completely defeated (Sumbatzade, et al., 1960, pp. 214-215).

The Soviet era narrative doesn't conceal the fact that the massacre occurred. The text above demonstrates specific nature of historical knowledge – facts do not matter as much as their interpretation. The length of materials' presentation bears significance as well. Still, the most important aspect of these Soviet texts is their intention to avoid interpreting and presenting the conflict as interethnic. Only political markers are mentioned for all active participants of the events.

¹⁸ The above-mentioned writer Banin remembers mutual supportiveness and team spirit witnessed in those days. “At four in the morning there was such a loud banging on the front door that it seemed as if the whole house would collapse and all our hopes would collapse with it. Here they are, the Dashnaks! They will cut us all! My father took his revolver and left the room <> And we were getting ready to die... but it looked like we were a bit ahead of ourselves. Some time passed and father and Amina came back. They brought with them our neighbours, Armenians, who lived in the house opposite ours. They came to offer us to hide in their house. They said it would be safer there. What did we have left to do? <> Our hosts met us with hospitality and care. It was worth a lot at that moment and it was very touching” (Banin, 2006, pp. 98-99). Manaf Suleimanov mentions similar cases in his book published towards the end of the Soviet era, which gives a very detailed account of the horrors of the Baku March massacre. “Here is what one of Gadji Zeinalabdin Tagiev's daughters remembers of those days: “When the shooting started Armenian millionaire Melikov send his son George Melikov to get us. George told my father to hurry, ‘Gadji, everybody is really worried about you. My father said to tell you to get ready right away and come to us. The car is downstairs... Let's go! I have already brought a few families’ <> ‘That night George Melikov saved 15 wealthy Muslim families. He was rushing the streets of Baku under gunfire, driving frightened women, children and old people to his father's house. They all stayed with the Melikovs until it got safer.” In his memoirs, Anastas Mikoyan mentions that during those days Stepan Shahumyan took all precautions to take the families of Nariman Narimanov and Meshadibek Azizbekov to his place “and hid them from the Dashnaks for two weeks” (Suleymanov, 1990, pp. 214-215).

We are dealing with political struggle to gain power, which escalated and turned into a “bloody massacre.” Naturally, the Bolsheviks who curbed that outbreak of violence are painted as heroes¹⁹. This version is actually very close to the one that participants of the events considered “correct.”

Though this canonical version of the March Days representation have changed very little throughout Soviet times, some ethnic markers already can be found in the last version of the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic history textbook:

In those March days when the future of the Soviet system in Baku was being decided, Baku workers of all nationalities –Azerbaijani, Russians, Armenians and others – bravely fought counterrevolution shoulder to shoulder. <> In the days of March combat the Dashnaks, eager to turn class struggle into interethnic confrontation, started to rob and kill members of the Azerbaijani population. But the Soviet forces ended those provocative acts on the part of the Dashnaks (Guliev, 1986, p. 80).

Here we once again witness the reproduction of the idea that the struggle for power was purely class-specific and the Bourgeois nationalist Dashnaks were trying *maliciously* to turn it into interethnic clashes and bashings. The concept of Soviet internationalism, something that any Baku school student could observe in the city by the end of the 1970s and 1980s when interethnic conflicts had been made practically non-existent (Rumyantsev, 2008, pp. 243-248), is more outspoken in this version. The Soviet system has long been accepted as the only legitimate power. Fighting it was illegal by definition. The educational history narrative served the Soviet version of internationalism or “peoples’ friendship,” which then had been effective for quite a few years. In the 1950s-1970s, it was already hard to imagine that in 1918 the city was the site of outrageous violence and bashings.

¹⁹ It is worth mentioning a quote from the post-Soviet academic monograph with the meaningful title “The Face of the Enemy.” I wish to emphasize that the author is hardly sympathetic of Bolsheviks in his political views: “On March 19 representatives of the Azerbaijani population appealed to the Baku Council and personally to Stepan Shahumyan to stop the slaughter of defenseless Muslims by raising white flags to signal full surrender. However, the bashings and killings went on through March 21. Only drastic intervention from Dzhaparidze, reinforced by ultimatums from the 36th Turkestan regiment and threats from sailors of Russian Caspian fleet to get out of the Baku Council’s control, put an end to the mass terror. Here is what was later printed in the “Azerbaijan” newspaper on the subject: “The Muslims were being killed through March 21 and the slaying stopped only after the demands of the 36th Turkestan regiment and interference from Dzhaparidze, the Chairman of the Executive Committee. Battle ships “Ardagan” and “Krasnovodsk” approached the eastern docks and threatened to inflict fire damage on the Armenian part of the town if the killings of Muslims did not stop” (Nadjafov, 1994, p. 67).

Here one should understand that in Soviet times the actual knowledge about the specific nature of those confrontations was to a certain extent available and accessible to any specialist or for that matter to any curious average person who wished to familiarize him- or herself with select memoirs of the events' participants. But evidently in the absence of political demand, those texts were of little interest to anyone. There was no direct demand for actualization of these events in the Soviet times, especially for their interpretation through the prism of ethnic conflicts. Research studies (master's and doctorate thesis) were focused on the topics solicited by the system. In this regard, March events (to use the term employed by their contemporaries) or March combat (as per the Soviet interpretation) were not as much a taboo subject as a historical episode that had already received its canonical interpretation. They were remembered but those memories were measured out in carefully calculated doses. If one had wished to make a career in the academic field, one would not have touched that unpopular subject. Therefore the subject was not interesting to professional historians.

The tables turn following the collapse of the USSR. Now only the actions of Musavat Muslim Turks are regarded as strictly legitimate. In this light the actions of Bolsheviks are being interpreted as fighting the only legitimate power, that of the Musavat. In the context of escalating Karabakh conflict brings the enemy image into focus. Therefore, the March events become a highly sought after topic, both in specialized historical texts and in amateur works on the subject of the modern Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict.

The official interpretation of the events was cemented in 1998 when the President Geidar Aliev's, by decree recognized the "March combat" as genocide. Later on this version found its way into history textbooks for schools. In a History textbook for middle schools this story is structured around a conversation among 10-15 Azerbaijani men. An observation made by one of them did not seem radical enough for the other who responds with the following tirade:

*One of the young men angrily interrupted the speaker, "How could one put up with Armenian squads rummaging the city and doing whatever they please? On our own turf the Armenian government seizes our weapons and gets ready to kill the whole nation. What should we call that?" The man who had been speaking before the young man answered, "This is genocide. When the authorities intentionally destroy a nation on its own turf it is called **genocide**. They wish to uproot and kill our people" (Mahmudlu, et al., 2003, pp. 201-202).*

So, according to the post-Soviet official interpretation, the Baku Bolshevik Commune morphs into the Armenian government and civil war or the “March combat” transforms into genocide.

A high school history textbook raises this topic once again. The whole second paragraph entitled “Genocide of the Azerbaijani in March 1918” is devoted to representation of these events. This text reproduces the already familiar discourse. “By stating at the March 15 meeting of the Baku Council that ‘the Baku Council must become the palladium of the civil war in the South Caucasus’ Shahumyan in fact gave an order to start the genocide of the Azerbaijani” (Gaffarov, et al., 2002, p. 11). Narimanov is painted as an outraged patriot who points out that Armenian Dashnaks “spare neither men nor pregnant women” (Gaffarov, et al., 2002, p. 13). Mass killings of the Azerbaijani not only in Baku but in the regions far beyond were the outcome of the events.

As a result of the March genocide, over 12,000 people were killed in Baku alone. The Bolshevik-Dashnaks atrocities spread far beyond Baku. They continued to massacre the Azerbaijani in Gubinskiy, Saliyanskiy, Lenkoranskiy districts. From April 3 through April 16 the Dasnakist fighting squads spearheaded by S. Lalayan and T. Amirov committed bloody atrocities against the civilian population of Shehmahi. <> In Baku province genocide of Muslims (the Azerbaijani) continued through mid-1918. During that time over 20,000 Azerbaijani people were killed” (Gaffarov, et al., 2002, pp. 14-15).

The story ends with the full text of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan’s decree about genocide of the Azerbaijani people. In summary, this is how March 1918 events once again stop being the subject of debate. They are reviewed instead only in the context of one official and this is thus the only admissible interpretation. It is important to note that in the post-Soviet period, the events of March 1918 begin to play a significant role in the “enemy image” construction. Armenians were this enemy in 1918 and, according to the authors of textbooks, this feud continued through the 20th century up to the days of the modern conflict with Armenia.

September 1918

The March events progressed in a manner consistent with the story about friendly, “brotherly” relations between Azerbaijan and the Ottoman Empire. On September 15 the Ottoman forces and newly formed Azerbaijani government and army took over Baku. Once again we are faced with different interpretations of one event. For the Ottoman-Azerbaijani troops under the leadership of Turkish generals, this was definitely about liberating the city. However, in the process of liberation multiple slayings and bashings of its Armenian population occurred (Swietochowski, 1985, pp. 135-139).

A few days after Baku had been captured by the Ottoman army, the government newspaper “Azerbaijan” (Azerbaijani Democratic Republic) in Gyandzhi reported:

Baku has fallen. Together with Baku the pillar of alien good has fallen, the good that seemingly went under the flag of socialism, turning into Bolsheviks today, Mensheviks tomorrow, sometimes simply into the Black Hundreds. They committed various atrocities against locals, against rightful owners of this land. In the end, bribed by the British, they decided to turn the whole Transcaucasia into a large-scale arena for bloody combat. <> All those Dzhaparidzes, Narimanovs, Aiollas and others were the janissaries of the Dashnaks whose actions were at the extreme of shamelessness and impudence. If the blood of tens of thousands of Muslims in Baku, Shehmahi, Lenkoran, Kuba and Dagestan, shed by the “Red Socialist army,” if all these ruins are not enough for die-hard socialists, it’s time to come to our senses. Nuri Pasha’s proclamation to Azerbaijani Armenians addresses the painful subject that has already played and continues to play the most negative role in the history of peaceful cohabitation of Caucasian peoples. <> Regardless of the role that Armenian army troops and the Dashnaksutyun party played in the Baku events, everybody knows²⁰...

One shouldn’t be fooled by the words “Baku has fallen.” Here the winners talk about the event, which is interpreted as liberation of the city, *the only capital of Azerbaijan*. The leaders of Ottoman Turkey and the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic rushed to congratulate each other. “The capture of Baku has lifted

²⁰ Here I try to preserve as much as possible the original’s orthography. The Azerbaijan newspaper, Thursday, September 19, 1918 № 2, p. 2.

the spirit here (as Rasuladze was wiring from Istanbul, I.A.). We celebrated twice. <> Enver Pasha called me on the phone on the night of the celebration to tell me Baku had been taken. I came to him immediately. We were hugging, kissing, celebrating” (Dispatch, 1998, p. 79).

Power-hungry nationalists didn't deny in 1918 that in the taking of Baku, it was the city's Armenian community that had to suffer. For instance, the first Prime Minister of the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic Fatali Khan Khoiskiy mentions this. He was killed by Armenian terrorists in June 1920 in Tiflis as an act of vengeance for “Baku massacre.” At the first meeting of the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic parliament Khoiskiy said:

During the capture of the city in the first two to three days, there have been cases of vengeance and various excesses. The government doesn't shy away from this fact, but the scale of these crimes is grossly exaggerated by the country's hostile elements. How could we prevent excesses during the capture of the city that has been under siege for three months and that has seen horrendous atrocities committed against Muslims; how could the passions not run high? Could any government, even a more empowered one, prevent everything that has happened? What the government did was to punish the perpetrators of those crimes – over a hundred Muslims were hung and killed by a firing squad (Azerbaijani Democratic Republic, 1998, p. 33).

One cannot but notice how similar this speech is to Bolshevik attempts to “justify” and distance themselves from the events²¹. Bolsheviks also came to drastic measures in order to gain power in Baku. At the same time Khoiskiy mentions the rule of law and that the perpetrators were duly punished in accordance with the law. However, the rein of the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic didn't last long, and in April 1920 the Soviet army took Baku. The new power offered its own version of the events.

As the Soviet interpretation would have it, the events of September 1918

²¹ Post-Soviet Azerbaijani historians who acknowledge the fact that bashings of the city's Armenian population had indeed occurred blame Shahumyan for them. “Shahumyan's refusal to surrender at that point (the end of July 1918, I.A.), as well as his refusal to join the larger coalition of parties that comprised the Baku Council, sabotaged the opportunity to peacefully transfer the power to the ADR government and in the aftermath led to multiple civilian casualties among the (this time Armenian) population during the capture of Baku by the Ottoman-Azerbaijani forces on September 14-16” (Mustafazade, 2006, pp. 29, 41). However, according to Khoiskiy the “excesses” were unavoidable. Besides, by the time the city was seized, Shahumyan had been dropped from command already for a month and a half.

involved “the capture of Baku by foreign interventionists.” In a textbook one can come across references to the heroic defense of the city by Bolshevik troops. However, “on September 15 Turkish interventionists broke into Baku. Musavatists – the worst enemies of the Azerbaijani – came to power with the support of Turkish bayonets” (Guliev, 1986, p. 93). As is the case with the “March combat,” Musavat is once again the enemy, now coupled with Turkish interventionists. Still, contrary to references to the massacre committed by the Dashnaks in March, a Soviet textbook does not mention anything about the bashings of Armenians in September 1918. Azerbaijan history textbooks were Soviet but still were written in the Republic itself, and thus in this case we most likely witness the influence that local authorities exerted over the textbooks’ contents.

Finally, the latest post-Soviet textbook offers one more interpretation of the events, the one that emphasizes the Azerbaijani army’s role. The authors talk about a military alliance of Azerbaijani and Turkish forces confronting the Armenian National Council. The enemy had it coming, and the capture of Baku is presented as a great victory. The “determinative battle” commenced and a young reader learns that:

On September 15 the Azerbaijani army entered Baku. On the same day the Ottoman forces under the command of Nuri Pasha entered Baku as well. Azerbaijani population greeted them with joy as liberators. The Turkish army provided much help in defending Azerbaijan’s territorial integrity and independence, losing 1100 soldiers and 30 officers in the process. After two days, on September 17, the national government moved from Gyandzhi to Baku. In Baku the Azerbaijani government proclaimed that the state guaranteed defense of citizens’ life, property and rights (Gaffarov, et al., 2002, pp. 31-32).

Once again the authors withhold any reference to events that followed the capture of Baku. This is simply a story about how “we” were friends with the Turks and how together we fought shoulder to shoulder with “our” common enemy, Armenians. There is no denying that such things indeed happened. But in reality they were much more complex and ambivalent. The version presented in textbooks is rather a myth, constructed from carefully selected and even more carefully forgotten events, which are being interpreted in accordance with the ideology of either collective friendship or feud. In this version the Turks are

only helping the Azerbaijani army and are not striving to create a new empire. The seizing of Baku is now a celebration of righteous and democratic system, in the modern sense of the word, personified by the leaders of the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic. All in all this is an educative example of the Azerbaijani and Turks' cooperative victory over the common enemy.

Conclusion

Consequently we observe how Soviet and post-Soviet systems construct different narratives and myths, form historical discourses in which "we" are always the ideal heroes and "they" are predatory and treacherous enemies. Authors present this perspective through calculated selection of facts (and/or myths), their ideological interpretation, construction of the only officially acknowledged version of a narrative, focus on military and political events alone at the expense of other aspects. This tradition is long-standing and has run through the history of writing Azerbaijan history textbooks since their first publication. It would have been an exaggeration to claim that in this case we deal only with the heritage of the Soviet approach to constructing historical narratives. To a large extent this approach is built on nationalism as we still live in the age of nationalism.

Approaches to constructing historical narratives in Azerbaijan described in this article should not be considered an exception to the general rule. However, in analyzing a concrete case it is worth rethinking the burning issues directly related to it. How is the decision regarding what a school student should and should not know made? It would be naïve to think that professional historians know nothing about these "uncomfortable events" that they "forget" to mention. Why has the experience of deconstructing Soviet historical myths, all the rage among historians at the time of the USSR collapse, not prevented us from constructing "new" discourses and narratives incredibly similar to Soviet ones?

Finally, from a plethora of questions we should come back to the central one already formulated by Marc Bloch: what is history? Is history synonymous with ideology and so can it accommodate various political systems: Soviet, any other totalitarian, autocratic or democratic? Or can history help us in understanding a simple fact that mutual violence, cruelty and hatred cost us much more than even the weakest peace? If the latter is true then we need to break free of the boundaries of historical and political myths.

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THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA'S NEIGHBOURS IN THE LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURIES IN CONTEMPORARY WORLD HISTORY TEXTBOOKS

Satenik Mkrtchyan

Introduction

In one of his books, Ferro states: “Our images of other people, or of ourselves for the matter, reflect the history we are taught as children. Its representation, which is for each one of us a discovery of the world, of the past as societies, embraces all our passing or permanent opinions, so that the traces of our first questioning, our first emotions, remain indelible” (2003, p. ix). Within the structure of any school, the textbook seems to be one of the most influential tools, serving as a basis for the teacher to organize the education and discipline of the students. Moreover, the textbook can perhaps be seen

as a more “regularized and controlled” tool for the state. This is true especially for post-Soviet countries. Most of them still sustain the tradition of teaching one approved version of a history textbook within the schools; hence, many teachers base their classes predominantly on this textbook.

An analysis of textbooks can provide the “official view” that the state tries to impose upon citizens from the early period of their life (Shnirelman, 2003, p.14). This becomes an even more topical issue in states that have had recent histories of conflict and disputes with other states. From this point of view, Luboš Veselý’s (2008) edited volume, which presents work on images of “self” and “others” in national history textbooks of the three South Caucasus republics, is quite useful. Many other studies about post-Soviet countries’ history textbook narratives have also been done (Ferro, 2003; Shnirelman, 2003; Aymermaher K. & Bordyugov G., ed., 1999; CIMERA, 2007; Rumyantsev, 2008; etc.). However, these authors mostly focus on national history textbooks and teaching from the point of view of “us” and “others” (or “enemies”), while classes of world history explore the rise and fall of nations and empires, migrations, invasions, laws and political institutions (Sewal, 2004, p. 8). From this point of view, it is also important to grasp the textbook’s coverage of Neighbouring countries beyond the context of otherness or enmity, looking also at the regional and world environment in the context of “Neighbourhood.” The article aims to present the issue of representation of Armenia’s Neighbouring countries and their nations – Azerbaijan (Azerbaijanis), Georgia (Georgians), Iran (Iranians or Persians), Turkey (Turks) – in the narratives of the current world history textbooks of Armenia during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The article analyzes this historical period as presented in Armenian textbooks taught in the eighth, ninth and eleventh grades (the Ministry of Education and Sciences (MoE) approves one version for each class). It focuses on representations of and narratives about Armenia’s four Neighbouring countries: Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Turkey and Islamic Republic of Iran. The article will also consider the extent to which the view in school textbooks fits with Armenia’s official foreign policy priorities as reflected in the country’s National Security Strategy. Parallel reviews of Armenian history textbooks will aim to produce a more comprehensive picture.

The textbooks have been analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative measures according to UNESCO’s Textbook Research and Revision Guidebook methodology. Quantitatively, we have calculated how much of the

text is allotted to a country (or nation), which can show where the emphasis lies (Pingel, 2010, p. 66). Qualitatively, we have examined the messages that the textbooks transmit (Pingel, 2010, p. 66). A linguistic investigation has also been conducted to understand how messages are characterized and transmitted. In addition, we have analyzed how the text portrays facts, events, persons and processes.

Background

Starting from the sixth grade, Armenian public schools use one world history textbook for each grade, which the MoE approved in the 2010-2011 academic year.

Separate textbooks are currently used to teach Armenian history and world history. Starting from the sixth grade, thirty-four hours are allocated annually for world history classes in schools, while twice as much time is spent on Armenian history classes. In 2001 an experimental textbook entitled “Armenian History in the Context of World History” was published as a joint narrative of both subjects. The MoE soon returned to the previous format of teaching these two subjects with separate textbooks. However, the idea of integrating global (world) and local (Armenian) histories has remained in state programs. Particularly, the “National Standard for World History” says: “Processes of Armenian and world history should be analyzed and presented in historical integrity within one united conceptual framework. However, this approach does not contradict the practice of teaching each subject in a different course” (National Standard, 2009). The structure of world history textbooks reflects this perspective. For example, the ninth grade textbook includes text about Armenia (and Armenians) as related to the broader global theme at a particular time. This section is printed in a smaller font size and presented separately from the main text.

Before analyzing related texts, it is also important to discuss how the state decides which elements of world history to teach. The National Standard says: “It is necessary to mainly focus on the nations and societies that are in the spotlight during the given phase of history. Meanwhile, we should also address the history of Neighbouring nations and states” (2009). The teaching aims, emphasize the need for “introducing respect for historical and cultural traditions of different people in the world into the minds of students” (National Standard, 2009). The same text advocates for “considering the Armenian world as a

unique, inter-civilizational world, which has participated in the key processes of world history” (2009).

Soviet to Post-Soviet Historiography Shifts

In general, historians, historical narratives, and cases of use and abuse of history have played important roles in the process of Soviet collapse and the formation of independent republics. Correspondingly, historiography was one of the first disciplines to react to, undergo, and in some cases, initiate changes. In the long run, this process has correspondingly impacted school history textbooks. One of the main avenues for shifting focus in Armenia included a ‘Gharabaghization’ of the history, as Iskandaryan and Harutyunyan mention (1999, pp. 147-160). Another major revision concerned the idea and the period of the First Democratic Republic of Armenia (from 1918 to 1921). Its thorough and objective research was absent during the Soviet period because discussions of the period and the First Republic were either taboo or were replaced with several unconvincing and negative clichés (Harutyunyan, 2004).

Post-Soviet historiography moved from demonization towards idealization of these periods of history, resulting in diametrically opposed views on them (Harutyunyan, 2004, p. 63). This change is evident when comparing the narratives of the Soviet and post-Soviet textbooks. “Friendship (or brotherhood) of nations” is another “revised” concept within the wider shifts of historiography, which are also closely tied to ethno-political conflicts in the region. The textbooks of the newly independent republics also reflect this. Above I discuss the tendency for increased focus on Armenia-Azerbaijan historical relations. In a recent article, Minasyan speaks about “black spots concerning relations between Armenia and its Neighbours.” He refers to how Russia, considered a taboo in Soviet times, recently began to be included in newly published works; these include studies dedicated to the history of Armenian-Georgian relations, as well as new works researching relations between Bolshevik Russia and Kemalist Turkey of the 1920s and several aspects regarding their impact on the development of Armenia. Later he also adds that new studies have provided fresh insights into the historical relations between Armenia and Iran (Persia), Byzantium and other countries without the “ideological enmity” and political restrictions of the Soviet period. Armenia’s independence brought about new progress in the research of the Armenian Genocide in Ottoman Turkey beyond

the work of the more recent decades of Soviet times (Minasyan, 2009, p. 12).

Authors and their professional backgrounds have significantly defined the character of the shift of historiography and history textbook writing within post-Soviet realities. Zolyan and Zakaryan mention two main trends. First, the majority of historians writing textbooks represent middle and older generations who seek to preserve continuity in relation to the Soviet-era Armenian historiography (which, in turn, was based in many respects on the achievements of the pre-Soviet Armenology). Secondly, the authors of the textbooks are also leading scholars at the Academy of Sciences. This makes it possible to minimize the distance between the textbooks' more ideology-based discourse and the comparatively more neutral academic historiographical discourse (Zolyan & Zakaryan, 2008, p. 16). The same is true for the textbooks of world history presented here, with two editors-in-chief representing the Institute of Oriental Studies and Yerevan State University.

Georgia and Georgians; Azerbaijan and Azerbaijanis

Quantitative measures: The narrative in the textbooks does not contain the terms “Georgian” or “Azerbaijani” (in terms of ethnic group or people). Instead, they speak about Georgia and Azerbaijan. Out of the three textbooks analyzed, only two mention Georgia a total of three times: once in the ninth grade textbook and twice in the eleventh grade textbook. Azerbaijan is mentioned once each in the ninth and eleventh grade textbooks.

The *linguistic dimension* of the analysis shows that the narrative has a precise style, and the authors do not use any attributes regarding the countries or people.

What the text tells us: Within its discussion of the foundation of the USSR (1922-1939), the ninth grade textbook uses a smaller font size text to state: “the Transcaucasian Federation consisting of Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan was formed in 1922...” (Stepanyan, ed., 2008, p. 46). Usually the smaller font size text is used for the Armenia-related texts in the eighth and ninth grade textbooks.

One can find a slight reference to Georgia in the ninth grade textbook under the “Aims of World War I participants” sub-theme, which discusses the goal of the “Ottoman rule.” The textbook argues that the Ottoman Empire sought to “disunite Russia, conquering Eastern Armenia, Georgia, the whole Caucasus,

Crimea, and Middle Asia from Russia and Iranian Atrpatakan from Iran” (Stepanyan, ed., 2008, p. 24). The same text has another similar reference to Georgia when speaking about the defeat of the Quadruple Alliance: “As a result of loss and revolutions, the four empires – Russian, German, Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian — collapsed. This brought about the formation of new states: Poland, Latvia, Finland, Lithuania, Estonia, Yugoslavia, Austria, Hungary, Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan” (p. 24).

Even a quick look at the results of textbook reviews shows that Georgia and Azerbaijan are rarely presented in the context of world history. While the Armenian history textbooks chronologically run parallel to those on world history, they also provide narratives of Neighbouring countries, with their main focus on Georgia and Azerbaijan. Thus, textbooks of Armenian history (2008, 2005, 1996), in the framework of the First Republic of Armenia (1918), also speak about Georgian and Azerbaijani Republics in the context of foreign relations. Particularly, the textbook (2008) offers students an introductory text including statements with a friendly attitude towards Georgia and Georgian people. The “establishment of good-Neighbourly relations with direct Neighbours, Turkey, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Persia,” is also presented as one of the directions of foreign policy of the Republic of Armenia. A “friendly” country, second only after Iran among the Neighbours, Georgia is discussed as a country that helped Armenia to be linked to the rest of the world, especially through trade. Further passages assess the relationship between Armenians and Georgians prior to the given period as “friendly and...positive,” and stress their “joint struggle against alien conquerors.” This also aligns with the broader recognition of Georgia as a Neighbour, declared in the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Armenia (approved in 2007). The Strategy begins with the following passage: “The relations between Armenia and Georgia have traditionally been friendly and significantly facilitate the maintenance of stability in the region” (National Security Standard, 2007).

Right after the subchapter about the relations of the First Republic of Armenia with Georgia, the Armenian history textbook currently taught in schools speaks about Armenia-Azerbaijan relations. The textbook says: “The relations with Azerbaijan were much more complicated, with especially acute and continuous borderline territorial disputes” (Barkhudaryan, 2008, p. 25). According to Zolyan and Zakaryan, the Armenian history textbook describes events around Nagorno-Karabakh in 1918, emphasizing the British decision to establish the

Azerbaijani Governor-General's administration on this territory. Moreover, the decision to hand Karabakh over to Azerbaijan in 1921 was assigned to the Soviet leaders¹ (Vesley, ed., 2008, p. 26). Zolyan and Zakaryan, in their contribution to the collection of articles on history textbooks in the Caucasus (2008), note that “overall, within the frames of the traditional national Armenian narrative, the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict of that period had always been of secondary importance compared to the events in the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, the textbooks devote considerable greater attention to the problem of West Armenia (East Anatolia) and Armenian-Turkish relations. Besides Ottoman Turkey, the other important actors include Russia and Western countries. Azerbaijan's role is modest compared to their involvement; even in the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflicts, the responsibility is to an extent not assigned to Azerbaijanis themselves, but to external forces” (Vesley, ed., 2008, pp. 26-27). Another episode relevant to this period is the 1905-1906 “Armenian-Tatar” (Armenian-Azerbaijani) clashes. According to the same authors, the origin of this conflict stems from tsarist Russia's provocation, along with the influence of “young Turkish agents” who advocated a Pan-Turkish ideology (p. 27).

In comparison, the National Security Strategy currently views both Turkey and Azerbaijan as external threats with the potential to use force against the Republic of Armenia². The Strategy mostly depicts an image of an “opponent” from whom danger might be expected, rather than of an “enemy” per se. It also highlights the need and intention to normalize relations. Regarding Azerbaijan, listed as a Neighbouring country, “diplomatic relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan have not been established due to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. Azerbaijan has adopted a policy aimed at the exclusion of Armenia from all regional cooperation projects. Azerbaijan continuously refuses to open its communication routes with Armenia and denies all Armenian and international initiatives to engage in bilateral cooperation in an attempt to exert pressure on Armenia regarding the Nagorno Karabakh conflict” (National Security Strategy, 2007).

¹ Though the authors note that later on in the section about the break up of the USSR and the “Third Republic”, Azerbaijan is seen almost exclusively in a negative context.

² The direct passage from the Strategy is the following: “The Republic of Azerbaijan continues to pursue an aggressive policy of militant posturing that explicitly threatens the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Nagorno Karabakh”...“There is an additional danger that the Republic of Turkey, a strategic partner of Azerbaijan, may also pose an additional threat. Taking into consideration the universally known provisions of international law, the Republic of Armenia considers the trade and transport blockade imposed by Turkey and Azerbaijan as a use of force against the Republic of Armenia” (National Security Strategy, 2007).

Iran and Iranians

Quantitative measures: The narrative in the textbooks does not contain the term “Iranian” (in terms of ethnic group or people); it speaks about Iran. The eighth grade textbook contains two references to Atrpatakan in Iran. There are more references to Iran in the eighth and eleventh grade textbooks in the context of two themes: 1) Iran’s radical changes after World War I, including the period between the 1921 state coup and the 1941 resignation of Reza Shah (the ninth grade textbook allocates 1.7 pages to Iran out of the total six pages in the chapter), and 2) the November 1943 Tehran Conference with the three Allied leaders of the USA, Great Britain and the USSR (each textbook contains one passage).

The *linguistic dimension* of the analysis shows that the narrative has a precise style, and the authors do not use any attributes regarding the countries or people. However, the title of the ninth grade textbook refers to Iran, along with Turkey, Japan, China, and India, as a “Traditional society of the East.”

What the text tells us: The eighth grade textbook contains two references to Atrpatakan: 1) “The aim of Ottoman Turkey, which supported the Triple Alliance, was to conquer the Caucasus, Crimea, Atrpatakan of Iran and expand to the Middle East; in other words, they sought to fulfill Pan-Turkish purposes” (Stepanyan, ed., 2007, p. 146); 2) The “Battle of Sarighamish took place on the Caucasian front (December 1914 - January 1915), where the Russian army heavily defeated Ottoman troops. Furthermore, Russians expelled Turks from the province of Atrpatakan in Iran” (p. 146).

The ninth and tenth grade textbooks describe the “time of radical changes” in Iran following World War I, which occurred first under the “control” of Great Britain then continued under its “influence.” In concluding about the period, the authors write: “A significant page of Iran’s recent history came to an end. It laid the basis for the modernization of the country” (Stepanyan, ed., 2008, p. 57).

The eleventh grade textbook emphasizes the international relations aspect and speaks less about the internal changes in the country. On the contrary, the domestic aspect is highlighted more in the ninth grade textbook. The eleventh grade textbook, moreover, also mentions Soviet Russia in addition to Great Britain as an influential regional factor. One can read the following text regarding Soviet Russia’s interests: “Improvement of relations between Iran and Great Britain caused the dissatisfaction of Soviet Russia...aim[ing] for the Sovietization of Iran, which eventually failed” (Qosyan, ed., 2010, p. 90).

The ninth grade textbook authors follow the course of events in Iran. “After the 1921 revolution in Iran, Reza Khan dissolved the previous regime (the royal family of Ghajars). A Republic was not founded in Iran. Instead, the parliament recognized Reza Khan as Shah, thus founding the royal family of Pahlavis” (Stepanyan, ed., 2008, p. 57). The textbook describes changes in the country: these include “rule of power,” the central element of which were the military and judiciary; enforcement of order and justice in the country; nationalization of advanced branches of the economy and cancellation of foreign monopolies; development of road construction and its own industry, and limiting of clerical influence and penetration of Western ideas into Iran through educational reforms (p. 57). Furthermore, the textbook also presents the negative view of the Shah’s governance, including “his autocratic power, persecution of dissidents, and elimination of parliament” (p. 57). Additionally, the authors describe another weak point of the Shah, namely “his orientation to Germany in foreign relations, which became detrimental to him. In 1941, under the military pressure of the USSR and Great Britain, he resigned in favour of his son” (p. 57). A map of Iran in 1920s also accompanies the narrative (p. 56).

The ninth and eleventh grades textbooks turn again to Iran in the framework of the period we discuss in this article as a country where the leaders of the USA, Great Britain and USSR met in 1943 (Stepanyan, ed., 2008, p. 82; Qosyan, ed., 2010, p. 90). The tone and the content of the textbook also aligns with the National Security Strategy, in which the Islamic Republic of Iran is seen in the light of “traditional Neighbourly relations based on a number of shared realities: shared borders, historic and cultural ties, and mutual economic interests” (National Security Strategy, 2007).

Turkey and Turks

Quantitative measures: For the late 19th century and early 20th century, the authors use the terms “Ottoman Rule” and (Kemalist) Turkey (though sometimes they also use “Republic of Turkey”) in the eighth, ninth and eleventh grade textbooks. In the eighth grade textbook, the authors directly mention “Ottoman Rule” in four passages covering World War I. Additionally, the authors speak indirectly about this subject in text with a smaller font size in two passages. The ninth grade textbook devotes 2.3 pages to Turkey out of the total six pages in the chapter. Meanwhile, the eleventh grade textbook talks about Turkey in

one page out of the total four pages for the chapter, which includes also a photograph of Mustafa Kemal.

The *linguistic dimension* of the analysis shows that Turks are mentioned here as a nation along with the name of the country, unlike in the texts regarding Iran, Georgia, and Azerbaijan. The authors use the following wording: Ottoman Rule, Ottoman Empire, Kemalist Turkey, Young Turkish government (“mladoturki”), and Republic of Turkey. Similar to the other groups, the textbooks contain attributes or attributive descriptions neither for the country nor for the people.

What the text tells us: The textbooks address the Ottoman Empire and Turkey in the framework of two big themes: (1) World War I and (2) changes that occurred in the East in the first half of the 20th century. Moreover, the concrete positioning of Turkey varies quite a bit from book to book, but all of them discuss Turkey as an Eastern country. Thus, the ninth grade textbook offers the theme, “Modernization trends of the traditional societies of the East,” providing separate subchapters about Turkey, Iran, and China and describing them as “semi-colonies for the developed countries of the West” (Stepanyan, ed., 2008, p. 52). The eleventh grade textbook presents Turkey along with Iran, Japan, China, and India within a longer chapter on Far and Middle Eastern countries.

Several lessons in the textbook present World War I and mention the Ottoman Empire in relation to the following events and themes: aims and projects for participation in the war, the Caucasian front of World War I, the Armenian Genocide, and the Treaties of Brest-Litovsk and Sevres. The eighth grade textbook mostly focuses on World War I, whereas the ninth grade textbook describes the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and events related to the foundation of the Republic of Turkey.

World War I, the Triple Alliance and the Pan-Turkish project of the Ottoman Empire

The eighth grade textbook refers to the “Ottoman Empire” as one of the parties adjacent to the Triple Alliance with its special project to “occupy the Caucasus, Crimea, Iranian Atrpatakan and spread to Middle East, in other words, to realize its Pan-Turkish aims” (Stepanyan, ed., 2007, p. 146). One can note the same concept in the tenth grade textbook, which offers an explanation of the rationale for these activities. “The Ottoman Rule aimed at

Russia's disintegration, to seize from it Eastern Armenia, Georgia, the whole Caucasus, Crimea, and Middle Asia, as well as Iranian Atrpatakan from Iran. The government led by the Young Turks wanted to realize their envisioned Pan-Turkish project. One part of that project was the ethnic cleansing of Armenia through the mass deportation of Armenians" (Qosyan, ed., 2010, p. 24).

Caucasian Front

While the eighth grade textbook focuses on the West European and East European (Russian) fronts, the two main fronts of the World War I, it also mentions the Caucasian front. The text particularly says: "Russo-Turkish military actions took place predominantly in Western Armenia"(Stepanyan, ed., 2007, p. 148). Speaking further about the Battle of Sarighamish (December 1914 and January 1915), the eighth grade textbook states: "The Russian army roundly defeated the Ottoman troops. Further on Russians also expelled Turks from the Atrpatakan province of Iran" (p. 149). The Caucasian front is also discussed in the eleventh grade textbook.

The Young Turkish Government, the Armenian Genocide, and Point Four of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty

The eighth grade textbook has a structure that also provides space for Armenia-related information to be presented separately, attached to a specific theme printed in a smaller font size. Thus, in sections related to World War I, one can also find information about the Armenian Genocide and Point Four of Brest-Litovsk Treaty incorporated as a result of Turkey's demand. The ninth grade textbook says: "Taking advantage of the war turmoil, the Young Turkish government realized its planned genocide of the Western Armenians. Of the total population, 2.5 million Armenians from Mets Yeghern suffered, 1.5 million were killed and the rest were expelled from their homes and deprived of their property. Other peoples of the Ottoman Empire, including Greeks, Assyrians, etc., also underwent a genocide. It was only after World War II in 1948 that international laws were adopted to define genocide as a crime against humanity. Despite this, modern Turkey denies the Armenian Genocide in order to avoid responsibility for it, whereas numerous states and world organizations have recognized and condemned it as the first genocide of the 20th century" (Stepanyan, ed., 2007, p. 150).

The eleventh grade textbook has nearly the same information about the Young Turk's government, though it is integrated into the narrative. It says: "The government of the Young Turks initiated the genocide of Armenians, which had been planned three to four years before the war. During 1914-1916, the Armenians of Western Armenian and Asia Minor were deported and annihilated. Around 1.5 million Armenians were killed, while another one million were expelled from their homes and deprived of their property" (Qosyan, ed., 2010, p. 26).

The eighth grade textbook, when describing the course of World War I and discussing its outcomes, also speaks about "the degrading preconditions that Germany and its allies imposed upon the Bolsheviks."

In addition, it mentions the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, signed on March 3, according to which Russia gave up Poland, Ukraine, the major part of Belarus, and the Baltic States and had to pay heavy military fines (Stepanyan, ed., 2007, pp. 155-156). In a smaller font size, usually reserved for discussions of Armenia and/or Armenians, the text says: "The Brest-Litovsk Treaty had disastrous outcomes. Germany and its allies, who were about to be defeated, launched an attack in the spring and summer of 1918. German troops almost reached Paris, while Turkish troops occupied Western Armenia, Transcaucasia and Eastern Armenia. These actions were accompanied by massacres and robberies of peaceful citizens" (Stepanyan, ed., 2007, pp. 155-156).

The eleventh grade textbook also speaks about the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in the framework of World War I, which had "particularly disastrous outcomes for Armenia... Not only Western Armenia, but also Kars and Ardahan were granted to Turkey by the Brest-Litovsk Treaty. Moreover, after Russian troops left, Armenia remained alone against Turkey in the war and had to fight for life or death" (Qosyan, ed., 2010, p. 31).

Treaty of Versailles, Ottoman Rule and the Treaty of Sevres with Points 88-93 Related to Armenia

The ninth grade textbook continues on the topic of World War I by discussing the Paris Congress and Treaty of Versailles. Furthermore, the narrative says, "After the Versailles Treaty, similar treaties were signed with Germany's allies as well, specifically, Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire. They lost territories, were obliged to limit their military, and had to pay military fines

to the victors” (Stepanyan, ed., 2008, p. 10). Particularly, “the Ottoman Empire, according to the 10 August 1920 treaty signed in Sevres, a suburb of Paris, rescinded numerous territories in Europe, the Arabian Peninsula, and Asia Minor, including Western Armenia and Cilicia. The basis for future sovereign states such as Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Kurdistan was formed. The united and democratic Republic of Armenia was also established” (Stepanyan, ed., 2008, p. 10).

The Armenia-related text, in a smaller font size but attached to the main narrative, discusses points 88-93 of the Sevres Treaty, which concern Armenia. The textbook says, “the Ottoman government recognized Armenia’s rights to Western Armenia. US President Woodrow Wilson’s commission made corrections regarding the Armenian-Turkish border. Armenia was granted more than 90,000 square kilometers of territory... Armenia thus would have access to the sea. These territories were to be added to those 70,000 square kilometers so that the Republic of Armenia would become a pan-Armenian state” (Stepanyan, ed., 2008, p. 10). The ninth grade textbook offers students a map entitled “seperation of the Ottoman Empire according to the Sevres Treaty” (Stepanyan, ed., 2008, p. 10).

Turkey as One of the Eastern Traditional Societies

World history textbooks in Armenia speak about Turkey and Iran in the beginning of the 20th century in sections of a chapter entitled “Eastern Countries.” The ninth grade textbook, in the framework of the eighth theme related to modernization trends of Eastern traditional societies, allocates separate subchapters to Turkey, Iran and China. As mentioned above, these countries are described as “semi-colonies for developed countries of the West” (Stepanyan, ed., 2008, p. 52). In the eleventh grade textbook, Turkey, Iran and Arab countries are included in a chapter entitled “countries of Middle East and Near East³ in the first half of the 20th century.”

The subchapter related to Turkey in the ninth grade textbook is entitled “Kemalist Turkey.” Within two pages, the authors start from the Ottoman Empire’s loss in World War I and the truce signed in October 1918 and end

³ As the Armenian Soviet Encyclopedia suggests (1981), the terms “Near East” and “Middle East” when used together indicate the countries on the territories in the West of Asia and North-East of Africa together with Iran and Afghanistan.

with elimination of the monarchy (sultanate) and declaration of the Republic of Turkey in 1923. The eleventh grade textbook adds an explanation of this process, saying: "Territorial losses and the sultan's inability to stop the collapse of the empire facilitated unification of nationalistic forces under the guidance of Mustafa Kemal" (Qosyan, ed., 2010, p. 74).

Both textbooks present changes that occurred in the country. The ninth grade textbook particularly notes many of them, such as "adoption of a constitution, secularization of the state and courts, adoption of the Latin alphabet and European calendar, general education reform and development of a higher education system, civic marriages, European dresses, and some positive changes in the economy" (Stepanyan, ed., 2008, p. 55). The eleventh grade textbook also discusses Kemal's aims, stating that he "directed the country's modernization policy with a view of westernization" (Qosyan, ed., 2010, p. 74).

Furthermore, in the concluding part of the narrative, the authors address the weak points of Qemal's governance, particularly noting, "Though Turkey became a republic, it was not democratic. Power was concentrated in the hands of Qemal and his entourage, and the military supported them. The president was presented as a hero; all successes in the country were attributed to him. A strong rule of power extinguished all opposing voices. Displeasing parties and non-governmental organizations were shut down. National minorities such as Greeks, Armenians, Kurds, and Assyrians, experienced persecution" (Stepanyan, ed., 2008, p. 55). Both textbooks note the fact that Kemal was granted the honour of being named Atatürk (which means father of Turks). In the framework of this theme, the textbook offers two visual materials, a photograph of Mustafa Qemal (Stepanyan, ed., 2008, p. 53) and a map of 1920s Turkey (p. 54).

Thus, Turkey is referenced in two major contexts, within a longer discussion and in the framework of two main themes: modernization of Turkey, and World War I and the Ottoman Empire as viewed from the point of view of the discourse of the Armenian Genocide. The National Security Strategy (2007) also refers to the Armenian Genocide, stating: "Armenia aspires for the universal recognition and condemnation, including by Turkey, of the Armenian Genocide, and sees it both as a restoration of historical justice and as a way to improve the overall situation in the region, while also preventing similar crimes in the future." Above we also discussed that Turkey is seen as the next external threat supporting Azerbaijan in terms of potentially using force. For both countries, the textbooks mention the absence of diplomatic relations.

Conclusion

This article has shown that broadly speaking, the Armenian world history textbooks do not contain any “Neighbourhood” discourse. In particular, they do not contain chapter or subchapter titles referring to Neighbours or nearby countries, although textbooks of national history present relations with two of the Neighbours of the First Republic of Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan. Interestingly, the National Standard states that the “main attention should be placed on those nations and societies that are on the first line for the given period of historical development. Simultaneously, the history of Neighbouring countries should be addressed” (National Standard, 2011). Apparently the broad context of world history and limits of the textbook volume did not allow for a more narrow country-specific approach; instead, a wider regional classification is used. On the one hand, with the focus on “the nations and societies on the first line of historical development,” we see the Euro-centric historiographical influence; on the other, we see elements that signify Armenia’s Neighbours. A similar blend of approaches is noted regarding the interpretation of history. Particularly, the National Standard for the subject of Armenian history offers that the “civilizational” principle should be used in combination with the “achievements of social formation theory” (National Standard, 2009, p. 7). The textbook authors and national standards for the subjects have classified the societies of the period into two types: progressive industrial societies (e.g., Europe, USA), and traditional societies of the East (e.g., Ottoman Empire, Iran, and Kemalist Turkey).

As another main theme, the narrative in the textbooks does not contain the terms “Georgian,” “Azerbaijani,” and “Iranian” (in terms of ethnic groups or people); they speak only about Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Iran. For the period of the late 19th century and early 20th century, the authors of the textbooks use the terms “Ottoman Rule” and (Kemalist) Turkey (though sometimes they also use “Republic of Turkey”) in the eighth, ninth and eleventh grade textbooks. In contrast with discussions of the other three Neighbours, the authors often use “Turk” to refer to the ethnic group.

In terms of the content and concrete texts on the different countries, two broad conclusions can be drawn as a result of the analysis. Firstly, in the 1920s and 1930s, the textbooks describe “radical changes in the semi-colonial Eastern countries such as Iran and Turkey, which aimed at modernization of their economy, political system, culture, and everyday life.” But this is presented

as being introduced from above and having faced major challenges. In Iran Reza Shah led these changes, while in Turkey Mustafa Kemal spearheaded the reforms. Secondly, Turkey is discussed also in the context of World War I, specifically in relation to the Caucasian front and the Treaties of Brest-Litovsk and Sevres. It is also viewed as part of the discourse on the Armenian Genocide. This is apparently one more “testimony” supporting the perspective that the 1915 genocide has become one of the key perceptions, or “root paradigms,” to form the modern Armenian worldview, and it appears often in representations of Armenian identity (Dudwick, 1989; Abrahamian, 2006; Marutyan, 2009; Panossian, 2005).

Narratives in the textbooks that have been written at different times (the last edition we analyzed was published in 2008) and those in Armenia’s 2007 National Security Strategy generally use the same discourse. Namely, Georgia is seen as a “traditionally friendly country” and relations with Iran as “traditionally Neighbourly based on shared realities.” Azerbaijan and Turkey, however, are seen mostly as opponents who pose a potential threat, underlining the need and intention to normalize relations.

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THE IMAGES OF SELF AND NEIGHBOURS IN GEORGIAN HISTORY TEXTBOOKS: REPRESENTATION OF THE EVENTS OF THE BEGINNING OF THE 20TH CENTURY IN THE POST-SOVIET PERIOD

Nino Chikovani

Introduction

The purpose of this article is to trace the dynamics of representation of the images of Neighbours in narratives of the events of the beginning of the 20th century in post-Soviet history textbooks developed for Georgian general education schools.

The timeliness and significance of researching this particular subject are attributable to several considerations. First of all, it should be highlighted that “Conceptions of history teaching and textbooks created on their basis represent

one of the most important tools for shaping national identity and collective historical awareness” (Stojanovic, 2001, p. 27). Textbooks represent a mirror that reflects society. They demonstrate not only values but also stereotypes that in many cases prevail in a given society.

After the collapse of the USSR the processes of deconstruction and reconstruction of the past, much as in the rest of the post-Soviet countries, started in Georgia as well. By the end of the 1980s, since the practice of elective courses had not been introduced yet, Georgian history was made a mandatory class in universities, not only for liberal arts majors, but also for hard sciences, natural sciences and economics majors. For post-Soviet countries in general and Georgia in particular the main objective was to design a national history curriculum and develop congruent textbooks.

Creating textbooks is by all means the state’s prerogative. The state determines goals and standards for teaching history as well as key guidelines for representing national and world history. To a large extent, the images of self and others are conditioned by these guidelines and principles. History textbooks are closely connected with the historiographic tradition reflected in the master narrative:

Dominant narrative as expressed in key texts, which are widely received as being particularly subtle, masterful and authoritative. Being legitimized and institutionalized, they provide narrative framework of national history writing, providing us with the exact and bright cases of the perception and interpretation of the past, demonstrating who are the central figures and actors of national history, who are we and who are others, who are described as enemies (Berger, 2009, p. 33).

Even if objectives for teaching history had been identified and articulated in the best possible way, it would have been unwise to expect university or school textbooks to “outstrip” historiographic reality.

What exactly was this reality like in the 1990s? Methodological taboos and limitations that had existed in historical studies vanished following the demise of the USSR. It looked as though Marxist historical materialism and the formational approach would give way to methodological pluralism. However this proved to be a greater challenge than expected, which could be explained by the following factors:

► The Iron Curtain was blocking Soviet territories from the rest of the world not only in terms of politics and ideology. Soviet scholars were out of touch with key modern processes in the world of science. This was especially apparent in the social science fields, and with new approaches, methodologies and theoretical doctrines. A great deal of time was required to apprehend and conceptualize new tendencies characteristic of then current historical studies and to gain a better knowledge and understanding of schools and trends that had emerged in the second half of the 20th century.

► Inertia proved to be quite strong. Historians got used to the monomethodological approach since it made their work easier and much more comfortable since it provided the only possible discourse for interpretation of historical facts and bestowed upon them the role of “keepers of the past” in service to the state, first the Soviet, then the newly independent national one.

► During Soviet times teaching history was considered one of the most important tools in the shaping the new Soviet identity, and it was also highly ideology driven. De-ideologization of history became a significant task for post-Soviet historiography. However, this also turned out to be quite challenging: as noted in studies of the subject, instead of de-ideologization, communist ideology was simply replaced by either unprofessional, unqualified or parapatriotic narrative (Reisner, 1998, p. 414). This certainly did little to facilitate the further development of historical studies.

► The tendency to determine “historical truth” – one that should be reflected as the only “correct,” institutionalized, official, positivist version of history – remained (and is still going strong in some cases). So did the clear divide between “Georgian History” and “World History.” As Reisner notes, “It is implicitly understood that ‘World History’ deals with the history of the non-Georgian world” (1998, p. 414).

As is the usual case for countries undergoing critical transformations, in the beginning of the 1990s people in Georgia turned to history seeking to find answers to all their questions. Blank spots in history started to be filled in; topics that had been taboo in the Soviet period “came back” to historiographic texts. The above-mentioned factors played their role in that process, too: new topics were narrated in accordance with old methodology. Since historical materialism as an approach had been rejected – verbally, at least, and there was still a long way to go in conceptualizing and mastering new methodological options, the

narrative was beginning to resemble a chronicle, filling up with more and more new (or well-forgotten) facts and names.

Having compared the majority of historiographic texts of the 1990s with the contents of the eight volumes of the “Essays on Georgian History” published in the 1970s just a few changes can be identified:

1. Topics and quotes referring back to the classics of Marxism and Leninism, which in Soviet times had been obligatory for historical studies of any period, disappeared;

2. The narrative representing the history of the 19th and 20th century is radically different;

3. Previously taboo subjects are represented through a massive amount of empirical evidence;

4. The context of Georgian history has been changed. In the “Essays” the focus is on the historically hostile and antagonistic political environment as well as on the need to resolve the situation by finding a reliable like-minded ally. That need presumably led to voluntary annexation to Russia and overcoming the threat of physical eradication, and then to joining the family of Soviet peoples. On the contrary, the modern version emphasizes the threat of losing national identity as a result of the colonizers’ policy of first the Russian Empire and then its successor, the Soviet state.

It could be argued that the master narrative of Georgian history created by I. Javakhishvili in the beginning of the 20th century lives on, but the environment in which this narrative was crafted is radically different from current realities. This was the time when Georgian nationalism was being established: “As a rule, nation was perceived *vis-à-vis* others, who were often constructed as ‘national enemies’. Historians were trying to demonstrate that the markers, like language, common history, territory or culture, were genuinely pure, important and durable” (Carvalho & Gemenne, 2009, p. 3).

Georgian academic historiography was developing in confrontation with the policy of the Russian Empire, which had as its primary objective the reconstruction of the historical memory of the Georgian people so that it would fit the Empire’s goals. In that environment, history became the main reason and foundation for the reconstruction and preservation of an ethnic identity that had been seriously threatened. “The theme of suffering and repression was prominent in the wide range of national histories, which enabled to mark

out national history from oppressive ‘other’” (Berger, 2009, pp. 30-32). In the modern times of national historiography establishment the “oppressing other” found its representation in the image of Russia, and in Neighbouring Muslim countries as well – to account for earlier periods.

In summary, the modern Georgian historical master narrative has retained all of the above-mentioned features. The narrative developed in the beginning of the past century, having gone through formal transformations but having nevertheless persevered in Soviet times, has altered its form once again to comply with the new context in the 1990s. Thus the ethnic concept of history has found a new life.

The First Generation of Post-Soviet Textbooks

New textbooks, penned by well-known historians, had already been developed by the end of the 1980s. Those textbooks contained a lot of facts that were nevertheless presented in the same old manner which emphasized the consecutive interchange of socio-economic formations.

After Georgia had gained its independence, several textbooks were written in the spirit and tradition of positivist historiography. They were full of various facts and heroic rhetoric. Those textbooks were authored by university professors which, according to some experts, made them “conceptually too difficult for students” (Gundare, 2007, p. 31). Georgian history textbooks contained way more information, including representations of previously taboo facts and events. Special emphasis was placed on the history of the Democratic Republic of Georgia (1918-1921) and on the events of the beginning of the 20th century. Such fascination with rote facts was driven by a number of reasons among which one could name the long-standing tradition of the Marxist version of positivist historiography, difficulties with conceptualizing various new theoretical approaches (and in some cases a plain unwillingness to take them into consideration), the quest for “real history” that was seen as a way to find the “right” answers to the challenges arising before the newly independent country, and last but not least, the opportunity to expand the national history curriculum since the rather extensive course on the history of the USSR was no longer a part of it. The focus was once again on memorizing. In 1990s Georgia, much as in other post-Soviet countries, teaching history turned very ethnocentric. As noted by I. Gundare, that period saw the rapid jump from one “True” history

that examined everything through the class struggle perspective to the other “True” history that had a Georgian perspective as its cornerstone (Gundare, 2006, p. 32). As was the case with Soviet texts on the subject, political history prevailed in those textbooks, but economic, social and cultural history was still touched upon as well (Lomashvili, any edition from the 1990s to 2005; Vachnadze, Guruli, Bakhtadze any edition from the 1990s¹). There was still a long and hard way to go to achieve methodological pluralism and a multi-perspectival approach.

How were the Neighbours represented in those first-generation textbooks? The narrative on the history of the middle ages highlighted cases where Georgians joined forces in fighting foreign invaders and class oppressors with those Neighbours that later became their “brothers in the USSR” (e.g., the joint struggle of Georgian and Armenian people against Persian conquerors in the times of king Vakhtang Gorgasali in the 5th century, the Babek uprising of Georgian and Azerbaijani people against Arabs and so on). In the narratives on later historic periods, the Muslim world was presented mainly as the enemy, since it posed the greatest threat of not only conquering but also of assimilation and depriving the country of its national and ethnic identity. From the 15th century on, the Russian Empire began to gain proximity and significance as the only hope in breaking free from Muslim entrapment.

“Children of 7-10 years of age already have a simple, stereotypical perception of different social groups including ethnic ones with whom the children had no or hardly any personal contact” (Weigl & Maliszkievicz, 1997, p. 185). Such stereotypes were developing towards non-Soviet Southern Neighbours with which Georgia had had long-standing, challenging and manifold ties, fully severed after the establishment of the Soviet system. Naturally, textbooks are only one of the many media, and other media (ideological propaganda, mass media, etc.) helped strengthen those stereotypes as well. However, as discussed earlier, textbooks have a certain degree of influence and the point is, they did little to facilitate the overcoming of those stereotypes.

In general, in the narrative of the history of the beginning of the 20th century, the images of Neighbours are represented by Russia and Turkey, and much less often by Azerbaijan and Armenia.

¹ Before the education reform those textbooks were mandatory and were being reprinted annually (there were no alternative textbooks at that time).

Turkey²

The image of Turkey is conditioned by its active role in the political events that took place in the Caucasus during the time period in question. In World War I Turkey was allied with Germany, and therefore enemies with the Entente Powers and, coincidentally, with Russia. Later on Georgian territories became the subject of negotiations and treaties between the “big players,” which included Russia and Turkey. Hence, the narrative presents Turkey as a source of constant threat. Despite signing the Brest-Litovsk treaty, Turkey violates its terms on numerous occasions attempting to conquer various Transcaucasian territories. Moreover, it supports Abkhaz separatists, together with Iran tries to “enkindle a separatist movement in Saingilo (historical Gereti),” and together with Russia attempts to affix ethnic, religious and sometimes an agricultural agenda to separatist movements (Vachnadze, Guruli, 11th grade, 2000, p. 111). Turkey also does covert intelligence work in Abkhazia, Samtskhe-Javakheti and Adjara (Vachnadze, Guruli, 9th grade, 2000, p. 131).

During World War I “The Turkish command embarked on a strong offensive along the coastal area of the Black Sea. Turkish advanced guards trenched upon Batumi near-border territories.”

Due to specific environmental factors that had developed by the end of 1916, Turkey’s military and political plans for Georgia and the rest of the Transcaucasian territories fell through (Vachnadze, Guruli, 11th grade, 2000, p. 100).

Turkey... went on the offensive. Thus the threat of Turkish occupation became very real for Georgia and all of Transcaucasia (Lomashvili, 1999, p. 36).

In the last days of February 1918 the Transcaucasian Sejm “opened peace negotiations with Turkey... Turkey was deliberately causing all sorts of delays with those negotiations due to the fact that by that time Germany had launched an attack against Russia”... The Brest-Litovsk treaty assigned “conquered territories to Germany and ‘awarded’ Turkey as its ally with historical Georgian and Armenian territories... The negotiations were discomfited... On April 1 Turkey resumed the attack and trenched on Georgian and Armenian territories. The people of Georgia and Armenia fought heroically, but the relationship of forces was inequitable”... Having conquered new territories Turkish military forces “moved on to Tbilisi” (Lomashvili, 1999, p. 38).

² Hereinafter no distinction is made between the Ottoman Empire that existed until 1922 and its successor, the Republic of Turkey.

Other textbooks provide an even more detailed account of the activities of the Turkish army in Transcaucasia: there is talk about Turkey's territorial acquisitions, the ever-present menace of war that "would have been detrimental not only for Georgia but for all of Transcaucasia," and Turkey's attempt to take control over the Batumi region through a referendum held by Turkish occupational military forces (Vachnadze, Guruli, 9th grade, 2000, pp. 121-122, 130). Some also note that in case of any attack against Georgia that was anticipated from Russia, Turkey would have become Soviet Russia's ally. "Turkey's new authorities were grateful to Russia. Turkey was willing to turn Transcaucasia over to Russia in exchange for military and economic aid as well as support internationally" (Vachnadze, Guruli, 9th grade, 2000, p. 138).

Russia

The image of Russia is that of an empire trying to keep its territories at all costs. The events that took place in Georgia at the beginning of the 20th century are narrated through an outline according to which, the revolutionary struggle in the Russian Empire gradually unfolded: Russia's economic and political backwardness, the rise of revolutionary struggle, formation of political parties, the first revolution, the period of reaction, the new rise of revolutionary movement, World War I, the February revolution, the Transcaucasian Commissariat, the Transcaucasian Seim, the short-lived independence of the countries of the South Caucasus, the establishment of the Soviet regime.

The textbooks analyze the Russian Empire's colonizers' policy, which aimed to change the demographic situation and stir up national hatred among various ethnic groups.

There was a spike in alien migration to Georgia which created additional challenges for the country, already short on land resources. From 1908 to 1915 sixty six thousand Russians were relocated to Georgia and a great deal of the country's best land was allocated to those migrants. By 1912 close to a hundred Russian settlements had appeared in Georgia. The authorities were providing strong support to new settlers in meeting their land needs (Vachnadze, Guruli, 11th grade, 2000, p. 87; Antelava, et al., 1996, p. 261).

There are also accounts of how Russia supported Abkhaz and Ossetian separatists during World War I even before the restoration of Georgian national independence (Vachnadze, Guruli, 11th grade, 2000, p. 111).

Such is the image of Russia, and it carries over to the narrative of the Russian Provisional Government times and the Bolsheviks' rise to power. Russia sparks up ethnic confrontations between Neighbouring countries. It provides financial and military support to local Bolsheviks. It also enters into negotiations with its enemies, trading Transcaucasian territories in order to keep some of the dominions that belonged to the Tsarist Empire. However, at the same time, the texts recognize the role of the Russian army in warding off Turkey's attacks:

The Russian Caucasian army command was able to stop the Turkish army that had gone on the offensive on Batumi. Turkey could not break off that army's resistance in 1915-1916 (Vachnadze, Guruli, 9th grade, 2000, p. 100).

In January 1918, the Bolsheviks used military forces taken off of the Caucasian front in an attempt to occupy Georgia and establish the Soviet regime. The newly formed Georgian army and the People's Guard of Georgia fully defeated Russian detachments (Vachnadze, Guruli, 9th grade, 2000, p. 121).

Naturally, Soviet Russia was not interested in strengthening Turkey's influence in Transcaucasia since it believed that region to be its own integral territory. But in all fairness, incitement to civil war [in the countries of the South Caucasus] facilitated Turkish aggression, and moreover, the most important thing is that Soviet Russia's imperial and autocratic policy facilitated Transcaucasia's separation, and its disintegration into national republics (Lomashvili, 1999, p. 97).

By the spring of 1918 Georgian people had found themselves in the face of radical historic choice. Going back to Iran-Ottoman captivity was absolutely out of the question. So was expecting any support from the Soviet power or the so-called 'White Guard counterrevolution.' Both powers displayed clearly imperial ambitions. The only right way to go was to use that favourable environment to fully restore complete national independence (Lomashvili, 1999, p. 97).

In describing domestic and foreign policy of the Democratic Republic of Georgia in 1918-1921 the authors cover Russia's interference with Georgian internal affairs quite extensively (Vachnadze, Guruli, 9th grade, 2000, pp. 122, 130-131). They mention that:

By the end of April 1920 Soviet Russia had taken over Azerbaijan and proceeded with its attack on Georgia. However, England and other countries made Russia break off the offensive and recognize the independence of Georgia (Vachnadze, Guruli, 9th grade, 2000, p. 48).

There is also a separate discussion on the May 7, 1920 treaty between the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic and the Democratic Republic of Georgia. In that document Russia “Unconditionally recognized the sovereignty and absolute independence of Georgia” (Vachnadze, Guruli, 9th grade, 2000, pp. 122, 130-131). Later on Russia violated that treaty.

Some of the textbooks’ authors comment on the role that Georgian Bolsheviks played in establishing Soviet rule in Georgia as well as on the incompetence and inadequacy of the Mensheviks’ regime:

In February 1921 Ordzhonikidze used Russian army troops to attack Georgia from the direction of Armenia and already Sovietized Azerbaijan. Georgian troops moved into action, emerged victorious and paraded the streets of Tbilisi with 1600 captured Russian soldiers in tow. However, Georgian authorities, headed by Zhordania, decided not to wait for the war’s resolution and fled west, to Europe... The country, left on its own, once again found itself as part of Russia. February 25, 1921 is the most grievous day in the chronicles of Georgian people. The Soviet, that is Communist, yoke proved to be even more difficult, cruel and bloody than that of the Russian Emperor (Sanikidze L., Metreveli R., 1999, p. 94). (This rather histrionic story is written for 5th grade students).

In one of the textbooks under analysis the abstract devoted to the events of February 1921 is titled “The Conquest of the Democratic Republic of Georgia by Soviet Russia” (Vachnadze, Guruli, 11th grade, 2000, p. 119). It evaluates the events of January-February 1921 and the actions of the Democratic Republic of Georgia’s government differently while highlighting Soviet Russia’s aggressive ambitions:

The government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia and Constituent Assembly of Georgia performed their obligations in full and did not agree to surrender to Soviet Russia despite the extreme pressures of the military and political environment. [They emigrated to Europe. N.C.] The government

considered the fact that the 11th Red Army and other military troops could launch a bloody crackdown on the Georgian army and the People's Guard...A ceasefire agreement was signed. Despite an ultimatum from Soviet Russia, Mr. Lortkipanidze did not sign the act of capitulation (Vachnadze, Guruli, 11th grade, 2000, pp. 119-120).

Azerbaijan and Armenia

As mentioned earlier, the textbooks talk about Azerbaijan and Armenia much less frequently. These countries are mentioned mainly in the narrative of the events related to the declaration of independence in May of 1918 and later on in relation to the establishment of the Soviet regime. There is but a short description of the military confrontation between Georgia and Armenia:

In October 1918 the government of Georgia proposed to call for a conference of Caucasian republics (Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and the North Caucasus) in order to settle the issue of disputed territories. The conference was sabotaged by Armenia's negative attitude. On December 8, 1918 Armenian military forces trenched upon Akhalkalaki and Borchali provinces without a declaration of war. The Georgian army managed to break off the offensive and make them retreat (Lomashvili, 1999, p. 47).

Another textbook provides a more detailed account of the war in question and Armenia's demands:

The Republic of Armenia tried to encroach on the integrity of the Democratic Republic of Georgia. It demanded that Georgia give up its historical territories, both in Southern Georgia (Javakheti) and in Kartli (Tbilisi, Gori) and Adjara (Batumi). The government of Georgia strongly denied Armenia's claims. In December 1918 Armenian military forces invaded Borchali province. The Georgian Army and the People's Guard had to work their way back. In terms of an ultimatum the government of Armenia demanded to yield ground up to Gori, including Tbilisi. Soon the Georgian army and the People's Guard went on the offensive. The enemy had to yield with massive casualties (Vachnadze, Guruli, 11th grade, 2000, p. 114).

Those disputed territories are brought up again in connection with the start of the Russia-sponsored pro-Soviet uprising in February 1921. It is highlighted that the disputed Lori region had been chosen intentionally so that uprisings in the settlements of Russian colonists could be organized (Vachnadze, Guruli, 11th grade, 2000, p. 138).

In paragraphs describing the fight for independence in the beginning of the 20th century, some textbooks note the ethnic structure of the Georgian bourgeoisie. At the time of the first Russian revolution:

There was practically no national bourgeoisie in Georgia. The bourgeois were mainly represented by businessmen and merchants of Armenian descent. Therefore it was out of the question that they would join efforts with the nationalist movement. The Armenian bourgeoisie supported the colonial regime and joined the authorities in fighting the nationalist movement and revolution (Vachnadze, Guruli, 9th grade, 2000, p. 86; Antelava, et al., 1996, p. 261).

Here is another interesting quote worthy of consideration, “Following the Armenian - Tatar massacre in Baku, there were attempts to instigate a similar conflict in Tbilisi, but headed by Noe Ramishvili, Tbilisi workers managed to prevent the tragedy” (Vachnadze, Guruli, 11th grade, 2000, p. 119). This is an example of a rare exception when a textbook mentions Azerbaijanis as the Tatars. In the 2003 edition of the same textbook this ethnonym is already corrected and the overall tone of the narrative is noticeably more reserved:

In 1905 due to intentional provocations on the part of the authorities a confrontation between Armenian and Azerbaijani people started in Baku. It then escalated to massive massacre. This created the threat of a similar confrontation between the Armenian and Azerbaijani residents of Tbilisi. That potential conflict was prevented through decisive and courageous actions on the part of Noe Ramishvili and other Georgian leaders. There was also an attempt to start a slaughter of Armenians in Batumi. Risking his own life and safety, Memed-Beg Abashidze saved the lives of many Armenians (Vachnadze, Guruli, 9th grade, 2000, p. 88).

The First National Standard and the Second Generation of History Textbooks

In the trying times of transition, amidst many conflicts that had been ignited with the demise of the USSR, Georgia came face to face with yet another problem: how should one teach history in a multiethnic, multicultural and multi-confessional country? The search for answers proved to be difficult. It was also the time to decide on the representation of the images of Neighbours in history textbooks.

The new “Law on Education” was passed in Georgia in 1997. It served as a basis for the new “National Education Standard” for Georgian history and world history, which defined the principles and objectives of teaching history. The Standard’s authors tried to come up with such a concept of history teaching that would be in accordance with the overall political orientation of post-Soviet Georgia. According to the Standard, modern Georgia was in need of a very specific model of history education. It would be one that would be in line with the prospect of the country’s complete democratization and would help bring up political, cultural and religious tolerance in students (National Education Standard for Georgian History, 1997, p. 5). The concept of history teaching needed to comply with international standards. The emphasis was made on a “pluralistic alternative approach to history education” – something that previously had been banned and thus missing in ideologically driven Soviet courses in history. In addition to acquisition of historical knowledge, development of skills was also taken into consideration (National Education Standard for Georgian History, 1997, p. 5).

However, the Standard’s content did not match its declared mission. A great deal of factual content was presented through the prism of the positivist approach which clearly did not facilitate the development of students’ independent critical thinking. The most remarkable thing is that according to the Standard the only purpose served by presenting alternative viewpoints in the narrative was to find *historic truth*, “There can exist multiple views of the same historical fact, but only one of them is true” (National Education Standard for Georgian history, 1997, p. 31). The way in which the facts were presented did not allow students to distance themselves from those facts for proper objective analysis. This encouraged regarding history as fate, and as a legend about the past.

No significant changes were introduced to textbooks after the Standard had been passed. Except for a few minor corrections, the textbooks issued

after the Standard's enactment were the same as the ones published before 1997. These are the textbooks analyzed in the preceding part of the article, and are the ones that show a rather static picture of history teaching in the beginning of the 1990s and onward. Therefore, the distinction between first and second-generation history textbooks is very relative. The image of *self* and *others* remained unchanged and so did the master narrative. The formational approach was replaced by an odd mix of historical materialism, the theory of local civilizations, the Annales School principles and bits and pieces of other not fully conceptualized theoretical doctrines.

The 2005 Law on Education and the Third Generation of Textbooks

In 2004 the document titled "National Objectives of General Education" was drafted and passed in Georgia. The purpose of its enactment was to create a favourable environment for the growth and development of independent people whose personalities would combine national and universal human values. The fact that mutual respect, mutual understanding and interactive learning skills are prerequisites of today's dynamic, ethnically and culturally diverse world was also emphasized (National Objectives of General Education, 2004).

In April 2005, the new 'Law on Education' was passed in Georgia. This new education act defined the primary objectives of national policy in the field of education (The Law of Georgia on General Education, 2005). Among other things, the law stipulated the unification of Georgian language, Georgian geography and history, as well as other social sciences' teaching throughout the country.

New courses have been developed, and new textbooks have been written. In the following years an attempt was made to integrate history, geography and civic education into one subject for the 7th and 8th grades, as well as to integrate Georgian history into world history.

The National Curriculum and Assessment Center reviews and approves new textbooks developed in line with the National Standard. It is allowed for multiple textbooks designed for one grade to be granted the official quality seal of approval. Some of the approved textbooks have been translated into all of the languages used for teaching. In the current academic year there are seven textbooks – one for each grade from 6th to 12th – translated into Azerbaijani,

Armenian and Russian (a complete list of approved textbooks for the 2010-2011 academic year is available at www.ganatileba.org./index.php?m=149).

Schools have the right to choose among textbooks approved by the Center. New syllabi for 2011-2016 have been developed during the 2010-2011 academic year, and new criteria for textbooks' quality certification have been approved. Each textbook's longevity is five years (National Curriculum for General Education Schools, 2010-2011 Academic Year, 2010, p. 16). Teachers also have the right to use content from non-certified textbooks as supplementary teaching aids if they believe that these textbooks comply with the objectives and principles stated in the National Curriculum (National Curriculum for General Education Schools, 2010-2011 Academic Year, 2010, p. 17).

The principle methodological guidelines emphasize that:

Information should be presented from different perspectives. This encourages the development of the critical thinking that is necessary in the overcoming of stereotypes... Schools should promote pluralism and a variety of approaches that take students' interests into consideration and help bring up tolerance to differences in religion, language and ethnicity (National Curriculum for General Education Schools, 2010-2011 academic year, 2010, p. 35).

If one were to briefly characterize third generation history textbooks developed after 2005, the following would be noted:

▶ As before, political history prevails in the textbooks' content. Economic, social and cultural history issues are now part of the overall historical context; no complex terminology or statistics are used in their representation;

▶ The narrative approach has changed: in most cases narrative has been replaced by abstracts from actual sources, supplemented by short introductions or some comments³;

▶ It stands to mention that in our opinion these textbooks have indeed been created with a multi-perspectival approach in mind. However, to some extent the drive to restore one "real," "True" history still remains;

This article will now move on to the issue of the images of Neighbours in these textbooks.

³ In this regard the textbooks written by 'pre-reform' authors are a notable exception.

Turkey

As in the second-generation textbooks, Turkey is mentioned in the narrative of the events that describe international powers' fights over influence in the Caucasus. During World War I "Georgia and the Caucasus saw the interests and influence of the Ottoman Empire, Germany, Russia and the Entente Powers intersect" (Anchabadze, *et al.*, 2008, p. 387). It is mentioned that "The military and political plans of the Ottoman Empire have failed both in Georgia and the rest of Transcaucasia" (Abdaladze, *et al.*, 2008, p. 17).

In some cases new sources are used. For instance, the book by S. Kakhabadze "Georgian History in Brief: The New Era," first issued in 1921, is quoted. The book talks about the fight against Ottoman forces after the signing of the Brest-Litovsk treaty:

On April 8 [1918] Georgian troops and the armored train under the command of Gogvadze met Ottoman troops near the river Natanebi. The Ottomans were defeated with casualties totaling six hundred people, not including the wounded (Akhmeteli, 2009, p. 294).

It is mentioned that according to the terms of the Mudros treaty "Turkey left occupied Transcaucasian territories" (Abdaladze, *et al.*, 2008, p. 52).

Anti-Georgian activities of Ottoman agents in Akhalkalaki and Akhaltsikhe provinces in 1918-1919 are also discussed. "Despite some territorial losses, the government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia managed to preserve the country's territorial integrity" (Abdaladze, *et al.*, 2008, p. 52).

There is a special chapter devoted to the "Dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Ottoman Empire" in the "World and Georgian History" textbook for the 12th grade. This is how these events have been described:

In October 1918 the Ottoman Empire announced its surrender in World War I. The Entente Powers' military forces occupied the Ottoman territories. Mustafa Kemal Pasha and his friends spearheaded the national movement and the fight against the Entente Powers' troops. In 1920 Kemal was elected Chairman of the Grand National Assembly and in 1923 after the allies' troops had been withdrawn and the Republic of Turkey had been established he was elected its first president (Akhmeteli, Murgulia, 2008, p. 106).

The narrative goes on with the account of the Treaty of Lausanne that defined the borders of the Republic of Turkey and legitimized the demise of the Ottoman Empire. It gives examples of the reforms undertaken by Kemal Pasha in order to achieve the “modernization of Turkey and establish a European like polity.” During presidential elections Kemal was given a new name – Atatürk, which means “Father of the Turks.” The source contains Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen Points speech where point 12 concerns Turkey. It also provides official symbols of the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey with the task, “Discuss how history affected the country’s symbols” (Akhmeteli, Murgulia, 2008, p. 107).

Russia

In textbooks written before the August 2008 war between Georgia and Russia, the image of the latter country remains pretty much the same. Russia’s colonizers’ policy and the struggle to reclaim national independence in Georgia still form the core of the narrative. Some authors introduce students to the idea that a multi-perspectival approach should be used in evaluating the history of relations with Russia and the country’s overall role in Georgian history. “Are there only negative trends in the history of Georgia between 1801 and 1918 or can they be evaluated positively as well?” (Akhmeteli, Murgulia, 2008, p. 34) – such is the assignment given to 12th graders.

Interestingly enough, one of the textbooks provides an excerpt from Noe Zhordania’s speech at the first meeting of the Georgian National Council in November 1917 as a source. In that speech he explains Georgia’s ambition to be closer to Russia by its wish to distance itself from the East:

This was a historical necessity. At that time Georgia was at a crossroads – it was either the East or the West. So our ancestors decided to distance themselves from the East and thus turned towards the West. And the way to the West lay through Russia... Today we are facing the same dilemma - ...it is either the West, and therefore Russia again, or the East (Anchabadze, et al., 2008, p. 372).

Paragraph below is a quote from Noe Zhordania’s speech at the January 14, 1920 meeting of the Constituent Assembly of Georgia that clearly demonstrates how in just a short period of time the attitude towards Russia changed completely:

We have always chosen the West... The ways of Georgia and Russia part here as well: our way is to Europe, Russia's – to Asia. Our enemies will say that we are siding with imperialists. That is why I must resolutely state the following: I prefer Western imperialists to Eastern fanatics (Anchabadze, et al., 2008, p. 389).

The textbooks note that:

At the turn of the 19th-20th centuries a lot of Russian settlements were being established on the Black Sea coastal area in Abkhazia. The residents were mainly military officers and anti-Tsarist intellectuals. It is known that the Caucasus was a kind of 'nearby Siberia' for the Emperor where politically unreliable citizens were often deported (Elizbarashvili, et al., 2007, p. 153).

It is emphasized that in the times of the Transcaucasian Seim and the Democratic Republic of Georgia, Soviet Russia was actively interfering with Georgian internal affairs:

The Russians considered Sochi and Gagra Russian territories and while Georgia had time and again proved their territorial claims unsubstantiated, they did not change their stance on the subject... Both Bolshevik Russia and Anton Denikin, the White Guard general who was fighting against it, aspired to seize Georgian territories (Anchabadze, et al., 2008, p. 383).

Since 1917 Russia had been supporting:

The South Ossetian National Council, which aimed to separate from Georgia and annex to North Ossetia that is to Russia... Ossetian separatists became especially active after the Bolsheviks had taken over the North Caucasus and began to arm separatists, inciting them to a Bolshevik coup... When the People's Guard and some regular Georgian army units stamped out the separatists' rebellion in the summer of 1920, Georgy Chicherin sent a note to the government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia, expressing his concern over the event. Russia had to yield, if only temporarily (Abdaladze, et al., 2008, pp. 50-52).

The 2008 and 2009 editions use this quote from the works of Noe Zhordania (here he talks about the way the so-called uprising in Lori province was set up):

The war broke out. In a radio broadcast Moscow informed the world that an uprising had started in Georgia. In Transcaucasia Moscow claimed that Soviet Armenia had attacked the Mensheviks and demanded that Borchali be annexed to Armenia. We went along with that version in order to boost morale. Then we started to talk about Azerbaijanis. When we got Russians among the captives, we said that they were being helped by the Russians. This propaganda helped, people were furious... They still had no idea about what was really going on – that it was the Russian army fighting, not Armenians or Azerbaijanis (Akhmeteli, Lortkipanidze, 2009, p. 294).

As per the establishment of the Soviet regime, it is reviewed through the prism of Georgian-Russian relations and the events in the South Caucasus. There is an account of activities of Georgian Bolsheviks, supported by Soviet Russia. “Apart from Georgian Bolsheviks, Moscow was also pitting ethnic minorities residing in the country against Georgia” (Abdaladze, *et al.*, 2008, p. 54). The following events are recited: the May 7, 1920 treaty between the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic and the Democratic Republic of Georgia, and the blueprint for the war with Georgia designed in Moscow which covers the set-up of the Borchali province uprising. The uprising was to be followed by the Red Army’s entry into Georgia allegedly to “render aid to the proletariat” (Abdaladze, *et al.*, 2008, p. 54).

Excerpts from secret telegrams of S. Kirov, I. Stalin, S. Orjonikidze, G. Makharadze (the ambassador of the Democratic Republic of Georgia to Russia), newspaper articles, correspondence between S. Orjonikidze and the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) following Sovietization of Azerbaijan are used as sources. These documents represent Soviet Russia’s attitude to Georgia and the process of preparations for the establishment of the Soviet regime (Anchabadze, *et al.*, 2008, pp. 395 - 397).

The title of one of the sources is quite telling, “The Orchestration of the 11th Army’s Invasion of Georgia.” It consists of excerpts from Stalin’s, Trotsky’s, and Lenin’s letters in which occupation of Georgia is discussed (Anchabadze, *et al.*, 2008, pp. 395-397). Annexation and occupation on the part of Russia is emphasized. “In 1921, the Russian army invaded Georgia on three fronts. Georgian military forces put up heroic resistance. The relationship of forces was inequitable. The Georgian army had to yield. On February 25, the Bolshevik army occupied Tbilisi” (Kupatadze, Samushia, 2009, p. 149).

Some quoted sources indicate that the Bolsheviks promised “heaven” to starving, unclad, and unarmed soldiers in the case that Tbilisi was occupied. One captured Russian soldier said that they were promised the right to loot the city for a week (Anchabadze, *et al.*, 2008, p. 402).

Students can use these sources as a basis for building their own attitude towards the role that Russia played in Georgia in the 1920s. Mutually exclusive evaluations of the events of February 25, 1921 are provided (Anchabadze, *et al.*, 2008, p. 403). There are questions at the end of each paragraph that actualize the subject of occupation and annexation. “Why, in your opinion, did Russia mask its aspirations, and which methods did it use to conquer Georgia?” “Which methods did Russia use to invade Georgia?” (Akhmeteli, Murgulia, 2008, p. 98). The paragraph on the establishment of the Soviet system in Georgia in the textbook for the 9th grade is titled “The Occupation of Georgia,” and 12th graders are offered to write an essay on the same topic (Akhmeteli, Murgulia, 2008, p. 98).

Armenians, Azerbaijanis and Other Nations of the North Caucasus

The National Curriculum defines the teaching of history and geography in the 8th grade and states that it should be based upon the global regionalization principle, and on the review of a number of features that characterize Caucasian nations (demographic, ethnic, and religious diversity). It advises teachers to train students to compare and contrast similar regions using the above-mentioned characteristics (National Curriculum for General Education Schools, 2008 - 2009, p. 77).

One 8th grade textbook that integrates world history, Georgian history and civic education, focuses precisely on the Caucasus. The content centers on commonalities and differences among various nations of the South Caucasus. The maps of the Caucasus are supplied with explanations of geographical names’ origins and meanings. Another 8th grade textbook on the history and geography of Georgia and the world provides students with a version of the geographical border between Europe and Asia according to which the three South Caucasian states turn out to be a part of Europe (Neidze, *et al.*, 2007, p. 5). There is also information about geographic location, climate, economics, political system, resources and the population of Neighbouring countries - Russia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkey and Iran (Elizbarashvili, *et al.*, 2007, pp. 154-274).

The image of the Caucasus is that of a region characterized by ethnic and religious diversity. “The peoples of the Caucasus have had close long-standing cultural and economic relations with each other, and that has driven their rapprochement”; “in addition to ethnic and religious diversity, the peoples of the Caucasus have a lot in common” (Elizbarashvili, *et al.*, 2007, pp. 142-143).

At the same time the narrative indicates that “sometimes this ethnic and religious diversity is the cause of serious political issues in the region” (Elizbarashvili, *et al.*, 2007, p. 119). In this regard section V of the 8th grade textbook is of interest. It is titled “Geographic Location. The History of Conflicts.” The section defines stereotypes, which are, in the authors’ opinion, one of the driving factors behind the fomentation of ethnic and religious conflicts (Elizbarashvili, *et al.*, 2007, pp. 170-227).

It stands to mention such titles as “The Caucasian Knot”, “The Multiethnic Caucasus” and “The Everyday Life of the Peoples of the Caucasus” (Elizbarashvili, *et al.*, 2007, pp. 117-120, 121-122, 143-147). At the same time the authors of this textbook find it necessary to explain to 8th graders the reason behind the fact that Georgia has a large Armenian community:

*There are many Armenianized Georgians among Armenians since in the Middle Ages one way for Georgians to escape Islam was to join the congregation of the Armenian Apostolic Church. Unlike other Christians, Armenians enjoyed significant tax benefits in Iran and the Ottoman Empire. The Armenian Apostolic Church was the cornerstone of Armenian cultural life and ethnic identity. An Armenian who had denounced the faith of his ancestors was no longer considered an Armenian, and those non-Armenians who joined the Armenian Apostolic Church’s congregation became Armenians with no regard to their knowledge of the Armenian language. In the 19th century, up until 1917, Armenians had owned important national institutions (theaters, schools, newspapers) in Tbilisi (Elizbarashvili, *et al.*, 2007, p. 152).*

Some authors exercise caution in describing various conflicts that emerged between newly independent South Caucasian states during the short period of their national independence. One textbook interprets military confrontation between Georgia and Armenia in December 1918 as well as aggravation of relations with Azerbaijan in January 1919 as border controversies (Anchabadze, *et al.*, 2008, pp. 385-386). Not much attention is paid to military operations. A

photograph of the parade in honour of the victory in the war with Armenia is provided as one of the sources. The same textbook mentions that “Armenians expressed their protest when Georgian troops occupied Borchali province, however the issue was resolved through a peace treaty” (Anchabadze, *et al.*, 2008, p. 386).

The account of the events of the beginning of 1921 does not say anything about the ethnic composition of the “insurgent” provinces. The authors also avoid mentioning anything about the non-Georgian populations of those regions. The focus is on the interests and aspirations of certain external players, and first of all on those of Russia (Akhmeteli, Lortkipanidze, 2008, lesson 117; Anchabadze, *et al.*, 2008, lesson 91). On the contrary, another textbook directly states that the establishment of the Soviet regime was preceded by uprisings among ethnic minorities supported and incited by Russia (Anchabadze, *et al.*, 2008, p. 384).

It is noted that in 1919 Armenia and Azerbaijan recognized Georgia’s independence *de jure* (Anchabadze, *et al.*, 2008, p. 389). “Western countries chose not to counter Soviet Russia which had won the civil war. The countries of the South Caucasus – Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia – found themselves in international isolation” (Anchabadze, *et al.*, 2008, p. 394).

To conclude the analysis of the images of Neighbours in third-generation textbooks, it can be said that they reflect the changes in the approaches to history teaching, keep in line with the requirements of the National Standard and show the tendency to overcome the consequences of conflict memory. However, the latter is not applicable to some Neighbours. Complex relationships with Russia have been reflected in the textbooks’ content as well as in the country’s memory policy overall. The August 2008 war between Georgia and Russia has actualized the image of the “other” that is endued with the attributes of the “historic enemy.” As a result of that conflict, the subject of Russian colonization and occupation has become even more important and topical in current Georgian historiography.

Third-generation textbooks have stirred much controversy among experts. We can single out two most debatable issues. The first one concerns the so-called “integrated textbooks” (those that combined history, geography and civic education in one). Merging disciplines proved to be artificial, mechanical and unproductive. Therefore, later on, the Ministry of Education and Science abandoned this idea. Another issue centers on the almost complete disappearance of the author’s

narrative in most textbooks. It is precisely this approach that causes a most heated debate among academic practitioners and theorists alike. Their grievances are for the most part substantiated: in some cases the choice of sources has not been thoroughly thought through, and that could potentially lead to the creation of a rather fragmented idea of the historical process.

In our opinion, the main issue is that these new generations of textbooks require much more proficiency and professionalism from teachers. A new educational narrative is not the same as a textbook with ready-made content, which students need to memorize so that their teachers could just check the level and quality of their memorization later. Both schoolteachers and academics struggle with understanding and accepting history as a way to interpret available facts. In the words of one professor, "History is history! We have to write the real history [as it was], and nothing else!" This approach still prevails among historians.

The majority of schoolteachers still believes in one and only one "real history," and thinks that teaching this "real" history can facilitate conflict resolution. In response to experts who wonder what this "correct teaching" means, more often than not a teacher would say that this means teaching the truth, what really happened. "History consists of facts, and how can you say that something did not happen? There cannot be an alternative opinion" (Gundare, 2006, p. 34).

Finally, we need to once again touch upon the issue of the "political demand" and historians' positions. It is known that state guidelines issued for textbooks' authors and publishers are based on more than just pedagogic rules. Development of these guidelines is heavily influenced by politics as well. "Ideally, pedagogy, academic research and political guidelines should interact" (Pingel, 2003, p. 7). This does not happen often. As a rule, politics have the upper hand and many professionals are not particularly happy about it.

Conclusion

Up until now, the images of "others", including Neighbours, presented in Georgian history textbooks, have not been the subject of a dedicated program of research. The researchers found the level of "inclusion" of the history of various ethnic minorities in the overall history of Georgia one of the most interesting topics. This research can be considered an important step in developing a civil society.

The analysis performed in this article allows stipulating that compared to pre-reform textbooks, history textbooks currently used in general education schools provide more detailed context – regional as well as global. This gives the authors an opportunity to provide students with more information about Neighbours. The textbooks contain virtually no ethnic, religious or other stereotypes. Unlike in pre-reform textbooks, which emphasized ethnic identity issues, here the focus is on developing civic consciousness. New textbooks employ a more neutral tone in representing Georgian history, which helps students to distance themselves from the “past.” This is further aided by the fact that multiple, alternative interpretations of historic events are offered.

At the same time, despite the fact that this analysis of three post-Soviet generations of textbooks leads to a conclusion about positive dynamics of changes in the narrative in general and the issue of representation of the images of Neighbours in particular, it stands to mention that third-generation textbooks have their flaws as well. In this article we tried to cover some factors driving the existence of these flaws.

In the years following the reform Georgia has acquired a definite, new experience in the field of history teaching. There have been many meetings with textbooks’ authors, representatives of the scientific community, education professionals, and schoolteachers. Both government and non-government institutions as well as international organizations initiated those meetings. Research papers summarizing the results of the curriculum and textbooks’ analysis and teachers and students’ surveys have been published. Relationships with foreign counterparts are developing and becoming more productive. Taking into consideration the fact that the issue of representing relations with Neighbours in history textbooks remains one of the most important to societies undergoing periods of transition (Stradling, 2003, p. 12), it is safe to say that it is the strengthening ties with counterparts from the European Union countries, the US, among others that will facilitate the overcoming of current drawbacks.

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RELIGIOUS IDENTITY AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF OTHERNESS: THE PERCEPTION OF ARMENIAN IDENTITY IN THE TURKISH EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Çakır Ceyhan Suvani

Introduction

This study suggests that Armenian identity, positioned as “the other” in the construction of Turkish identity, has been understood from a religious perspective rather than an ethnic or national one. This perception has in turn been supported by stereotyped historical narratives. For this purpose, this paper examines the portrayal of Armenian identity and fictionalized narratives present in history textbooks approved by the Education and Morality Council of the Turkish Republic Ministry of Education and used as didactic tools at different levels of the Turkish education system. The subject of Armenian

identity has been highlighted especially in the textbooks dealing with the lecture on “*Principles of Atatürk and Revolution History*”¹. For this reason, textbooks on this subject from different time periods have been examined.

Assessments of the arguments in textbooks have been conducted with an anthropological approach rather than a historical one. My aim is not to act as a historian but to analyze the national historical statements reconstructed with nationalist perspectives and clichés ranging from the first years of the republic’s foundation to today. I have therefore focused on clichés found within these narratives rather than only concentrating on historical facts.

The focus on clichés illuminates how the dilemma of “us vs. them,” central in the construction of a group’s identity, mostly arises from stereotypes. Answers given to the questions “Who am I?” and “Who are we?” underlies the sense of identity. Thus, consciousness and feeling of belonging is constructed upon the contradiction of “us” and “others/them” (Küçükcan, 1999, pp. 45-46; Bilgin, 2007, p. 35). People are often most sensitive about their own cultures when they first meet other people. This moment may therefore serve as the most suitable occasion for constructing their own identities, reinforced from the position of “the other” against “us” (Cohen, 1999, p. 78). For this reason, the relation between “I/we” and “the other” must be understood. Bilgin states that dual concepts, such as similar-different, local-foreigner, close-far, friend-enemy, normal-perverse and minority-majority, determine this relationship (2007, p. 177). Synthesizing the works of various researchers, eight criteria define any group under a single and common identity: a group with a collective special name for itself; a common ancestors belief; sharing of historical memories; one or more common cultural elements shared by the group members; a connection with a certain land/motherland; a developed sense of solidarity among group members; choice of endogamy marriages; and a sense of themselves as a special group (see. Smith, 2002, pp. 47-55; Altuntaş, 2002, pp. 20-21; Küçükcan, 1999, p. 46; Aydın, 1998, pp. 55-56; Fawcett, 2000).

In constructing “us,” the group is able to establish a common identity through these criteria. Stereotypes play an important role at this stage, not

¹ The purpose of the lecture “Principles of Atatürk and Revolution History” has been specified as follows in the official web page of Ministry of Education (see. <http://orgm.meb.gov.tr/OzelEgitimProgramlar/Egitilebilir/07%20.htm>): It discusses the situation of the Ottoman Empire during the First World War and its consequences, Atatürk’s education, personality and qualities, along with the events and phenomena regarding life, particularly during his last days, the Independence War and resulting developments in Turkey, including political, legal, educational, economic, social and cultural reforms, Atatürk’s opinions regarding national education, the meaning of Kemalism, and the significance of Atatürk’s principles and reforms for the Turkish nation.

only signifying “us” against “the others” and affirming the above variables in our favour, but also negating and trivializing these eight factors against “the others” by means of stereotypes towards this group. In this way, they further serve to construct “us.”

My purpose in addressing stereotypes is to analyze the “logic” of these explanations rather than the extent to which they reflect reality. Yet, as Milas underlined, relation between stereotypes and reality is less significant. Instead, the model and project in which they have been created is essential, along with the social needs they address, the ideologies they serve, and how they promote them (2005, p. 21). So, a study of stereotypes will reveal thought patterns and perspectives on identity.

At the same time, examining the discussion of Armenian identity in textbooks since the foundation of the republic will provide clues as to why “Armenianhood” is deemed as a problem, in addition to showing changes in the state’s official ideology. Sections of the textbooks that have been used since the first years of the republic, explaining the events of 1915 and the Exile Law, have been fictionalized under the title of the “Armenian Problem,” using clichés referring to the “Betrayal of Millet-i Sadıka (Loyal Community)” and massacre of Muslims by Armenian gangs. The “Armenian Problem” has been brought into the agenda more often especially since the 1990s, when Armenia emerged as an independent state after the disintegration of Soviet Union.

In conjunction, this subject has also been more frequently addressed in textbooks. Two factors could explain this development. First, Turkey has become Neighbours with a state that has Armenian instead of Soviet identity. The conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan serves as a second issue. Because of the dogma regarding “our Muslim brothers and our relatives,” Turkey seems to support Azerbaijan’s side. It is necessary to understand the perspective that Azerbaijanis are “coreligionist and cognate,” which underlies Turkey’s approach to this issue, and to examine the role of religion in construction of national identity generally and Turkish national identity specifically.

The Effect of Religion in Construction of Turkish National Identity

Religion has played an important role in the construction of both individual and social identities. Various researchers state that religion is the source of identity in the periods before the Enlightenment Age (McNeill, 1998; Dolukhanov,

1998). Did this effective role of religion come to an end with the modernization process or did it remain but with a secondary importance?

As Geertz also underlines, “national identity and religious commitment are like two faces of a medallion” (2001, p. 73). Moreover, “especially colonial societies have a national identity comprised of the synthesizing of religious traditions and Enlightenment tradition that forms the manifest of secular nationalism” (Kinvall, 2002, p. 88). Rieffer has also considered religion and nationalism as inseparable pieces with many meanings that complete each other (2003, p. 215).

All ethnic groups and national states are “branded” with a certain religion. Demerath suggests “the cultural religion”² concept to explain this situation. According to him, “no matter if religious practices have been fulfilled at the individual level [or even if a person is atheist], the individual is not able to think independently of the religion that is the brand of the ethnic and national identity that he/she comes from” (2000, pp. 127-129). As a matter of fact, regardless of where he/she goes, a Middle-Eastern person is usually assumed to have a Muslim identity, without considering the possibility that he/she is a Christian, Jewish, Yezidi or atheist. Yet, the perspective that “Arabs have constructed their ethnic identities around the religion of Islam” has been identified with the Middle East (Tamimi, 2003, p. 168). On the other hand, Catholicism has been a basic criterion for Polish identity (Demerath, 2000, p. 128). Shinto religion has become the political and ideological basis of Japanese nationalization since 19th century and it has been accepted as the official religion as a result (Pye, 2003, p. 48). Even atheists in Northern Ireland are identified as Protestant or Catholic (Demerath, 2000, p. 136).

Although Turkey is officially a secular national state, religion occupies an important place in the construction of Turkish identity. Islam is the most important and most known symbol of “Turkishness” in ethnic terms, and religion marks belonging to the nation for its people both within and outside of Turkey. Regardless of where they are, both Turks and non-Turks equate Turkish identity with Islam. Moreover, this concept has now become a cliché as it is for other ethnicities and nations. According to the results of Küçükcan’s research on Turks living in England, Islam has been a central, inseparable aspect of their identities, even for those who do not consider themselves as Muslims. The

² Demerath’s (2000) “cultural religion” concept matches up with the definition of religion which Geertz (2001) considers as a cultural system.

study revealed that 43% of those surveyed certainly believe in Allah, whereas 47% express doubt regarding this idea. The percentage of non-believers is 4% while 4% are not concerned with the issue of religious beliefs, with 2% not answering the question. That is to say, beyond being a Muslim, although 51% doubt the existence of Allah or do not espouse this belief at all, for those Turks living in England, the cliché “Turk = Muslim” is common (1999, p. 147).

Stereotypes and clichés of “the Other” in the construction of identities in social sciences, prejudices and stereotypes define the stigmatization phenomenon (Bilgin, 2007, p. 72). Prejudices are the negative and clichéd judgments attributed generally to a group. People from the “other” group are the targets of these prejudices because of their association rather than their actions or skills. In other words, prejudice is a preconceived opinion, the expression of acting negatively against a certain group based on judgment without evidence. Similarly, stereotypes are also predetermined attitudes, ideas and images that we have about various groups; they are general claims or comments developed and communicated in daily chats, mass communication tools, or works of literature and art (Bilgin, 2007, p. 129). According to Milas, stereotypes are established through a) individual experiences, b) common perceptions of the group of which individuals are a member and c) communication tools, schools, literature, etc. (2005, pp. 18-19).

Prejudices and stereotypes play an important role in identity construction. As stigma and labels are placed on all the members of “the others,” they not only determine the meaning of this group in “our” eyes but also confirm “the perfection” of “us.” According to Daniel-Henri Pegeau, each stereotype results from the relation between an “I” who is “here” and “the other” who is “there.” In this way, societies or groups determine the cultural, optical, and ideological environment that they belong to. The designated environment displays a strong “duality”: “us” and “others” (Milas, 2005, p. 20).

Prejudices and stereotypes also create categories by totalizing groups that are close to each other. Categorization serves to systematize the environment. A person sorts out the information he/she obtains from the environment, processes this information, and simplifies the phenomenon by exaggerating some similarities between stimuli and ignoring differences (Bilgin, 2007, p. 120). “Turning [new information] into cliché and personalization,” which Adorno considers as the facility to comprehend the incomprehensible (2003, p. 129), is a paradoxical solution. Strict dualities inherent in the earliest development

phase, such as “good and evil,” “we and others,” and “me and the world,” allow us to comprehend confusing and complex concepts. They also serve as “the structures required in terms of allowing us to stand up to a reality that will be chaotic by means of foresight and a rough organization.”

The fact that Muslims in Turkey consider Christians in Anatolia, who are from different sects and who speak different languages (Armenians, Assyrians, Keldanis, Christian Arabs, etc.) all as Armenians is a precise result of categorization. An interview that Neyzi conducted with a Christian Arab from Antakya confirms that categorization:

Without a doubt, torture of students that espouse leftist opinions reflect a general tendency but Can believes that his Christian identity made him draw more attention: Oral historical narratives of Christian Orthodox Arab Can Kılçksız from Antakya... “If a Muslim or Turk makes critiques, they are considered as traitors or separatists at most but if a Christian makes the same statement, they take huge counter-measures and they are considered as a foreign threat.” Since torturers could not distinguish one Christian sect from the other, Can has been classified either as an insurgent or “Armenian.” “In their subconscious, they think that I am not one of them. It is a very different thing to feel that fear.” As a matter of fact, the lawsuit of Can has been published by a right-leaning section of the press, referring to Can as a leftist activist with Armenian roots and his name has been published in newspapers as “Kılçksızyan” (2004, pp. 195-210).

This and many other similar examples show that Christianity and Armenian identity are perceived as synonymous. Generally in Turkey, both the state and Muslims educated by the government’s educational institutions identify Christian “others,” particularly when they are criticized, in connection with Armenian identity. In conjunction, prejudices suggesting that Armenians are “unreliable,” “insidious,” and “resentful” are very common throughout Turkey. In fact, the phrase “son of Armenian” often corresponds to all these adjectives when negative terms are imposed on Armenians, effectively condensing a long story. Prejudices and stereotypes imposed on Armenians can also clearly be seen in textbooks.

The Perception of Armenian Identity in Textbooks and Stereotypes Imposed on Armenians

As mentioned above, Armenians in Turkey are “otherized” through references to their religious affiliation. The idea that Armenians are Christians is more frequently used as an “otherizing” tool than the fact that they speak another language or that they come from a different ethnicity, for instance. The perception of “Armenian” as connoting belonging to another religion is seen as negative. Many definitions regarding Armenians through this perception involve stereotypes. In addition, not only ordinary lay people, but also politicians, religious functionaries, bureaucrats, and academics define Armenian identity by using stereotypes and drawing on prejudice.

In textbooks, we can also find clues suggesting that Armenian identity is connected with a “Christian other,” drawing on a religious reference, rather than an ethnic or national identity. This situation reveals itself for the first time with the claim suggesting that Armenian religious functionaries have played an active role in facilitation and promotion of Armenian nationalism:

...The idea of an independent state emerged from the Armenian Church, not from among the Armenian people... Armenian churches have become the places where Armenian nationalism has been represented, rather than places fulfilling their religious responsibilities (İlgazi, 2009, pp. 22-23).

Armenian religious functionaries have played an important role in terms of both the rebellions and organization (Turan, et al., 2006, p. 94).

As before, the patriarch, priests and church organizations have made great efforts in promoting Armenian activities during this period. Without a doubt, Patriarch Zaven Efendi is the first name that comes to mind when one mentions the Church and patriarchate. He has acted like a gang leader rather than a Patriarch (Selvi, et al., 2006, p. 109).

Another sign that Armenian identity is perceived through a religious lens is the emphasis on Christian Western countries’ support for Armenians:

The third reason that pushes European people to be interested in Armenians is a psychological one. The Christian world considered Armenians as their religious fellows within the boundaries of the Ottoman Empire. According to them, most of the Christians in the Balkans have been rescued and now

it is time for rescuing the Armenian minority living in Anatolia... (Alpargu, et al., 2008, p. 169).

“Gavur”³ is another name that Turkish Muslim groups use for Christians. This negative expression removes all kinds of ethnic and linguistic differentiation among the Christian “others,” used instead with a perception of a homogeneous Christian group. Another cliché regarding Armenian identity, based on the perception of “gavur,” can be seen in explanations of Armenian history:

The historical origin of this community, referred to by their Neighbours as Armenians and who call themselves Hay or Hayasdan, mostly depends on narratives and postulates...Actually all Armenians and the country called Armenia was never ruled by a ruler and its people have never formed a country and state of the same type (Eroğlu, 1982, p. 216).

In short, the abovementioned cliché claims that historical data regarding Armenians all depend on rumors and they have never had a state belonging to them. According to this quote, Armenians are a community without a history or homeland. For this reason, they have set their sights on “our” lands and resorted to every kind of evil deed for the sake of reaching their objectives. Here, by stating that Armenians, who are perceived as others, do not have a history, it is strongly underlined that “we” have a real and ancient history, ignoring the “others” past as “our” history is being built.

A positive Muslim Turk image is constructed in textbooks through a negative perception of Armenians. Adjectives such as “innocent,” “hero,” “forgiving,” “prudent” and “fair” characterize Turks in the textbooks in which Armenians are defined as “drunk,” “mad,” “immoral,” “cowards,” “rapist,” “traitor,” “spiteful people” and “gang members.” As a matter of fact, Yalçın, et al.’s statement “... It is seen that Turkish authorities acted coolheaded and patient against every kind of activity and rampancy of Armenians” clinches the contrast between the Turk and Armenian images. The textbook suggests that the “patient Turk” will not be easily agitated, but in the end even their patience ends as a result of the rampancy of Armenians:

³ The word “gavur” is expressed as “irreligiousness” in the dictionary prepared by Turkish Language Society (see. <http://tdkterim.gov.tr/bts/>)

Loss of lives and the concern people had after random fire that Armenians shot at the end of Ottoman bank robbery has challenged the endurance of Muslim people. This tension has turned into mutual conflicts and many lives have been lost during these incidents (Turan, et al., 2006, p. 97).

In textbooks, we also frequently encounter the idea that “Turkish people are forgiving in spite of all kinds of evil done by Armenians.” As Saray states, “provided that Armenians will retreat from the lands they invaded without any conditions, Turkish and Azerbaijani Turks wish to have good Neighbourly relations and live in peace with Armenians by forgetting about all the pain they had in the past.” The author also contributes to the image of the forgiving Turk by saying Armenians will be “forgiven” without any conditions (2000, p. 182).

In a symposium entitled “A Friendly Look on the History While Entering the 21st Century: Turk-Armenian Relations,” organized in Igdir with mostly Turkish and Azerbaijani participants, both academics and state officials used many stereotypes regarding Armenians. For example, Memmedov characterizes them with negative adjectives such as “betrayal,” “cunningness,” “ruthlessness” and “wretchedness” (2000, p. 63). Kalafat cites the stereotypes from declarations and added that Armenians are also thieves:

...In his declaration regarding the Crusade and Armenians, he has stated that Armenians have encouraged Christians to crusade with a spirit of banditry. Local Armenians of Anatolia have left their places to invader Armenians and the robberies that Armenians have committed in Istanbul during the reign of Fatih Sultan Mehmet have been attributed to the forces of Fatih Sultan Mehmet... (2000, p. 186).

Eroğlu, in parallel with the negative expressions in the declarations presented in the symposium, has stated that Armenians “have not abstained from conducting the highest level of evil deeds, the cheapest of betrayals and the bloodiest murders in eastern, southeastern and southern regions.” He also displays Armenians as “ultimately evil” people (1982, p. 226).

Turan, et al., who discuss the incidents of 1915 in the textbook *Ataturk's Principles and History of Turkish Revolution*, state that Armenians are “hypocrites” and that those who died in conflicts perished because Turkish

people, in order to protect their lives and goods, needed to defend themselves with weapons:

It was said that independence would be the solution. Armenians, who have never given up on their actual objectives, became patriots within this atmosphere. In spite of this, they carried on being hypocrites and they continued to use every opportunity within the framework of their separatist purposes by taking advantage of the environments provided by independence. However, it was not too long before their masks fell off...Under these circumstances, Turkish people took up arms to defend their lives, goods, and honour, and many Armenians died during the conflicts that occurred. Although Museg, who organized these incidents, ran away to Alexandria and saved himself, he continued lying and conducting mischief (2006, p. 98).

The text “The Armenian Issue and Eastern Front Line,” provided to students as “additional information” in the textbook, *Primary School Turkish Republic’s Principles of Atatürk and Revolution History, 8th Grade,* is also filled with stereotypes and prejudices:

...Armenians were encouraged by the help and support of Entente States, claiming that they were seeking their rights by coming to the foreground as people who have been wronged. The statements of Ottoman Empire authorities suggesting that Armenians were a loyal people to the state and that they were innocent people also spoiled them. However, Armenians were neither innocent nor loyal to the state. What these people did to the state they were associated with since the end of the 20th century was nothing more than a complete betrayal and hostility above all kind of indulgence...Armenians experienced many losses against the Turkish army and fell into more dangerous positions. Armenians, who understood that being in a war is not as easy as killing armless and defenseless people, declared that they accepted the conditions of truce (Çağatay, 1998, p. 101).

It was stated that Armenians, defined as “guerillas” in some other textbooks such as Çağatay’s (1998, p. 101), were pulverized when the Turkish army engaged in the situation. Turks achieved an ultimate victory and ultimately beat the “traitor Armenians” in the battleground. The wishes and demands of

Armenians were suppressed forever thanks to the ultimate superiority of Turks over Armenians⁴ (see Serdarlar, et al., 1968, p. 63).

In the additional texts in textbooks comprised of personal comments and subjective views of the authors, stereotypes have been used to refer to Armenians as “shameless” (Bircan, et al., 1996, p. 151), along with other derogatory terms, including “slanderer Armenians” (Bircan, et al., 1996, p. 149), “Armenian madness” (Bircan, et al., 1996, p. 151), “drunk Armenians” (Öztürk, 2007, p. 155; İlgazi, 2009, p. 154), and “raki addict Armenians” (Çağatay, 1998, p. 103).

In fact, women of “the other” have been subjected to the highest level of insults while constructing “us” against “them.” “Ego” establishes its power by means of stereotypes used regarding the women belonging to the “other.” Thus, women are defined within the “other” as “indecent,” “coquettish,” and “cheating,” and as “women who are made available” by their men, while “our women” are defined as “decent,” “loyal,” “beautiful,” and “loyal to the religion and the state.” As a matter of fact, Kaşgarlı, who has declared Armenians as eternal traitors, relates this thought to the Crusades, dated long before the period between 1915 and 1918⁵. However, in trying to prove this point, he claims that “women,” who have a critical value in the “honour” concept within construction of Turk-Islam identity, a process to which he has influentially contributed, have not had any value for Armenians and Christian culture. He further contrasts Armenian identity against Turk-Islam identity by means of using the “women” concept:

Armenians have not only defended Franks against Turks but have also considered every kind of betrayal and felony they committed as ingenuity. They have not stopped at this point, trying to make their girls available to Franks in order to gain their support. They made their girls, with fertile lands in large portions, available to Franks by kind of begging them (2000, p. 32).

⁴ Exactly on the contrary to the expression “the wishes and demands of Armenians have been suppressed forever” the expression “Armenians have never give up on their objective and they are still conducting activities even today for reaching these objectives” is also suggested in textbooks (see. Kürkçüoğlu, et al., 1989, p. 168; Kara, 2000, p. 50; Uzun, 2000, p. 2; Saray, 2000, p. 179).

⁵ This claim made by Kaşgarlı (2000) is in contradiction with the opinions of some Turkish historians. Yet, many Turkish historians have underlined that Armenians were loyal to Ottomans until the 19th century and to Seljuks before Ottomans and that is why Armenians have been mentioned as a loyal community (Millet-i Sadıka). However, Kaşgarlı states that Armenians are “traitors” and they never have been “a loyal community.”

This situation is supported by the image of Armenian women presented to Franks during the Crusades (Kaşgarlı, 2000, p. 32) or the image of “indecent” women, one of whom danced with a French sergeant only once the Turkish flag was taken down from Maraş Castle (Alpargu, et al., 2008, p. 160).⁶ The reading texts about the Maras Incident and Sütçü İmam are given as case studies and additional information at the end of each chapter in some textbooks. In this source, the moment when Turkish people lose their patience and attack the “others” in self defense is described as a result of the “the evil others” attacking sexual and religious symbols of Muslim Turkish women. “The veil” is the most frequent symbol for this purpose. It has a religious meaning (according to Islam a woman needs to cover her face and hair around men who are strangers to her) and a sexual meaning through the concept of “honour.” For example, in the incident of Sütçü İmam, he shoots “the other” person who opened “the veil” (Kara, 2000, p. 161; Çağatay, 1998, p. 103; Mumcu, et al., 1985, pp. 123-124).

The Situation in Textbooks Prior to the Armenian Exile

It is generally stated in the textbooks that before their exile, Armenians had not had any problems with the Ottoman administration. Until the end of 19th century, they had a good relationship with Muslims and Ottomans called them “Millet-i Sadika (Loyal Community)” because of these qualities (Kolaç, 2008, p. 55; İlgazi, 2009, p. 59; Turan, et al. 2006, pp. 92-93). It is especially underlined in these books that Ottomans were extremely tolerant of all minorities, but particularly of Armenians. Specifically, they had never pressured Armenians to adopt their religion and speak their language:

⁶ The incident of taking down the Turkish flag (it should actually be an Ottoman flag because the Turkish Republic has not been founded at that date) and hanging a French flag is told in the above-mentioned book as it follows: Minorities in the city had prepared a feast for the commander of French Forces who invaded Maras. A French commander wanted to dance with a girl from the minority. But the girl said: “I would like to dance with you but not in a place that this Turkish flag is waved, only when I see a French flag on Maras Castle.” After that, the Turkish flag on top of Maras castle was taken down with the order of the commander and French flag was hung instead of it... (Alpargu, et al., 2008, p. 160).

However, the hanging of the French flag at Maras Castle is told in this way in another book: Many stressful incidents occurred in Maras. The first serious incident involved a Turkish woman, returning home and assaulted by a few drunk Armenians. Sütçü İmam, who saw this incident and killed one of the people who assaulted the woman, managed to escape to Elbistan without being caught. After this incident, which caused tension in Maras, taking down the Turkish flag at the castle with the order of a French commander was the final straw (İlgazi, 2009, p.154).

As it is known, Turkish Statesmen were responsible for treating everyone equally, regardless of whether they were Turks, Non-Turks, Muslims or Non-Muslims. Armenians were one of the nations who benefitted from this tolerance system the most after Turks emigrated from Asia Minor. The fair and tolerant administration style of the Turks, who emigrated as a dynamic force, has allowed the Armenians, exasperated because of Byzantine pressure, to survive. Armenians, happy with the tolerance and justice of the Turkish administration, had a very comfortable life during the reign of Seljuks and Ottomans. This comfortable life continued until the end of the 19th century, when provocation of Russians and some European nations started (Saray, 2000, p. 179).

While some textbooks mention that “Armenians had a comfortable and peaceful life” in (Kolaç, 2008, p. 55; Mumcu, et al., 1985, p. 117; Çağatay, 1998, p. 99; Kara, 2000, p. 154; İlgazi, 2009, p. 59; Akkoyun, 1997, p. 72; Akyüz, et al., 1997, p. 117; Akandere, 2008, p. 39; Turgut, 2004, p. 82), others state that “even the owners of the country, the Turks, were not as comfortable and free as they were” (Turan, et al., 2006, p. 93, Bircan, et al., 1996, p.144). The cliché of “Armenians who had a comfortable and peaceful life” has been strengthened with this statement. In fact, the description of Turks as the “real owners of the country” underlines a hierarchical and categorical distinction between the nation’s citizens. It is thereby ingrained in the minds of students that Muslim-Sunni-Hanafi Turks, who are referred to as Millet-i Hakime, truly own the country:

Ottoman Armenians in Eastern Anatolia have carried on a comfortable and peaceful lifestyle for hundreds of years thanks to the uncommon tolerance policy. It has been so significant that Armenians have earned the title “Millet-i Sadıka” (Loyal Community) as a community sincerely loyal to the Ottoman Empire. Since the state has not forced them to move from their original lands, they spread throughout all corners of the country...In addition to being allowed to fulfill the requirements of their religion without any limitations, these people were also able to speak their own languages freely. Armenians were not conscripted as all other minorities were. Even the real owners of the country, the Turks, were not as comfortable and free as they were. Ottoman Armenians were very happy with this life... Armenians have never had a problem with the Ottoman administration (Bircan, et al., 1996, pp. 144-145).

On the other hand, there are some contradictions in the sections where this issue is discussed. For example the information suggesting that “Armenians have had a very comfortable life and they were not even conscripted” (Erođlu, 1982, p. 217) contradicts the information in another book that suggests that the “Armenians who were taken into the army betrayed the country” (Akandere, 2008, p. 41):

Armenians comprised a rich class among Ottoman society. Armenians did not join the army unlike Ottoman Turks (Erođlu, 1982, p. 217).

Upon the declaration of mobilization by the Ottoman Empire before World War I, some of the Armenians that were called to the army escaped to foreign countries while others fled to inner parts of the country and preferred to create rebellions by cooperating with the enemy (Akandere, 2008, p. 41).

In contrast to the above-mentioned textbooks, some resources state that Armenians “betrayed” Ottoman and Seljuk Empires whenever they had a chance and even helped crusaders during the Crusades, thus pointing out that Armenians were not in fact a “loyal community.” Kařgarlı’s claims, also cited, are as follows:

The real heroes of the Crusades were not noble overlords but Armenians. Armenians did their best to begin the Crusades and to continue them. They accompanied Crusaders along the road that reaches from Istanbul to Jerusalem. They made terrific efforts to help Christian armies... Thanks to the Armenians’ suggestions, Crusade armies that had planned to go to Taurus to reach Jerusalem then followed the Taurus Mountains by northwest and came to Kayseri and held the gates of the Taurus Mountains that are opened to Syria. The people who took made efforts so that the Turks would not advance again are not the Crusaders but the Armenians... Adana, Taurus and all of Cilicia were given to the Crusaders by Armenians (2000, pp. 30-32).

In spite of the fact that Armenians never had a majority in any city of Anatolia, they spread to Western cities thanks to the tolerance shown by the Ottomans. It is also claimed that in the process, their wealth grew and their population increased:

Armenian merchants' and missionaries' partiality and cunningness, along with local rulers' mercy and sometimes their ignorance of certain incidents have caused the Armenian population to increase in such places over time; and churches, monasteries, schools, and naturally Armenian graveyards have also been established (Memmedov, 2000, p. 63).

Even if the textbooks that have defined Armenians as the “loyal community” also mostly blame them for the collapse of relations between Ottomans and Armenians (Yalçın, et al., 2006, p. 102; Turan, et al., 2006, pp. 98-99; Akbıyık, 2000, p. 107), some books include such statements: “Armenian nationalism emerged through the end of the 19th century with the provocation of Russia, a country that had interests in Anatolia. Russia provoked Ottoman Armenians to divide Anatolia and some trivial Armenian rebellions occurred in some places of Anatolia” (Mumcu, et al., 2001, p. 119). This statement suggests that foreign countries, particularly Russia, used Armenians to their own benefit.

The Explanations for the Armenian Exile Given in Turkish Textbooks

Regarding the exile of Armenians, all the textbooks suggest that this was necessary and Armenians were the only people responsible. The Ottoman Empire had to enact an Exile Law since Armenians had “cooperated with the enemy,” “rebelled and killed civilian Muslims” and “made things difficult for the Turkish soldiers on the front lines.” For these reasons, the term “forced migration” is used instead of “exile” in some of the textbooks (Öztürk, 2007, p.108). The main point underlined in these textbooks is that Armenians, who were the “loyal community” in the past, acted in an “ungrateful” manner and misused the tolerance “we” showed them:⁷

Armenians followed Armenian committees that sought adventures with the provocation and encouragement of foreign countries with various interests in Turkey and that have maintained their existence in this way. They created turmoil and rebellions, committed sabotage, and even acted as spies for the enemy... They fought against Turkish soldiers. If they had not done these things, it would [not] even be discussed to force them to migrate to different

⁷ In regards to this issue see also Öztürk, 2007, p. 152; Kara, 2000, p. 155; Akyüz, et al., 1997, pp. 117-118; Bircan, et al., 1996, p. 145; Ilgazi, 2009, p. 60.

parts of the country and also no military efforts would be used to suppress Armenian rebellions... However, it has never been seen in history that governments had their hands tied as a result of the acts of minorities who do not act in accordance with the interest of the country or who even act to demolish the country. Providing the appropriate punishment for a crime is the most natural right and even duty of the state authorities and government administrator (Turgut, 2004, pp. 83-84).

The Armenian issue rose to another level during World War I. For the Ottoman Empire, Armenian incidents have turned from being a terrorist movement into a complete betrayal against the country. Armenian gangs who cooperated with Russian armies within the difficult conditions of World War I committed unimaginable torture and massive massacres against Turkish people in the regions they invaded. More than 700,000 Turks migrated from Eastern Anatolia to Western Anatolia as a result of this Armenian ferocity and Armenians massacred approximately the same number of people (Alpargu, et al., 2008, p. 171).

...The Exile Law was enacted after Armenian rebellions. Ultimately, the rebellion and massacre of Turks in Van made it necessary to enact the law. As the Armenian committee member Papasyan clearly stated, Armenians' cooperation with Russians, in order to demolish the Turkish nation and state prompted the migration (Eroglu, 1982, p. 224).

However, again, there is contradictory information in the discussions of this subject. The first inconsistency regards the name of the state. Although the incidents of 1915 occurred during Ottoman reign, some textbooks have used the name "Turkey" in statements such as "Armenians wanted to found a large Armenian country by taking advantage of Turkey's situation" (Serdarlar, et al., 1968, p. 62). On the other hand, contradictory expressions identify the people allegedly killed by Armenians, sometimes referred to as Turks and sometimes as Muslims. Yet, Turks are not the only Muslim community in Anatolia, which also includes Kurdish and Circassian people, etc. However, authors who used the expression "Turkish" either ignore these groups or include the other Muslims under Turkish identity and try to homogenize Anatolia in favour of Turks.

The Armenian Exile in Textbooks

As with the other subjects, there are some contradictions and differences in sections regarding the Armenians' exile. The first inconsistency that we see deals with its dimensions, including the affected people and areas:⁸

The Agent of the Commander in Chief, Enver Pasha, demanded in his letter to the Minister of Internal Affairs, Talat Pasha, dated May 2, 1915, that Armenians should be dispersed so that they are not able to rebel against the government. This is only to be applied to Armenians in the regions where rebellions have broken out... With a provisional law enacted on May 27, 1915, the power of re-locating and settling the armed people, insurgents, and village and townspeople who disrupt the peace and who betrayed the country by showing resistance and infringement, has been transferred to the army (Yalçın, et al., 2006, p. 103).

According to this law, known as the "Exile Law," people who act against the orders of the government, the country's defense and provision of security, were subjected to migrate to other regions either as individuals or en masse if they cannot be stopped in any other way. The law gave large powers to the regional commanders in practice. Eastern Anatolia Armenians, who acted in favour of the enemy during the war against Russia, were forced to immigrate to Syria and Palestine, areas which were not yet front lines at this time (Turan, et al., 2006, p. 101).

Exile had to occur in places that would directly shaken the trust of the front line, including Erzurum, Bitlis and Van regions and Mersin and Iskenderun, which were behind Sina front line, and then expanded to Adana, Ankara, Aydın, Bursa, Samsun, Çanakkale, Diyarbakır, Edirne, Eskişehir, İzmit, Kastamonu, Kayseri, Karahisar, Konya, Kütahya, Maraş, Niğde, Sivas, Trabzon and Urfa. Armenians living in these places were transferred and settled in Halep, Rakka, Zor, Kerek, Havran and Mosul (Akandere, 2008, p. 42).

The second inconsistency can be seen in the information given regarding deaths. It is stated in some textbooks that Armenians reached Syria and Beirut without any losses:

The claim suggesting that Armenians were massacred during these transfers is not true. Close and simple roads were preferred while the convoys were trans-

⁸ See also Selvi, et al., 2006, p. 166; Çağatay, 1998, p. 100.

ferred to their settlement locations and special care was shown for their protection and safety (Akandere, 2008, p. 42).

Some authors have written that Armenians experienced losses but as a result of natural conditions and Kurdish Tribes and Arabian Bedouins, not the fault of the government:

During this exile, thousands of Armenians have lost their lives because of road conditions and the raids of Kurdish gangs (Saray, 2000, pp. 179-180).

The fact that people who have been subjected to forced migration have been attacked by some gangs like those of the Armenians and especially Kurdish Tribes and Arabian Bedouins, and that this was a reason for the loss of lives, is a fact stated in many reports prepared regarding these developments (Öztürk, 2007, p. 108).

Various textbooks claim that it was other Armenians who killed those subjected to exile:

Many incidents occurred during the migration. Armenian gangs, armed against Turks and who had taken control of the hills, attacked the convoys to prevent the migration and Armenians in the convoys reacted during these attacks. Security forces responsible for the transfer of the convoys had to prevent the incidents and fulfill their duties. In this situation, an armed conflict was inevitable between the parties. As a natural result, many people lost their lives (Turan, et al., 2006, p. 102).

Textbooks accepting that Armenians died during exile claim that this was natural and that the number of Muslims or Turks killed by Armenians before and after the exile would have been much higher than the number of Armenian people who died as a result of the migration:

It has been avoided with care, as the conflicts between Muslims and Armenians would have caused a much more significant loss of life to the Muslim population than the number of deaths that has been exaggerated on the Armenian side, which continues to use these incidents for propaganda until today (Öztürk, 2007, p. 108).

It is true that Armenians have had some losses during conflicts in Eastern Anatolia and the exile. In fact, no one denies that... Also, it should clearly be stated that the losses that Turks experienced as a result of rebellions and massacres started by Armenians was much bigger than those of the Armenians (Alpargu, et al., 2008, p. 173).

Armenian people have died during this exile because of climate conditions, the difficulties of the roads, contagious diseases or various rebellion movements, attacks of gangs and various other reasons... However, the number of Turks who died because of incidents that Armenians caused and their actions that forced Turks to impose an exile, is much higher than the losses of Armenians (Selvi, et al., 2006, p. 166).

Some of the textbooks that attribute the losses of Armenians to natural conditions have compared two different situations with the statement, “some of the Armenians have lost their lives because of natural conditions and lack of public order, however, it should not be forgotten that approximately 100,000 Turkish soldiers died in Sarıkamış because of difficult natural conditions. As a result, Turkish nationals cannot and should not be held responsible for what happened during the migration of Armenians” (Bircan, et al., 1996, p. 145). They tried to display Armenian exile and the deaths during that exile as a “legitimate and ordinary” phenomenon.

Conclusion

The Armenian issue has been significantly discussed in textbooks of the lecture *Principles of Atatürk and Revolution History* used in the Turkish educational system. Although the textbooks have tried to use a common language regarding the Armenian issue, contradictory information is given regarding Armenian history, the exile, and the incidents that occurred during this period.

Judgments including quite a number of stereotypes and prejudices regarding Armenian identity are used. The textbooks discuss Armenians, who have been positioned as enemies and “others,” in terms of contradictions such as good-evil, superior-inferior and fair-unfair. Armenian identity, considered as being “the other,” is displayed in a negative manner whereas “we,” Turks of the Ottoman

Empire and Republic of Turkey, have been fictionalized as perfect and superior. Violence, killing children, raping women, setting eyes on “our” lands, acting immorally and cowardly, being hypocrites and traitors were stated in reference to Armenians. Even if it is rare, a Turkish evil deed is specified but then justified as an “appropriate reaction” or a kind of “punishment” against the massacres and betrayals that Armenians committed against the Turkish people.

In spite of claims that this “evil” state of Armenians resulted from “provocations” by Russia and England through the end of the 19th century, it is actually specified that this state of “being evil” is eternal. Armenians, who are “others” against “us,” those who are fair and superior, are always inferior in some way when compared to “us” and they need to act in accordance with this. Almost every textbook uses the statement, “the rightful owners are the Turks who are the real owners of the country.” Actually, perception of Armenians as a “loyal community” is as much the result of a problematic perspective as the perception of Armenians as “traitors.” Armenians, who are “otherized” in both cases, are degraded to a position lower than Turks, who are shown as “the ruling nation” in other words. While there is a direct insult with “traitor Armenians” in the first perspective, the expression of “loyal community” expects an attitude of ultimate submission, implicitly stating that Armenians are in a lower position than Turks. Armenians have also been the “others” economically, becoming rich as a result of the policy of tolerance, and in turn they have risen to higher positions than Turks. At this point, it is stated directly or implicitly that Armenians have exploited Turks by getting rich because of the exceptions that were provided to them.

Different and contradictory information exists regarding the incidents that occurred during the exile. While some of the books claim that no Armenians died during the exile, others argue that Armenians did die but that the Ottoman Empire was not responsible and that they were killed by natural conditions, Kurdish Tribes, and Arabic Bedouins, and even Armenian gangs. This perspective suggests that as the Ottoman Empire, “we” have not had the slightest fault in the incidents during the exile.

Reading texts are given at the end of chapters in addition to the main subjects discussed in textbooks. “Sütçü İmam” is the reading text that has been most discussed. They provide inconsistencies regarding the Sütçü İmam incident, which occurred after Maras city was taken under control by French soldiers. Some books state that the people in the incidents are French soldiers (Mumcu,

et al., 1985, pp. 123-124; Alpargu, et al., 2008, p. 160; Kara, 2000, p. 161), whereas others argue that these people were Armenian soldiers dressed in French uniforms (Çağatay, 1998, p. 103). Still other sources claim them to have been drunk Armenians (İlgazi, 2009, p. 154; Öztürk, 2007, p. 155).

Inclusion of Armenian women in the degraded state of Armenian versus Turkish identity clinches the situation. "Honour," which women embody within Turkish identity through the concepts of "holiness" and "morality," has been used in creating a fictionalized image of the Armenian women with a "lack of honour" in stereotype narrations. In this way, Armenian identity has once again been degraded by means of gender. "Worthless" and "indecent" images of Armenian women, presented to Franks during the Crusades and who danced with a French commander provided that the Turkish flag was taken down from the castle, serves as an example of Armenian women being placed in a position below Turkish women.

Chapters in textbooks regarding Armenian identity are written with nationalist reflexes. Textbooks, the reproduction of judgment patterns, have reinforced the perception of Armenians, "otherized" by Turkish national identity to the present day. History writing, in the effort to establish a Turkish national identity, supports this perspective. This type of historiography undertakes the most important and functional role in the construction of the identity regarding one's own nation. However, it is inevitable to be stuck in some dilemmas while playing this role. In this type of case, the situation involves more of a reconstruction of the past rather than a factual description of what happened in the past. So, a history that is actually fictional and inconsistent is being built. As Aydın states, during this construction process, this type of historiography ignores examples and incidents that may damage its own theories or the integrity of the ideological history that is its aim (1998, p. 59). The purpose is not to write an accurate history, but to influence "the national conscious" by providing the manipulated masses with legitimizing arguments regarding the deeds of the instrument of the state that represents "the nation."

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PART 2.
THE END OF THE 20TH CENTURY:
SEARCHING FOR NEW INTERPRETATIONS



AZERBAIJAN IN THE LATE 20TH – EARLY 21ST CENTURIES: ETHNIC BOUNDARIES IN THE CONTEXT OF RELATIONS WITH “NEIGHBOURS”

Sevil Huseynova

Introduction: The 20th Century as the Age of Nation-Building in Azerbaijan

For Azerbaijani intellectuals, the 20th century was a time of searching for the boundaries and content of national identity. Social activism of the first intellectuals who formed the core of the national movement in the late 19th – early 20th centuries was aimed at “awakening national (self) consciousness” in the Muslim Turks populating the territories that would later be merged in the Azerbaijan Republic¹.

¹ Following Ernest Gellner I must emphasize that I don't count myself among those specialists “who accept and support nationalism in its own ideological wordings.” Speaking about “awakening” in this case, I only wish to point at ideas which circulated among nationalists themselves in the beginning of the 20th century. In Gellner's fair opinion, “nationalistic theories tend to view nations as stable, naturally social communities which only start to act, or, to use the nationalists' favorite term, ‘awaken’ in the age of nationalism. ‘National awakening’ is the definition that nationalists love dearly” (Gellner, 1991, pp. 14-15).

Those first intellectuals, whether they belonged to right-wing or leftist parties, were influenced by various concepts and ideas borrowed from European nationalism and modernization theory². The first experiment in nation-building should be dated back to 1918-1920, when the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (ADR) was proclaimed in Transcaucasia. Despite the fact that the Republic existed for less than two years, local intellectuals spearheading the Republic, mostly members of the Müsavat ("Equality") party, managed to create a number of government institutions that would be further developed later during Soviet times³.

However "mass awakening of national consciousness" in the Muslim Turks came about only in the years of the implementation of the Soviet nationalities policy. In this regard the Azerbaijani Turks did not differ from the absolute majority of "peoples" that populated enormous spaces of the Russian Empire. Francine Hirsch, the author of a most interesting analysis of ethnography's influence on the realization of the Soviet national politics, notes that:

During the All-Union Census of 1926, the ethnographer-consultants reported that the inhabitants of nonurban regions continued to identify themselves primarily in terms of clan, tribe, religion, or place of origin, while local elites attempted to manipulate the registration of nationality to advance their own agendas (Hirsch, 2005, p. 145).

However, in Hirsch's opinion "nationality becomes a fundamental marker of identity" already in the first half of the 1930s. "National territories" and language were becoming the main criteria used to describe ethnic boundaries. In his turn Yuri Slezkine highlights that:

The world's first state of workers and peasants' was the world's first state to institutionalize ethnoterritorial federalism, classify all citizens according to their biological nationalities and formally prescribe preferential treatment of certain ethnically defined populations (Slezkine, 1996, p. 204).

² The few elite, comprised of intellectuals with European education, emerged already in the mid-19th century. According to historian Tadeusz Swietochowski, the second generation of local intellectuals who had gotten their European education by the 1870s were a small but close-knit group (Swietochowski, 2004, p. 27). Already in 1875 Moscow University graduate Hasan bey Zardabi started to publish the first local Turkic-language newspaper "Əkinci" ("The Ploughman") (Shaffer, 2002, p. 29). In the beginning of the 20th century, especially at the time of the 1905-1907 revolution, first national parties were being formed (Bagirova, 1997, p. 7). The Müsavat party, established in 1911, turned out to be the most influential. Precisely the vanguard of that party became the leaders of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (1918-1920).

³ First of all we need to mention the State University. In addition, the system of state government institutions (ministries and various administrative entities) was created.

In the context of the Soviet nationalities policy, nations were territorialized and moreover, those newly formed “national territories” were being filled with a certain “national spirit.” That is, the inculcation of the nationality and ethnicity phenomena accompanied the development of “ethnic cultures.” In fact the “cultural revolution” (Fitzpatrick, 1992; Clark, 1995) supplemented and corrected national politics. As a result:

The Soviet institutions of territorial nationhood and personal nationality constituted a pervasive system of social classification, an organizing ‘principle of vision and division’ of the social world, a standardized scheme of social accounting, an interpretative grid for public discussion, a set of boundary-markers, a legitimate form for public and private identities... (Brubaker, 1994, p. 48).

Clearly the Soviet regime sought to pursue its own ends. The policy of inculcation, development and cultivation of nationalities and ethnicity suggested construction of “ethnic in form” but “Socialist in content” Soviet nations. This policy was aimed at overcoming the “bourgeois nationalism.” Soviet nations had to meet the expectations of the new proletarian power, and so as a result,

*[nations’] pasts were constructed and reconstructed; traditions were selected, invented, and enshrined; and even those with the greatest antiquity of pedigree became something quite different from past incarnations (Suny, *The Revenge of the Past*, 1993, p. 160).*

Apparently, the Bolsheviks, at least those who were formulating the policy (and Stalin in the first place), strongly believed that overcoming “bourgeois nationalism” would help preserve the country’s unity and integrity. The idea was that having acquired “their own” territories and an opportunity to develop national languages, having seen representatives of the local “native-born” elite as heads of “their own” republics, “Soviet nations” would simply lose the drive to fight for national self-determination⁴.

⁴ As American Sovietologist Terry Martin points out: “The Soviet Union was not a federation and certainly not a nation-state. Its distinctive feature was the systematic support of national forms: territory, culture, language, and elites. ...The Bolsheviks attempted to fuse the nationalists’ demand for national territory, culture, language, and elites with the socialists’ demand for an economically and politically unitary state. In this sense, we might call the Bolsheviks internationalist nationalists or, better yet, Affirmative Action nationalists” (Martin, 2001, p. 15). For information on how this policy was implemented in the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic, see Baberowski, 2003, pp. 314-349, 553-668. We should not be surprised to see the concepts of ‘nationalism’ and ‘internationalism’ combined. Of course the average person, as well as most social sciences and humanities experts, is still convinced that internationalism is the antithesis to nationalism. However, as Tom Narin duly notes, “Internationalism is an organic part of the conceptual universe of nationalism. Both creeds derive from the modern epoch of industrialized development and empire, plainly” (Nairn, 1997, p. 28).

The year 1991 showed that those hopes of the USSR founders never materialized⁵. However, the end of that era did not put an end to “Soviet” conceptions of nation and ethnicity. Not only did the Soviet system not overcome “bourgeois nationalism” – au contraire, it was the Soviet nationalities policy precisely that facilitated the extraordinary development of national movements in the late 1980s⁶. It seems that for the absolute majority of people in former Soviet Union countries, nationality still remains in the first place a biological and genetic category – an indispensable, obligatory and essential characteristic of every person.

It is still hard to overestimate the influence of Soviet national politics on the development of such ideas about the nature of ethnicity and nation, as well as on their blanket distribution. It is quite common for post-Soviet politicians, intellectuals and even ordinary people not to reflect on “their own biological ethnicity,” which, according to Vladimir Malakhov, was internalized in the USSR times when institutionalized ethnicity became the most significant basic characteristic of the country’s every citizen. Malakhov goes on to note that:

Ascribed ‘ethnicity’ (that is, defined by the state and not by individual consciousness) was internalized by people and gradually became a part of (self)-identity instead of an external identifier. This is the origin of such a peculiarity of political thinking as methodological ethnocentrism, which considers society a conglomerate of ‘ethnic groups’ (‘nations’). Today this way of thinking is shared both by the general public and the majority of intellectual and political elites. Sometimes it is rather hard to explain to a former Soviet citizen that his or her nationality is not something innate (Malakhov, 2007, p. 50).

⁵ As Mark Beissinger points out, “the disintegration of the Soviet state could not have taken place without the effects of tidal influences of one nationalism on another” (Beissinger, 2002, pp. 36-37).

⁶ Ronald Suny mentions the rise of “new nationalism” in Armenia in the 1960s (Suny, 1993, Looking Toward Ararat, p. 185-191; Suny, 1997, pp. 374-378). In my opinion the most important characteristic of that ‘new nationalism’ was its large scale. This is exactly what makes it so different from the nationalism of the beginning of the 20th century that was supported only by the very few elite of European-educated intellectuals both in Armenia and Azerbaijan (see Baberowski, 2003, pp. 80-83, 142-153). That is, the Soviet nationalities policy that aimed to make nationality (including the “biological” one) the most significant and fundamental characteristic of every Soviet citizen laid the foundation for the rapid expansion of the mass “new nationalism” in the 1960s-1980s. Ethnic cultures development policy and expansion of mass general education have significantly contributed to the distribution of “new nationalism”. As far as education is concerned, mandatory “national history” course has had no small share in that process.

Institutional History: “Us” and “Our Neighbours”

This article argues that the system of education in post-Soviet Azerbaijan is still focused on developing and maintaining *the very type of thinking* that Malakhov discusses. In order to analyze the specifics of representing such notions of what a nation is in educational texts, I have used post-Soviet national and world history textbooks. In Azerbaijan textbooks are approved by the Ministry of Education, and only one version of a textbook is allowed to be used in secondary schools throughout the country. Therefore a history textbook remains one of the most mass texts, known to a certain degree to practically every resident of the country who has received mandatory secondary school education. In this case, in the words of Mark Ferro, we are talking about institutional history “which reigns supreme, as it expresses or legalizes a policy, an ideology, a regime” (Ferro, 1992, p. 306). No other alternative texts on the subject are allowed in schools.

The analysis I provide in this article stems from the assertion that the definition of nation that is offered to secondary school students within Azerbaijan history course is based on Joseph Stalin’s official Soviet definition⁷. The concept of “nation” (what “we” are as a nation) plays a crucial role in the narrative of “our” relations with Neighbouring nation-states. The logic of the narrative about nation is essentialist in nature. Both “we as a nation” and each of the Neighbouring “nation-states” are represented as solidary and homogeneous communities. Such communities are often collectively and unanimously either on “friendly” or “unfriendly” terms with Neighbouring nation-states. The reasons for and the origins of these “friendships” or “non-friendships” are represented in the context of the “historicism”⁸ ideas. “We” are friends because “we” are “brotherly nations” who have “lived side by side for ages” and been “friends.” We are “not friends” because of “historically” developed circumstances, meaning that one or another Neighbouring nation has acted with hostile intentions towards “us” for centuries. The most important aspect of these processes of essentialization and historization of the notions about the Azerbaijani nation as well as its relations with Neighbours is the assertion that only two contrasting types of contacts are possible: either peace or feud.

⁷ This preservation of the main components of the Soviet definition of nation in post-Soviet historical narrative should not be considered an exception. All-in-all the influence that historical narratives created during Soviet years have on their post-Soviet analogues remains quite significant (for reference, consult: Khalid, 2007, pp. 130-131).

⁸ “Historicism” is a belief that the present can be understood through the past. This is a belief that the key to the meaning behind current events lies in history. That what is happening today is seen as the unfolding of the tendencies that have emerged much earlier (Malakhov, 2005, p. 53).

It should be emphasized that it is of no coincidence that such disciplines as Azerbaijani history and contemporary history have been selected for this analysis. As Rainer Ohliger points out:

There are three subjects which are particularly well-suited for producing and disseminating national ideology in primary and secondary schools: history, geography and literature... History narratives and history textbooks provide a space for the national narrative and establish widely shared beliefs in a common cultural origin or descent within an abstract or imagined community (Ohliger, 1999, p. 108).

Four textbooks have been selected for the analysis: two of them are written for the first years of Azerbaijan history teaching in secondary schools (5th and 6th grades respectively) and two of them are written for the last years (10th and 11th grades respectively). In the 5th and 6th grade textbooks, their authors provide the first explanations and definitions of the Azerbaijani nation. There is a separate unit (that is, a separate thematic lecture on the subject) in the 10th grade textbook devoted to explaining the phenomenon of the Azerbaijani nation. Finally, in the 10th and 11th textbooks one finds the most vivid representation of relations with Neighbouring “nation-states.” Certain evaluative statements about relations with Neighbours can also be found in world history textbooks. In this regard I have included the course in contemporary history developed for 11th grade.

But before we move on to the analysis of the texts themselves, I would like to touch on two aspects. Firstly, I will define the theoretical and methodological boundaries that frame this analysis of the description and definition of the Azerbaijani nation and “national relations” with Neighbours. Secondly, I will provide a brief overview of the scientific, political and ideological context that makes it possible for the above-mentioned definitions of nation to be widely accepted and to be incorporated in schoolbooks.

People, Nation, Nationalism

Immanuel Wallerstein starts one of the essays in his famous book *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities* with the idea that “nothing seems more obvious than who or what is a people...[We] tend to deny that the issue is

complex or puzzling or indeed anything but self-evident” (Balibar, Wallerstein, 2003, p. 85). This seeming “self-evidence” often becomes a serious barrier for researchers in post-Soviet Azerbaijan. Many simply don’t find it necessary to clearly define the notions of “people,” “nation” or “nationalism,” which have become so customary in our daily life. The first two concepts simply become synonymous with each other and more often than not with the term “ethnos” as well. Since the USSR times, nationalistic ideologies that have inevitably followed the process of nations’ formation and development are perceived as those that have nothing to do with “us.” Nationalism is always not “our” ideology and nationalists are always representatives of other communities.

At the same time, no serious attempts have been made at reconsidering the definition of nation that has prevailed among social researchers and humanists in Azerbaijan since Soviet times. As mentioned above, Stalin’s definition of nation is, in fact, still widely used by specialists in the field. That is, all serious and longstanding research conducted on the subject of defining the phenomena of nation and nationalism has remained outside of the debate in Azerbaijani scholarship⁹. Language and territory still form the cornerstone of defining the phenomenon of nation, which is believed to have originated in high antiquity. This, while the majority of experts on the subjects of nation and nationalism point out that they are relatively new or more precisely, the meanings that are currently attached to these concepts are relatively new (Hobsbawm, 2002, pp. 9-10; Hobsbawm, 2003)¹⁰.

In order to clearly define the theoretical and methodological approach, it makes sense to refer to the works of Michel Foucault and touch upon the two

⁹ One of the very few examples of research, whose author is familiar with several works in this field, is historian Aidyn Balayev’s monograph about Mammad Amin Rasulzade, the most famous political leader of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic. Judging by the text, well-known Azerbaijani historian Balayev knows a few works by such experts as Tishkov V., Gellner E., Smith E. However this only leads to obvious eclecticism if not downright muddle in Balayev’s ideas. For instance, he points out that the elite facilitates the “establishment of national identity” in the general population, and he actively uses the terminology traditional for the social constructivism approach. Still this doesn’t stop him from trying to interpret the phenomenon of nation from the primordialistic viewpoint customary for a Soviet historian: “an ethnos acquires the characteristics of a nation not through ethnic self-development, but through political activity and thus they are the products of individual intellectuals’ activity... Modern nations use cultural, historical and other heritage of ethnic communities of the pre-nationalistic world as “raw materials.” In this regard modern nations without a doubt have roots that go deep into the earlier ethnic communities...” and so on (for further reference see: Balayev, 2009, p. 9).

¹⁰ Undoubtedly one of the most well-known definitions of nation belongs to Benedict Anderson. It is a vivid example of the social constructivism approach: “It is imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (for further reference see: Anderson, 1998, p. 6).

important questions of discourse analysis that he has formulated. The first question that, according to Foucault, needs to be answered in order to establish the connection among various “speech acts” is:

Who is speaking? Who in the aggregate of all speaking individuals is authorized to use this language? Who is its native speaker? Who uses its unicity, its authority and who gives this language if not the guarantee then at the very least the presumption of genuineness in return? What is the status of individuals, and the only individuals at that, who have the regulated or traditional, legally defined or spontaneously allowed right to this discourse? (Foucault, 2004, pp. 112-113).

In the first place it is politicians, scientists and teachers who are authorized to use the language of national discourse. The status of these actors is supported by “social institutions, systems . . . [and] pedagogical standards,” which suggest their priority right to constructing this discourse. The right itself is formed and supported within a national state.

Foucault’s second point is that “it is necessary to describe all these institutionalized *positions* from which [politicians, scientists or teachers produce] their speech and where it finds its legitimate origin and its point of use (its own specific objects and verification tools)” (p. 114). Of course institutionalized positions do not only include Parliaments, ministries, institutes of the Academy of Sciences or state universities, but also the multiple auditoriums and classrooms in secondary schools.

In searching for answers to these questions we inevitably face the necessity to take into consideration the high level of significance attached to national statesmanship. By all means any given “national elite” can use the categories of “nation” or “nationality” long before statesmanship is formed. We could follow Baberowski in claiming that the nation already exists in the minds of these elites (2010, pp. 21-22). However, as a rule, representatives of these elites hope that their activities will culminate in the establishment of a nation-state or at least in attaining maximally possible autonomy. It is this culmination precisely that representatives of the Azerbaijani national elite hoped for in the early and late 20th century.

Finally we should emphasize that history as an educational subject is called to carry out all those functions pointed out by Rainer Ohliger, specifically within the bounds of “our” nation-state. Returning to Foucault, I would like to highlight

that I do not consider discourses (national discourse in particular) mere aggregates of signs (“signifying elements that refer to contents or concepts”). I rather see my task in “examining them as practices that systematically form the objects that they discuss” (p. 112). Specifically, in this article I discuss the discursive formation of the image of the Azerbaijani nation or collective national identity. And besides the definitions themselves (such as “what is a nation” and so on), the most important aspect to be analyzed is the specifics of the representation of ethnic boundaries between the “Azerbaijani nation” and “its Neighbours” in history textbooks.

In this analysis I will expand on the idea that the presence of a nation-state becomes the defining factor for the existence of a group of actors whose mission is to construct a national discourse. These actors – politicians, scientists, teachers, experts, etc. – form the national discourse based on their idea of a nation as a fundamental, socio-biological category, or, in other words, on the ideas and definitions that were official in the times of the USSR.

I subscribe to the perspective offered by Rogers Brubaker. Commenting on the approach of this American sociologist, Sergey Glebov¹¹ points out that “one of Brubaker’s fundamentally important statements is that the language that we use to describe the phenomenon of nationalism is borrowed from praxis. Its terms are categories of social and political praxis and therefore should be subjected to serious critical examination before they can be used in the language of analysis” (Glebov, 2000, p. 148). The language of analysis thus must avoid terms used in social and especially in political praxis.

Like Brubaker, I will consider “nation” a fundamental, cognitive and social norm as well as the form institutionalized in the USSR, which “comprised a pervasive system of social classification,” “a set of boundary markers,” and so on. In Brubaker’s fair opinion,

When political space expanded under Gorbachev, these already pervasively institutionalized forms were readily politicized. They constituted elementary forms of political understanding, political rhetoric, political interest and political identity. In the terms of Max Weber’s ‘switchman’ metaphor, they determined the tracks, the cognitive frame, along which action was pushed by the dynamic of material and ideal interests. In so doing, they transformed the collapse of a

¹¹ He is one of the co-editors of the most highly regarded journal in the post-Soviet realm that discusses the issues of collective memory, nation and nationalism, etc.

regime into the disintegration of the state. And they continue to shape the political understanding and political action in the successor states (Brubaker, 2000, p. 287).

Finally, in my analysis I will take as a premise the idea that in the post-Soviet period a history course is an important element of the “nationalizing nationalism” policy. Brubaker points at various forms of nationalism, and he is right to claim that in Eastern European, post-Soviet nation-states that have established their territories, we come across “nationalizing nationalism.” Nationalism remains the dominating ideology even despite the fact that it has already achieved its primary goal – the establishment of a territorially national state. That is, the ideology of nationalism goes through certain changes in the context of the transformation of goals and objectives of nation-building. As Brubaker notes:

Nationalizing nationalisms involve claims made in the name of a “core nation” or nationality, defined in ethnocultural terms, and sharply distinguished from the citizenry as a whole. The core nation is understood as the legitimate “owner” of the state, which is conceived as the state of and for the core nation. Despite having “its own” state, however, the core nation is conceived as being in a weak cultural, economic, or demographic position within the state. This weak position – seen as a legacy of discrimination against the nation before it attained independence – is held to justify the “remedial” or “compensatory” project of using state power to promote the specific (and previously inadequately served) interests of the core nation (Brubaker, 2000, pp. 4-5).

Among these inadequately served interests, “national history” is definitely emphasized. It is customary to believe that in Soviet times Azerbaijan history was allotted undeservingly little time, and many events and facts were either intentionally concealed from Azerbaijani people or distorted. In other words, history was not serving its primary purpose – to form the “national consciousness.” The new, post-Soviet history course is to a large extent devoted to overcoming these “disadvantages.”

Post-Soviet Academic and Politico-Ideological Context

The specific goal of my analysis – examining the images and definitions of nation in the context of relations with Neighbours – allows me to mention several other aspects related to the politico-ideological and academic context in which new textbooks are developed. I will start by saying that in post-Soviet Azerbaijan there is a rather large group of specialists and experts who pen various publications on the subjects of nation, national identity, ethnicity and so on. However, modern theory of nation and nationalism is not reflected in the majority of studies on the subject that are published in the country these days. Perhaps only the ethnogenesis theory developed by Lev Gumilev¹² may be considered rather popular in post-Soviet Azerbaijan. More often than not even specialists simply do not have any information about contemporary research studies in the field, or about their methodology and theories based on this research. Quite often the studies in question are nothing more than the author's own musings that are not based on any serious large-scale field research and are not supported empirically. The majority of studies are either focused on political aspects exclusively or come in the form of traditional ethnographic texts that describe dwellings, clothes, customs and other attributes of ethnicity¹³.

By the end of the 1990s “Azerbaijanism” had become the official state ideology. It is customary to believe that this ideology (“national idea”) was created by Heydar Aliyev, the former President of Azerbaijan, who received the status of the “great pan Azerbaijani leader” after his death in 2003. There is no manifesto of any kind that clearly and intelligibly describes the main concepts of this ideology. In fact, the ideas of “Azerbaijanism” are strewn in bits and pieces across various public speeches, interviews or articles by the deceased President, other high-level officials and the regime advocates of varying levels¹⁴. Overall it could be said that we are dealing with an eclectic ideology, combining ideas of both ethno-nationalism and civic nationalism. Practically the only reflection of the “Azerbaijanism” ideology in textbooks is that of acknowledging

¹² For instance, in his recent monograph Samed Seidov, a psychologist well-known in the country, calls Lev Gumilev the author of “outstanding scientific discoveries in the field of ethnogenesis laws” and the like. (Seidov, 2009).

¹³ Professor Gamarshakh Cavadov was one of the most famous and frequently published Azerbaijani ethnographers. His works are classic texts on the ethnography of ethnic groups (“minorities”) (see e.g.: Cavadov, 2000; Cavadov, 2004). Specialists of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences practice traditional ethnography as well (see Abbasov, ed., 1998; Bunyadov, baş red., 2007).

¹⁴ Ramiz Mehdiyev, the Head of the Presidential Administration of Azerbaijan Republic, is considered the main state ideologist in present-day Azerbaijan. In his recent interview in the state newspaper “Bakinskiy Rabochiy” (“The worker of Baku”) he not only defined the content and specifics of the official ideology but promised that his next book would be fully devoted to describing the “national idea” (available at: <http://3view.az/articles/12837/1/>).

the special role played by the deceased President Heydar Aliyev both in Soviet and post-Soviet nation-building. His rise to power is seen as the climax of this process, and we will discuss the specifics of the process' representation in textbooks in the next section.

What is a Nation? The Theory of Ethnogenesis and Images of Nation

Introducing the concept of a “people” in the fifth grade textbook, the authors directly link it to the specific area: “ONE OF THE MOST ANCIENT RESIDENTS OF EUROPE, ONE OF THE MOST ANCIENT PEOPLES OF THE WORLD – MY PEOPLE, MY NATIVE, GREAT AZERBAIJANI PEOPLE¹⁵. Long live and prosper, my native land – the most ancient of the ancient ones, my primordial, my eternal Motherland – Azerbaijan...” (Otechestvo (Homeland). Fifth grade textbook, p. 5). The textbooks' authors do not provide any specific definition of “people.” However upon examining the texts it becomes obvious that the Azerbaijani are one of the “Turkic peoples.” The “tribal customs, ways of life, folk sayings” of the Oghuz Turks have become common for the “unitary Azerbaijani people.” The authors emphasize the “people’s confessional unity,” meaning devotion to Islam. This version of national discourse developed for the first year of history teaching in secondary schools already highlights the fact that people, national statesmanship and culture (customs and religion) are inseparable. “There is an undeniable truth that sooner or later those who do not have their own state blend into other peoples and dissolve, die, or completely disappear as a people” (Otechestvo (Homeland). Fifth grade textbook, p. 6).

The events related to the Treaty of Gulistan, a peace treaty concluded between the Russian Empire and the Ottoman Empire in 1813, demonstrate that there are other categories necessary for the existence of a nation/people. According to the authors, when the “depopulation started,” the “people,” already deprived of their independence, were deprived of their “language, schools, even their name” (Otechestvo (Homeland). Fifth grade textbook, p. 11). The authors also relegate “the ideals of freedom,” “the unbreakable spirit,” “the glorious past” and “the spiritual world of the unitary people” to the criteria necessary for the existence of a “people” (Otechestvo (Homeland). Fifth grade textbook, p. 12)

¹⁵ Highlighted as per the original text.

These criteria help describe not the whole (multiethnic and multifunctional) population of present-day Azerbaijan but only the Azerbaijani specifically, as an ethno-nation that consists only of the Muslim Turks. At the same time the authors mention that, “both the Turks and representatives of all other nations residing in Azerbaijan are its citizens” (Otechestvo (Homeland). Fifth grade textbook, p. 283). Equal rights to all citizens are guaranteed. The Constitution of 1995 “...bestows equal rights upon all citizens without any exception, regardless of their nationality, religious confession, language, race, beliefs, sex and social status” (Otechestvo (Homeland). Fifth grade textbook, p. 305). However representatives of other ethnic groups (other than the Muslim Turks) are not included in the notion of “my people” provided in the textbook. Overall, we can conclude that the following characteristics are assigned as those that define a nation: territory, linguistic (“sweet language”) and confessional cultural unity, and common collective memory about the past.

In the text written for sixth grade the authors make room in the introduction for a story of how the “Azerbaijani nation” was formed, even though the textbook only covers the history of the “ancient world.” Once again they provide the criteria that describe the Azerbaijani as an ethno-nation and not as a community based on co-citizenship¹⁶. The authors state that there are “ethnoses living” in Azerbaijan, which belong to different linguistic groups. They then proceed to specify that, “the name of our nation – the Azerbaijani, our language is Azerbaijani language. Today in total there are over thirty million Azerbaijani people in the world” (Azerbaijan history. Sixth grade textbook, p. 7). Thus for sixth graders it is stated even more explicitly that “our nation” is the Azerbaijani Turks. Representatives of other “ethnoses” living in the country remain outside the bounds of the Azerbaijani nation.

At the same time the authors mention that the Azerbaijani as a nation developed as a result of the “merging of various tribes.” But they emphasize that all those tribes were “of Turkic origin... The Azerbaijani Turks came into being as a result of the merging of Turkic ethnoses, which had occupied those vast territories from the earliest times and had migrated here periodically. Those ethnoses are known by

¹⁶ Here I mean that the criteria used in the textbook to describe the Azerbaijani nation to a far greater degree correspond to the “ethnic” concept of nation, which ideal type is often associated with the “German model” of the second half of the 19th – early 20th centuries. This model brings “history and culture to the foreground. The explicated version of this model is represented by Friedrich Meinecke...[He] defines nation as a ‘community of origin...[which] can be interpreted both in terms of culture (language, religion) and in terms of biology (blood line, heredity, genotype)’ (Malakhov, 2005, p. 24).

various names – the Azeri, the Gargar, the Albanians, the Hunni, the Khazars, the Sabir, the Oghuz, etc.” (Azerbaijan history. Sixth grade textbook, p. 7).

Finally the textbook for the 10th grade contains a separate paragraph on the development of the Azerbaijani nation:

The presence of the primary objective base is a must for the formation of a nation. No nation can be formed without it. This base is comprised of the following factors: development of capitalism, establishment of the common market, emergence of economic and cultural centers, transformation of the society's structure, creation of the bourgeoisie and the working class...All those conditions existed in Azerbaijan in the second half of the 19th century.

Further on the textbook's text provides an answer to the question of “what is a nation?”

As any other nation the Azerbaijani nation is a historically stable community of people that has come into being on the basis of spiritual fellowship expressed through the unity of language, areal, economic life and culture. All components that form a nation are equally important. It is necessary to take into consideration that a nation is formed only on the condition of the aggregate of all these components. For instance, such characteristics of a nation as the unity of language, territory and spirituality were present at different stages of the ages-old history of Azerbaijan. The commonality of economic life was the only thing missing for the establishment of the nation (Azerbaijan history. 10th grade textbook, pp. 183-184).

Thus the textbook's authors maintain Stalin's view of a nation. In his very first scholarly effort, he defines a nation as “a historically evolved, stable community based on a common language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture” (*quoted by Slezkine, 1996, p. 204*). The textbook's authors clearly echo this definition, and their only new element involves referring to the “Azerbaijani nation” in particular. It is also easy to spot an attempt to further strengthen the antiquity aspect in the interpretation of “Stalin's definition” offered by Azerbaijani historians. It is emphasized that all aspects of the Azerbaijani nation had already been present for many ages prior to the establishment of common economic life. Therefore the tradition of “Stalin's” approach to understanding the phenomenon of nation, which

was widely circulated in the late 19th – early 20th centuries and which should be used as the frame of reference for examining Stalin’s definition, is being “successfully” used in the early 21st century¹⁷.

In the context of this “traditional” idea of the phenomenon of nation, present-day historians reconstruct the events of the past and offer their views on relations with Neighbouring “nations-states.” Anti-imperial and anti-colonial discourses supplement these conceptions. As a result Neighbouring Russia and Iran are represented as direct heirs of the Russian Empire and Persian Empire which have “colonized,” “divided” and “brutally exploited” the formerly “unitary Azerbaijani people.” Most everything that happened in the late 20th century is interpreted through the prism of this context and authors tend to focus primarily on the events of political history (wars, conflicts, etc.).

The Russian Empire – the Soviet Union – Post-Soviet Russia

The “contemporary period” in the history of Azerbaijan starts in Unit 41 in the textbook written for 11th grade. It is titled “Perestroika and Azerbaijan.” The whole text is saturated with anti-colonial rhetoric. In the middle of the 1980s “the protests against the pillage of treasures and resources and the trampling of rights and opportunities for national self-expression were gaining momentum in Soviet republics including Azerbaijan” (Azerbaijan history. 11th grade textbook, p. 265). The authors describe in detail the reasons for the “demise” of the “Soviet Empire” which by that time had “landed on the wrong side of the world’s democratic forces.” In this narrative Azerbaijan (as a “nation-state”) plays the role of the “democratic forces” ally and not the “Soviet Empire’s” element. The image of the “Empire” is the image of the “center,” “Moscow” but not the periphery in the name of the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic.

¹⁷ “On the eve of World War I this definition (Stalin’s, S.H.) was not particularly controversial among socialists. There was disagreement about the origins of nations, the future fate of nationalism, the nature of pre-nation nationalities, the economic and political usefulness of nation-states and the relative importance of nations’ “characteristic features,” but everyone seemed to assume that, for better or worse, humanity consisted of more or less stable Sprachnationen cemented by a common past. Language and history (or Schicksalsgemeinschaft/ “community of fate,” both the precondition and consequence of linguistic unity), were generally taken for granted; but even the more debatable items on Stalin’s list were usually – if not always explicitly – considered legitimate.” (Slezkine, 1996, p. 203). Azerbaijani historians, the authors of this textbook, still do not find “Stalin’s” definition eccentric. However Hobsbawm highlights that: “Attempts to establish objective criteria for nationhood, or explain why certain groups have become ‘nations’ and others not, have often been made, based on single criteria such as language or ethnicity or a combination of criteria such as language, common territory, common history, cultural traits or whatever else. Stalin’s definition is probably the best known among these, but by no means the only one. All such objective definitions have failed, for the obvious reason that, since only some members of the large class of entities which fit such definitions can at any time be described as ‘nations’, exceptions can always be found” (Hobsbawm, 2002, pp. 5-6).

Moscow was eager to try all kinds of maneuvers to stop the inevitable collapse...One of those destructive factors involved fomenting hatred towards Turkic peoples and spurring the confrontation between the Muslims and the Christians. H. Aliyev points out that Gorbachev was particularly hateful towards the Muslims. Gorbachev started to implement his plan to relocate Turkic peoples to Western Russia and other Slavic Christian republics, and he made Christians settle in their original territories (Azerbaijan history. 11th grade textbook, p. 267).

The events that occurred in the course of the USSR's gradual dissolution are interpreted within the context of the prevailing concept of nation. The basics of "any nation's" collective identity are in this case represented as conflict due to "natural" causes (criteria) that separate one nation from the other. The conflict with the "center" is not only (and not so much) political but national and cultural in the first place. This conflict unfolds along the line constructed and drawn by historians between two different national worlds. "Us" and "them" are different by virtue of the linguistic factor ("the Slavs – the Turks") and on the strength of different confessions (Christians – Muslims). That is, in the long run this is a conflict between two different nations.

The nations differ due to the fact that their "basic characteristics" (language and religion) do not correspond with each other. These characteristics determine the choice of allies as well, and they also determine the contradictory nature of the narrative. On the one hand, "the West" is the democratic world. On the other hand, Azerbaijan is a national territory where democratic movement is just beginning. It is as if it is not a part of the USSR but an integrant of the "democratic forces." But at the same time relations with "the West" are represented as tense and not allied. This is because "the West", though anti-Soviet and democratic, is still "Christian."

Western countries were eager to use the devastating national conflicts to their advantage. With that in mind in June 1987 the European Parliament established the Genocide Remembrance Day to commemorate the victims of Armenian "genocide" (Azerbaijan history. 11th grade textbook, p. 268).

"Moscow" continuously fomented the Karabakh conflict, supporting "Armenian Christians." In this environment, "the patience of people who had endured the pillage of national treasures, the insults to national and religious feelings, and

the trampling of their rights reached its peak” (Azerbaijan history. 11th grade textbook, p. 272). A mass national movement started at this point. Its goals, according to the authors, were attainment of sovereignty, democratization and fighting Armenian separatism. “Moscow” had placed its final bet on Armenian separatists “in order to block the Azerbaijan Republic’s independence policy” (Azerbaijan history. 11th grade textbook, p. 308). Neither the “center” nor the separatists managed to stop Azerbaijan in its struggle for independence.

However after independence had been attained, the Karabakh war (1991-1994) broke out. “With the help of Russians” and Russian military, “Armenian aggressors...strengthened their attacks” on rural settlements with Azerbaijani populations (Azerbaijan history. 11th grade textbook, p. 314). Thus “Moscow” becomes the direct successor of the USSR and actions on the part of that country’s authorities are viewed as a direct continuation of the Soviet policy. Consequently Russia and Russians, as the nation that owns this state and acts against the nation of the Azerbaijani Muslim Turks, also become direct heirs to the USSR. The authors then proceed to describe successively the support that Russia provided to Armenia. Russia “increasingly pressured Azerbaijan...to join the Commonwealth of Independent States...[It] “further intensified provocative operations in the republic...[and] increased military support to Armenia” (Azerbaijan history. 11th grade textbook, p. 319). Already after Heydar Aliyev’s rise to power in 1993,

Russia’s ruling elite was discomfited and bothered by the strengthening of the Azerbaijani army and the republic’s growing rapport with NATO, and so they increased military support to Armenia. Despite the fact that Russia was one of the members of the Minsk group created in March 1992, it continued its imperial policy (Azerbaijan history. 11th grade textbook, p. 326).

Therefore post-Soviet Russia comes across as the nation-state of Russians. This nation and state are direct successors (and “owners”) of the Russian and Soviet Empires, which had continuously blocked the Azerbaijani Turks’ independence. The authors end the textbook with musings on the results and lessons of history. They do not waste an opportunity to mention in their conclusions and musings that:

Soon the Azerbaijani people, who in the early 20th century were the guardian of Islamic values and the interests of the Turkic world, started the process

of forming ideas of national uniqueness and statesmanship. This process has been greatly influenced by Russian chauvinism and Russian great-power policy (Azerbaijan history. 11th grade textbook, p. 367).

This is the only “compliment” towards “Russia and Russians” that one could find in the course in “contemporary history of Azerbaijan.” Overall “Russia and Russians” are the image of “the other,” the image of the Neighbouring nation-state that has “different spiritual values,” an “alien language” and, most importantly, has continuously and single-mindedly deprived the “Azerbaijani people” of its “national identity” and independence, supporting Armenia and Armenians with whom the Azerbaijani are in conflict.

Armenia: “Armenian Nationalists”

Now I turn to a discussion of Armenia, considering the link that the textbooks’ authors see between Russia and Armenia. However, extensive detail describing Armenia as Azerbaijan’s Neighbouring state is not necessary here. It is already clear from the previous section that Armenia and Armenians form an integral part of the “enemy image.” A significant portion of the contemporary history course is devoted to describing the Karabakh conflict (1988-1994), which is continuously represented as interethnic. Such epithets as “Armenian nationalists” and “Armenian fascists” can go a long way towards explaining which clichés are used to represent Neighbouring relations with Armenia. Presenting the results of the story they have told, the authors conclude that by virtue of the Neighbours’ imperial policy in the 20th century, the “Azerbaijani people” lost a “part of their main treasure – their territory.” The empires were eager to control Azerbaijan, as they were interested in its “advantageous geographical location.”

Armenian nationalists, who liberally offered their services to almost everybody, were an effective tool to reach those goals. With the support from their Russian and European patrons and under the leadership of the Armenian Apostolic Church, Armenians, who had relocated to the Azerbaijani people’s territories as early as in the 19th century, began to implement the policy of ethnic slaughter. In the early 20th century the Armenian state was formed in western Azerbaijan. Armenians who lived in Nagorno-Karabakh were granted autonomy. As a result of the systematic anti-Turkic policy in the 20th century the Azerbaijani were com-

pletely forced out of those territories (Azerbaijan history. 11th grade textbook, p. 371).

It is not difficult to see in these history “lessons” the same criteria for defining the boundaries of a nation, which in this case also become the boundaries of confrontation. The authors repeatedly problematize the conflict. Historical narrative once again turns into a story of a confrontation between collective and solidary communities – nations. These nations are different by virtue of a simple fact that one is comprised of Muslim Turks and the other of Christian Armenians.

Turkey: A “Brotherly Nation and Country”

It is only natural that on the basis of such logic Neighbouring Turkey and the Turks as a nation have an exclusively positive image. However, quite paradoxically both Turkey and the Turks get practically no mention in the textbook’s unit devoted to “contemporary history.” One can only find one reference to Turkey giving a loan to the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic. Or another, very brief statement that “comprehensive cooperation with Turkey occupied an essential place in Azerbaijan’s foreign policy” (Azerbaijan history. 11th grade textbook, p. 343).

Essentially the logic of such brevity is simple: it stems from the authors’ prevailing interest in describing conflicts. If there is no conflict between Turkey and Azerbaijan, then there is nothing to talk about. We are two “brotherly nations.” This “brotherhood” lies in the common language and in this particular case, common language trumps “religion”¹⁸. This statement seems obvious and thus it does not need a detailed argumentation. No significant place is allocated to relations with Turkey in the “World History” textbook either. But overall, the image of this Neighbour is largely positive.

Georgia: The “Invisible” Neighbour

The authors of the textbook are so infatuated with describing the conflict between Azerbaijan on one side and Armenia and Russia on the other that they pay even less attention to another Neighbour – Georgia. In fact in the sections

¹⁸ The Republic of Turkey is populated mostly by Sunni Muslims whereas Azerbaijan is mostly Shiite Muslims.

on Azerbaijan “contemporary history” Georgia is not mentioned at all. On the one hand, this shows the same lack of interest that can be observed in the case of Turkey, and it demonstrates that relations with this Neighbour are good and friendly. No conflict exists, and consequently there is nothing to describe. On the other hand, the fact that Georgia is not mentioned at all shows that this Neighbour’s status is much lower than that of “brotherly Turkey.” “We” are friends, but “we” are not “brotherly nations.” Here we run into the impenetrable borderline that, according to the textbooks’ authors’ ideas, lies in the language and confession. However, the version provided in the “World History” textbook suggests that there might have been certain difficulties in these relations:

With the collapse of the USSR new independent states were formed in the South Caucasus. With E. A. Shevardnadze’s accession to leadership in Georgia and H. A. Aliyev’s accession to leadership in Azerbaijan, certain transformations occurred in the life of the Azerbaijani Turks residing in Georgia. March 1996 visit to Georgia by H. Aliyev, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, has further cemented the trust between our nations and has significantly contributed to the restoration of the infringed rights of the Georgian Azerbaijani (Contemporary History. 11th grade textbook, pp. 88-89).

The textbook doesn’t say how exactly those rights were infringed. At the same time, when it comes to another Neighbour, Iran, the textbooks’ authors discuss the difficulties and “violated rights” at length.

Iran: Another Hostile Empire Next Door

It stands to mention that the specifics of describing relations between Iran and Azerbaijan mostly resemble and repeat those we have seen in the representation of relations with Russia. Iran is “the other empire,” and a significant part of the “wrongfully divided Azerbaijan” has remained within its boundaries (just as previously within the Russian Empire’s). The authors devote several separate paragraphs to the “contemporary history” of this part of Azerbaijan. According to the established and long-standing tradition in the Azerbaijani history scholarship, this territory is identified as “South Azerbaijan.” The authors go into much detail describing the events of 1945-1946 when Soviet army troops were stationed in the northeastern Iran. Soviet

power practically organized, guided and actively supported Azerbaijani Turks' local national movement. Still the authors try not to discuss this circumstance at length and thus overall they represent the movement in "South Azerbaijan" more as an autonomous movement for independence¹⁹. The movement's defeat is described in very emotional terms and becomes another reason for criticizing the Soviet regime:

The fall of the national government...that resulted from the Soviets' betrayal led to many tragedies in South Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan was bathed in a sea of blood. Freedom fighters were thrown into dungeons, people were executed in droves, and hundreds of thousands of families were exiled to the south where the climate was severe. Everything that had been achieved in the course of the one-year rule of the national government was destroyed. Azerbaijani (Turkic) language and culture were persecuted. The Tabriz University, the Philharmonic Society and other cultural oases were shut down; books and textbooks printed in the native language were burned. Complete darkness fell upon Azerbaijan. For quite some time economic, as well as moral and psychological decline reigned supreme there (Azerbaijan history. 11th grade textbook, p. 283).

The textbook's authors do not mention the potential "spiritual unity" of the Azerbaijani and Iranians who speak Farsi. Both are primarily Shiite Muslims. In order to draw the line between the Fārsī and the Turkish the authors focus on the different "native tongues." This criterion becomes the basis for the narration about the differences between the Azerbaijani and Iranian cultures. Finally, although the territories where the Azerbaijani Turks live are a part of Iran, they also still remain an integral part of the sovereign homeland ("national territory") of which only one part – the Republic of Azerbaijan as such – is currently independent. Therefore the Azerbaijani Turks do not belong to the "Iranian people." They are clearly associated with the territory – the "South Azerbaijan," that has been wrongfully subjugated by Iran. When "Iranian people started to fight for the nationalization of the oil industry...South Azerbaijan, which gradually emerged from depression, actively engaged in that struggle"(Azerbaijan history. 11th grade textbook, p. 289). However in the 1960s-1970s, the Iranian "Shah" regime continued to discriminate against the Azerbaijani:

¹⁹ A detailed recollection of these events can be found in the book by historian Jamil Hasanli (2006).

Chauvinistic national policy of the Shah government which was being implemented in the name of 'national solidarity' turned into a special instrument of pressure towards South Azerbaijan. National discrimination was especially obvious when it came to education reforms. The policy of Farsization of other peoples was consistently carried out. As a result, the Azerbaijani language was also banned, publication of books, newspapers and magazines in that language was suspended, and published books were taken out of circulation and destroyed (Azerbaijan history. 11th grade textbook, p. 291).

The Azerbaijani Turks are not described as an “ethnic minority” but precisely as a nation that populates a certain territory. In essence, South Azerbaijan is represented as a separate state that was put under the control of the Iranian regime – by analogy with the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic that was put under the rule of the Soviet Empire.

The Azerbaijani took the most active part in the 1978-1979 Iranian Islamic Revolution hoping to attain autonomy. However, in the result the new regime, in its turn, refused to recognize their rights.

After the revolutionaries had won the conservative right wing of Iran's ruling elite, who had pursued the anti-Azerbaijani (anti-Turk) policy under the slogan of 'unitary Iranian nation' in the times of the Shah regime, declared the 'unitary Islamic world' and began to deny the concept of national identity (Azerbaijan history. 11th grade textbook, p. 291).

Naturally, such problems of a part of the unitary but “wrongfully divided” people cannot but affect relations between the two countries. Here is what the authors of the “World History” textbook laconically say in this regard:

Though Iran claims that it has recognized Azerbaijan's territorial integrity, it still keeps close political and economic as well as diplomatic relations with Armenia. When it comes to dividing the Caspian Sea into sectors, it demands its 20% share (Contemporary History. 11th grade textbook, p. 101).

Conclusion

Therefore, according to the version provided by the textbooks, out of all Neighbouring countries, currently the Republic of Azerbaijan has “Neighbourly” relations only with Turkey and Georgia. Relations with Russia, Iran and particularly with Armenia are represented as hostile. In all cases description of these relations goes through the process of ethnicization. Different ethno-national communities are either “friends” or “foes.” The boundaries between these communities are historicized and essentialized. As a result, ethnic boundaries are often represented as impenetrable and in conflict. In this context political events (and conflicts in particular) are given decided preference in the historical narrative. Such narrative that is now used to raise and educate the first post-Soviet generations of Azerbaijan citizens can by all means become a serious barrier to regional integration.

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WRITING THE HISTORY OF THE PRESENT: THE POST-SOVIET PERIOD IN ARMENIAN HISTORY TEXTBOOKS

Mikayel Zolyan

Introduction: The Armenian Context

Writing a history textbook is not an easy task, especially in a post-Soviet country in the South Caucasus that has an unstable domestic political situation and unresolved issues with two of its four Neighbours. The historians working on the world history textbooks for Armenian schools had a difficult job ahead of them. They had to balance a post-Soviet legacy, a sharpened sense of ethnic and/or national identity in a newly emerged nation-state, and the need to educate students capable of living in a 21st century society. However, writing history becomes especially difficult when the historical facts that the historian deals with did not occur in the distant past but within the historian's lifetime.

While researchers have scrutinized written histories in post-Soviet Armenia, and particularly history textbooks (Iskandaryan, Harutyunayn, 1999; Zolyan, Zakaryan, 2010; Zolyan, Zakaryan, 2009; Vesely, 2008), to our knowledge no specific studies of the representation of contemporary history in Armenian textbooks have been conducted. Current research aims to contribute to filling this gap: in this paper we shall examine how contemporary history (defined for the purposes of this article as the post-1991 period) is presented in Armenia's history textbooks.

While dealing with representations of contemporary history in post-Soviet textbooks, one has to take into account all the pressures and obstacles that influence a historian who has undertaken the task of writing this history. Thus, historians of the former Soviet countries writing on modern and contemporary issues often find themselves squeezed between two opposing and equally destructive forces. On the one hand, the influence of the dogmatic Soviet historiography continues to linger, impacting not only the content but also the style of history writing. On the other hand, nationalist discourse plays an important role, in many cases replacing Marxism-Leninism as the official state ideology. Historians need to tread carefully, trying to avoid these two extremes, especially when the objective is to write a history textbook. Unlike historical monographs read mostly by specialists, textbooks have the widest possible audience, the nation's high school students. Moreover, historians writing about contemporary history are especially vulnerable when describing internal political developments. The degree of vulnerability varies from country to country, depending on such factors as the openness of the political system, the government's tolerance to differing and critical opinions, and the government's degree of control over the educational system. These components influence the climate in which historians operate. Other important issues include the existence of ethno-political conflicts in the region and the extent to which the nation had developed its own school of historiography prior to the Soviet Union.

While the outside world may not have expected the emergence of new nation-states from the ruins of the Soviet empire, it is important to understand that they did not arise "out of nowhere." The Soviet system harshly punished calls for independence from Moscow, as well as other open manifestations of nationalism, but concurrently helped to create semi-autonomous proto-states with a distinct national and cultural identity (Slezkine, 1994). In other words, the USSR promoted nationalism in a broader sense, defined by E. Gellner as a

political principle that maintains that the national and political unit should coincide (Gellner, 1983). As part of the proto-national state building that occurred in the republics during the Soviet years, national schools of historiography continued to exist (or in certain cases emerged), maintaining narratives of national history different from the official “all-union” Soviet historiography (on how “national” narrative was maintained in spite of the official Soviet “memory,” see Jones 1994). In certain cases, these national schools of historiography clashed with each other over issues related to conflicting political claims, which were often muted in the political discourse but articulated in the academic sphere (Astourian, 1994; Shnirelman, 2003).

In order to understand the challenges that Armenian historians face while writing histories of contemporary Armenia, it is necessary to consider the external and internal contexts in which the nation exists today. A substantial volume of literature in English deals with the experiences of post-Soviet Armenia (Libaridian, 1999; Libaridian, 2007; Suny, 1993; Astourian, 2001; Panosian, 2006). To a great extent, the late 1980s have defined this period. Armenia was one of the Soviet republics that experienced a wide popular movement that combined elements of democracy and nationalism (Beissinger, 2002). Moreover, this movement was one of the first to openly challenge Soviet authorities, paving the way for more protests in the USSR and the whole Eastern Bloc (Libaridian 1991; Malkassian, 1996; Marutyan 2009). It ultimately succeeded in replacing Soviet rule in Armenia with the government of the Armenian National Movement, a political party that emerged on the basis of the popular movement.

The events of 1988-1991 in Armenia, as well as in some other Soviet republics, were structurally similar to the revolutions that took place in Central and Eastern Europe in 1989. However, the aftermath of these revolutions was quite different. While Central and Eastern European countries were immediately welcomed by the West and found themselves on the course to European integration, the countries of the Caucasus became mired in ethno-political conflicts and faced serious obstacles in the path of democratic transition. In the early 1990s, Armenia was still able to position itself as “a beacon of democracy” in the Caucasus, mostly based on the fact that it was the only country in the region that did not experience the forcible overthrow of the government and former Communist leaders’ return to power. However, by the mid 1990s, the Armenian political system exhibited signs of authoritarianism, such as rigged elections

and persecution of the government's opponents. At the beginning of the new century, Armenia already had a political system, dominated by a narrow circle of state officials and "oligarchs," a system of authoritarian decision-making and widespread corruption with a democratic façade. However, Armenia's political system remained relatively more open compared to the so-called "sultanistic" regimes that existed than some other post-Soviet regimes, in which leaders enjoyed absolute political power with virtually non-existent opposition, free media, and civil society (on the definition of "sultanistic regime," albeit in a different regional context, see Goldstone 2011).

Conflicts with two of Armenia's Neighbours dominated the external political context of post-Soviet Armenia's experience. These included the violent conflict with Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh and the "cold" conflict with Turkey. The stand-off between Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians and the authorities of Soviet Azerbaijan transformed into a full-scale war when the USSR disintegrated. Armenia supported Nagorno-Karabakh, which by that time had proclaimed itself an independent republic, in the war, which ended with a cease-fire in 1994. However, attempts at finding a political resolution to the conflict have failed so far, and the state of "no war, no peace" continues (on Nagorno-Karabakh conflict see Chorbajian, et al., 1994; Waal, 2004).

Turkey supported its ethnic kin in Azerbaijan by imposing a blockade in Armenia in 1993, which has had catastrophic consequences for the Armenian economy. Apart from the Turkish support for Azerbaijan, other issues influencing Armenian-Turkish relations include Armenia's demands for acknowledgement of the 1915 Armenian genocide in Ottoman Turkey, recognition of the current borders, issues related to the remaining Armenians in Turkey, along with the fate of Armenian cultural heritage in Turkey, among other concerns. While the first Armenian government expressed its willingness to establish relations with Turkey without any preconditions, Turkey turned down the offer and the next Armenian government switched to harsher rhetoric and open support for the genocide recognition campaign. It seemed that a new page was opened in 2008, when Serzh Sargsyan, the new president of Armenia, invited Turkish president Abdullah Gul to visit Armenia and attend a football match between the two national teams. Gul accepted the invitation, initiating the so-called "football diplomacy," which culminated in signing of the "Armenian-Turkish protocols" in October 2009. The thaw in Armenian-Turkish relations generated a lot of attention all over the world, earning praise for Gul and Sargsyan in the West, but

prompting an angry response from nationalists in both countries, condemnation from Azerbaijan, and a mixed reaction in Armenian Diaspora communities. However, the protocols were never ratified by the Armenian and Turkish parliaments and currently both sides seem to have hardened their positions (on Armenian-Turkish relations and “football diplomacy,” see International Crisis Group 2009, Zolyan 2011).

While the Karabakh conflict and Armenian-Turkish relations dominate Armenia’s external agenda, Armenia’s foreign policy has to deal with other issues as well. Armenia has been trying to balance its relations with Russia and the West in a policy of “complementarism” (see below). Armenia has in general maintained good relations with Georgia, in spite of certain issues particularly connected to Georgia’s Armenian population, centered in the capital Tbilisi and the region of Javakhq on the Armenian border (Javakhq is the Armenian name of the region, in Georgian it is called Javakheti). Armenia has also maintained good relations with Iran, which holds a mostly neutral position in the Nagorno-Karabakh question, despite calls from ultra-conservative religious circles and ethnic Azerbaijanis in Iran to support Muslim Azerbaijan against Christian Armenia.

As we shall see from the textbooks, it is not an easy task for the authors to explain such complicated internal and external conditions to high school students. Armenian students learn about the period after 1991 twice: once in the end of the ninth grade, the last year of basic school, and again in the twelfth grade, the last year of high school. High school students are divided into two sections, humanities and natural sciences, with separate textbooks for each section. These changes are relatively recent however, and the twelfth grade textbooks were not available at the time of this research. Therefore, only ninth grade textbooks are the subject of analysis in this paper. The eleventh grade textbook for the humanities section ends with the First World War and that for the natural sciences section ends with the Cold War (Qosyan, 2010a; Qosyan, 2010b). A general description of how world history should be taught is available in the form of the “National Standard” for teaching world history in high school (National Standard, 2009).

The ninth grade textbook for world history (Stepanyan, 2008) consists of an introduction and 30 chapters, divided into three main sections: “The World in the Third Phase of Industrial Society” (1918-1945), “The World During the Cold War” (1945-1991), and “The World After the Cold War” (post-1991). This final section consists of eight chapters, out of which only four actually deal with the

chronological frames of the post-Cold War period. These chapters include “The Countries of the West after the Cold War,” “Post-Soviet States,” “International Relations in the Contemporary Era,” and “The Major Issues of the Modern¹ World.” The remaining chapters of this section deal generally with culture, science, economics and types of political systems in the modern period. These chapters must have been included in the third part of the textbook, based not on chronological considerations, but rather to make sure that all the three parts of the textbook are of relatively the same length.

The textbook of Armenian history that deals with the post-1991 period and is currently used in schools (Barkhudaryan, 2008) is divided into five sections: “The First Republic of Armenia² (May 1918 - December 1920)”; “Soviet Armenia: 1920-1945,” “Soviet Armenia: 1945-1991”; “The Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh: 1991-2008,” and “Armenian Diaspora (1915-2008).” Mainly the fourth section is of interest for us, but certain parts of sections three and five are also relevant. Compared to Armenian history textbooks published during the previous years (on these textbooks see Vesely, 2008), the 2008 version contains quite lengthy and detailed descriptions of the post-Soviet history of Armenia. All of section four is devoted to this period: it consists of two “topics,” each of which consists of four chapters. The first “topic,” entitled “The Republic of Armenia: 1991-2008,” consists of chapters entitled “The Republic of Armenia on the Road to Independence,” “The Republic [of Armenia] on the Road to Economic Reform,” “Socio-political and Cultural Life of the Republic of Armenia,” and “The International Situation of the Republic [of Armenia].” The second “topic” of the section is entitled “The Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh: 1991-2008” and is divided into two chapters: “The Republic [of Nagorno-Karabakh] During the Years of War and Independence” and “The Internal Situation in the Republic [of Nagorno-Karabakh].” Apart from these, the second “theme” of section three, entitled “The Policies of ‘Perestroika’ and the National Question” is also of interest, since it deals with developments in the late 1980s, as well as the “Relations Between the Third Republic of Armenia and the Diaspora” subchapter of the fifth and last section of the book (the section in general deals with the history of Armenian Diaspora communities).

¹ The word “ardi” is used, which can be translated both as “modern” and “contemporary.”

² In Armenian historiography it is common to refer to the Republic of Armenia that existed in 1918-1920 as the “First Republic”, to the Soviet Armenia as “the Second Republic”, and the republic founded in 1991 as the “Third Republic.”

World History Textbooks: The Neighbours' Conspicuous Absence

In the ninth grade textbook, the section dealing with the political history of the post-Cold War period is structured according to a pattern that divides the world into the West and “East,” roughly speaking, i.e. post-Soviet countries. Other parts of the world do not receive specialized attention in separate chapters; they are covered only in quite a general fashion in the chapters “International Relations in Contemporary World” and “The Issues of Contemporary World.” The emphasis on the West and post-Soviet history reflects the influence of a long-established Euro-centric discourse, which, ironically, remains much more common in the post-Soviet space than in western European countries, where this discourse originated.

In the ninth grade textbook, the chapter dealing with the history of the West in the post-Cold War period starts with an assertion that since the 1970s, western countries have entered a new phase of development as a “post-industrial society” or “information society” (Stepanyan, 2008, p. 136). The chapter proceeds to describe the contemporary phase of European integration. It also mentions the enlargement of the European Union, particularly stressing that out of 15 countries to join the EU after 1993, 10 were former socialist countries. The discussion of the EU is concludes with the statement that the European integration process faces certain obstacles, and particularly serious challenge of combining “national” with “pan-European” values (Stepanyan, 2008, p. 137). The rest of the chapter focuses on individual Western countries, namely the US, Great Britain, France, Germany, and Italy. Particularly, the US is described as “the only superpower” left after the end of the Cold War. While the textbook offers quite a favourable view of President Bill Clinton’s administration, it criticizes the following president, George W. Bush, for causing economic stagnation within the country and promoting militarist policies in the field of foreign relations.

Each section dealing with a major Western country is followed by a paragraph regarding its diaspora communities. Thus, the section on the US includes a footnote about its one million strong Armenian Diaspora, stating that “many Armenians have reached prominent positions in different fields in the life of the country; they are helping Armenia and contributing to promoting Armenian-American relations” (Stepanyan, 2008, p. 138). The subsection on France is followed by a note that discusses the 400,000 Armenians who live in the country, including businessmen, intellectuals, and artists, who “promote friendly

relations between Armenia and France,” analogous to the Armenian Americans in the US (Stepanyan, 2008, p. 139).

The ninth grade textbook also deals with post-Soviet states. It describes the end of Soviet totalitarianism, along with major steps taken after the transition: economic liberalization and development of market relations, introduction of private property, dismantling of the nomenclature, and creation of new financial systems. The authors argue that while the transition has mostly been successful in the Baltic region, allowing Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to integrate into the European structures, the process in the other post-Soviet states has faced many serious challenges. Particularly, as a consequence of “wild privatization,” a small number of people have acquired large fortunes, while the majority of the population has found itself in extremely harsh material conditions. This huge wealth gap, the authors argue, has primarily caused the political instability in post-Soviet countries, which manifests itself in election fraud and “colored revolutions.” Also, it is noted that the state-building process in most post-Soviet countries is far from over: even though all these countries have adopted constitutions and declared themselves democratic states, the reality is that political parties and civic institutions are weak, being united not around ideas but around the personalities of “the leaders” (Stepanyan, 2008, p. 142). Influence of external actors is also mentioned as one of the factors defining the state of affairs in post-Soviet states: it is interpreted as a competition for strategic influence between Russia on the one hand and the US and EU on the other (ibid.).

Discussing the post-Soviet period in Russia, the influence of the official version of history during Vladimir Putin’s period is obvious. Boris Yeltsin’s years of rule are described as “difficult and controversial,” characterized by economic decay and disarray of the system of government, coupled with unsuccessful attempts at economic reforms, as well as a bloody war against separatists in the North Caucasus. The description of Putin’s rule, on the other hand, has an openly apologetic tone. Thus, Putin is credited with flexible domestic and foreign policy, development of the country’s economy, successful reform of the system of government, increasing social welfare, and restoring faith in the future. In the field of foreign relations, Putin’s policy is described as balanced and stable, and the section concludes with the statement that Russia “returned itself to the status of a great power.” The subchapter on Russia, as in the case of the US and France, is followed by a note on its Armenian Diaspora, stating that 2.5

million Armenians live in Russia and have national [sic.], cultural, religious, and educational organizations, including the Union of Armenians of Russia, which provides material assistance to Armenia and promotes Armenian-Russian relations (Stepanyan, 2008, p. 143).

The textbook mentions “inter-ethnic conflicts” inherited from the USSR among the issues existing between the states of the CIS (Stepanyan, 2008, p. 144). It contains a paragraph that describes Armenia’s efforts to develop relations with other post-Soviet countries. In particular, a “strategic partnership has evolved between our Republic and the Russian Federation.” The text further describes “good Neighbourly relations with “Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Georgia and other CIS members” [the book was published in 2008]. The statement “the only exception is Azerbaijan” proceeds this text, which also argues that their “extremist position...is an obstacle to the solution of conflicts” (Stepanyan, 2008, p. 145).

When describing the contemporary system of international relations, the textbook describes NATO as the most powerful military-political alliance of the contemporary world, which “aims to reach global domination.” The EU is referred to as an organization that seeks to “ensure economic, political, cultural, and legal unity” (Stepanyan, 2008, p. 147). The authors stress NATO’s cooperation with Armenia. At this point the textbook goes on to discuss Armenia’s cooperation with NATO, particularly its participation in the “Partnership for Peace” program, the implementation of the “Individual Partnership Action Plan,” and in the NATO peacekeeping operation in Kosovo. However, it is emphasized that “though the cooperation is deepening, Armenia is not striving to become a NATO member” (Stepanyan, 2008, p. 148). Naturally, the textbook also mentions the Organization of Collective Security and Armenia’s participation in this bloc.

The textbook is quite enthusiastic about the European Union. While in the case of NATO there are some hints of the authors’ critical attitudes, the description of the EU is more sympathetic. Its main content describes its relationship with Armenia:

Armenia has active cooperation with the EU. In 1996 it signed a treaty of cooperation with the EU. Since 2007 Armenia has been implementing a program with the EU that provides large-scale reforms in the fields of democracy and human rights, as well as in social, economic, and legal spheres, among others. Membership in the EU is one Armenian policy’s strategic aims(Stepanyan, 2008, p. 148).

Thus, it is stressed that despite Armenia's cooperation with NATO, it is not aiming to become a member, with the EU, on the contrary, Armenia strives to become a member of the organization in the future. This perspective echoes the Armenian government's official position, though it remains questionable to what extent these subtleties are communicated to students.

Armenia's immediate Neighbours, Georgia and Azerbaijan, are also almost absent from the text. Georgia is mentioned several times only in the context of the description of the processes in CIS. It appears for the first time as one of the countries where a "colored revolution" had taken place, which has led to a "deepening rift with Russia" (Stepanyan, 2008, p.144). The second reference to Georgia occurs in the same chapter in the context of other CIS countries, which Armenia has made efforts to establish good relations with (Stepanyan, 2008, p.145). However, one of the few illustrations of this part of the book actually represents Georgia with a photograph of a crowd gathered in Tbilisi with a red-crossed Georgian flag flying over them and a caption reading "The Rose Revolution in Georgia" (Stepanyan, 2008, p.144).

Azerbaijan is also only referenced once, in a similar context. Describing the good relations between Armenia and other CIS countries, the textbook highlights Azerbaijan as the only exception. The authors blame the lack of positive relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan on the latter's radical posture, which "refuses to acknowledge the de facto independence of Karabakh" (Stepanyan, 2008, p.145). As in the case of Armenia's relationships with NATO and EU, this formula mostly aligns with the government's official position in the negotiations on the Karabakh issue.

The only mention of Turkey in the section of the textbook dealing with the post-Cold War period is not related to the current processes in Turkey, but the Armenian genocide in the Ottoman Empire. Chapter 21 in the previous section of the textbook discusses the history of modern Turkey within the broader topic of the history of the Middle East in the second half of the twentieth century. The reference to Turkey mentions the economic policies of Turgut Ozal, the Kurdish problem, as well as Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's election in 2003. A short paragraph, also in this section, refers to the current state of Turkish-Armenian relations:

Though Turkey was one of the first countries to recognize the independence of Armenia, to this day the two countries do not have diplomatic relations. Turkey

has presented preconditions to Armenia for establishment of diplomatic relations, which are unacceptable. Moreover, it has closed the border with Armenia. Turkey worries that more and more states are recognizing the Armenian genocide (Stepanyan, 2008, p. 126).

As in other cases, when the textbook touches upon issues of Armenia's foreign policy, it follows almost word for word various Armenian government representatives' official position.

Iran is also absent from the section of the book dealing with post-1991 history. However, the previous section deals with Iran in quite a detailed manner, describing events from the 1950s to 1980s, including the rise of the nationalist Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh and the subsequent *coup d'état*, Mohammad Reza Shah's attempts at reform, the Islamic Revolution, and the Iran-Iraq War. The discussion does not include post-1991 events in Iran, except for a reference to the country's Armenian community and its developing positive Neighbourly relations with Armenia.

Writing the Narrative of Nation-Building: The History of Armenia

While writing the history of contemporary events poses quite a challenge in any society, Armenian historians find themselves in an especially delicate position. Armenia's foreign affairs involve a state of open military conflict with Azerbaijan, its eastern Neighbour, and strained relations, or even a lack of relations, with Turkey, its Neighbour to the west. In terms of domestic politics, historians may face an even greater challenge. Many of the people who took part in the events of the early 1990s, when Armenia became independent, are still active on the political scene. Moreover, since late 2007, Armenia's domestic politics have been dominated by sharp conflict between the supporters of the first president, Levon Ter-Petrosyan, currently the leader of the opposition, and the supporters of the current government. The second president, Robert Kocharyan, led this faction until the 2008 elections, when Serzh Sargsyan became the third president. To make matters even more complicated, both Kocharyan and Sargsyan were prominent members of Ter-Petrosyan's team in the 1990s, before irreconcilable differences emerged between them and their former boss in 1998, leading to Ter-Petrosyan's resignation. If we also consider the fact that all Armenian administrations since 1991 have had questionable

human rights records, and the fact that nearly every major election since the mid-1990s was disputed and followed by mass protests, it becomes clear that writing a textbook about the internal life of post-Soviet Armenia is no easy task politically, to say the least.

The discussion of the representation of the post-Soviet period of Armenia's history would be incomplete without a reference to the coverage of the events of the late 1980s, more precisely the so-called "Karabakh Movement" that started in 1988 and culminated in the independence of Armenia in 1991. In the textbook in question, three chapters are devoted to this period (Barkhudaryan, 2008, pp. 111-122). Before proceeding to analysis of the text, it is necessary to highlight the importance of the events of 1988-1991 for Armenian society. Armenia was among the Soviet republics that experienced a strong popular movement in the late 1980s, a movement combining nationalism and demands for democracy (on these movements see Beissinger, 2002). Though the term "revolution" is rarely used to describe the developments in Armenia during these years, the story parallels the revolutions ("velvet" and not so "velvet") that rocked the countries of Central and Eastern Europe in 1989. In Armenia, as well as in some other Soviet republics, a mass movement challenged the authority of the Communist party and eventually succeeded in removing the Communist leadership from power through elections. At the same time, in Armenia, the movement aimed not only to overthrow Communism and secure independence from Moscow, as in Eastern Europe and the Baltic states, but it also mobilized the population to take part in a conflict with Azerbaijan over the region of Nagorno-Karabakh. In fact, as the name "Karabakh Movement" suggests, the initial goal was unification of the Autonomous Region of Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia proper. These aims were so closely intertwined in the mass movement taking place in Armenia in the late 1980s that it is extremely difficult to separate them from one another.

In any case, the mass movement of 1988-1991 not only produced change in Armenia's political system, but it also became a source of ideological legitimacy for the new state emerging on the ruins of Soviet Armenia. The events of 1988-1991 have significance for the modern Armenian state, the so-called "Third Republic," comparable to that of the War of Independence for the US or the French Revolution for modern France. However, different groups in modern Armenian society seek to interpret the events of 1988-1991 in different ways. To some, the most important aim of the "Karabakh Movement" was, as its

name suggests, self-determination for Armenians of Karabakh. To others, the movement mainly sought to establish an independent democratic state that would respect the rights of its citizens. And to some it was a struggle for national liberation against the Soviet “empire.”

Elements of these different interpretations can be found in the textbook. Thus, the textbook suggests that one of the consequences of perestroika was “the emergence of liberation movements in the Soviet Union” (Barkhudaryan, 2008, p. 111). However, as the trigger of the movement, the textbook points to “the arbitrary transfer of historical [Armenian] territories to Azerbaijan” and “anti-Armenian policies of Azerbaijani authorities” (ibid.). Yet the textbook does not focus on Azerbaijan as the main adversary: it highlights the role of the “political leadership of the Soviet Union, [which] qualified...those rallies as demands put forward by a group of provocateurs, extremists, and nationalists” (Barkhudaryan, 2008, p. 112). Similarly, when covering the massacre of Armenians in the town of Sumgait on February 27-29, 1988, the authors do not solely blame “local Azerbaijani authorities.” They also stress that central Soviet authorities failed to defend the Armenian population of Sumgait and tried to cover up who was responsible for the massacre by presenting it as “an act of a group of hooligans” (Barkhudaryan, 2008, p. 113). In the subsequent text “the center,” i.e. the Soviet leadership, continues to appear as the adversary of Armenia’s national movement.

However, the textbook does not represent Soviet leadership exclusively in a negative light. Thus, when describing the disastrous 1988 earthquake and the international aid efforts that followed, the authors stress that Gorbachev, who at that point was in the US, ended his visit and came to Armenia. More kind words are reserved for the prime minister of the USSR at the time, Nikolai Ryzhkov, who led the committee that coordinated relief efforts (Barkhudaryan, 2008, p. 116). The textbook’s sympathetic account of Ryzhov reflects the gratefulness that many Armenians felt toward him at the time. There is even a photograph of Ryzhkov in the text, the only one of a Soviet leader in the book, apart from that of Nikita Khrushchev, several pages earlier. While the textbook describes the tragic consequences of the earthquake in great length, it does not address the issue of the reckless urban planning and corruption in the construction industry, which apparently contributed to the earthquake’s enormous death toll.

The section dealing with the events of 1988-1991 ends with the chapter entitled “The Process of Independence of the Republic of Armenia.” It describes

the 1990s elections that ended the domination of the Communist party and the subsequent measures of the new Armenian authorities, aimed at securing Armenia's independence from the USSR. The same chapter also describes the beginning of the armed conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh. Particularly, the textbook offers a detailed description of the operation "Ring," which Soviet and Azerbaijani forces carried out in spring 1991 against Karabakh Armenians. As in the previous chapter, both Azerbaijani and Soviet authorities are presented as the Armenians' adversaries. On the one hand, the text states that it was the Azerbaijanis who "instigated the Armenian-Azerbaijani War in May-June 1991" (Barkhudaryan, 2008, p. 121). On the other hand, it stresses that Azerbaijani special police forces enjoyed the backing of the Soviet army (*ibid.*). Looking at the language used in this section, while the narrative clearly follows an official Armenian perspective on the conflict, the text does not contain highly emotional language, ethnic stereotypes, or hate speech, as do many other Armenian publications on the topic. The same can be said with regard to the following sections dealing with the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh. The narrative clearly presents Azerbaijan as "an enemy," but the authors in most cases refrain from using openly degrading and insulting remarks.

Azerbaijan is mentioned mostly in connection with the war in Nagorno-Karabakh in 1992-1994. The section of the textbook dealing with the post-Soviet period concludes with two chapters focusing on Nagorno-Karabakh: "The Republic [of Nagorno-Karabakh] through the Years of Independence and War" and "The Domestic Situation of the Republic." The decision of the authors to tackle the post-Soviet history of Nagorno-Karabakh reflects the increasing perception of the region as a separate entity, not only from Azerbaijan, but also from Armenia proper. The content of the first chapter mostly refers to the military campaign in 1992-1994; the second chapter describes the internal situation in Nagorno-Karabakh after the end of the war. The war is described as the "Azerbaijani-Karabakhi conflict," reflecting the point of view that aggression on the part of "Azerbaijani authorities," backed by "Turkey's support," caused the conflict (Barkhudaryan, 2008, p. 155). The military campaign is described clearly from pro-Armenian point of view. While the tone of narration is rather that of a "victorious war," it is relatively calm, without emotionally charged language or hate speech. The narration focuses on praising Armenian military and political leaders for the victory achieved, rather than focusing on victimization at the hands of the enemy (though this theme is also present). In general, it seems

that the authors of the textbook were more focused on promoting the feeling of pride for one's own nation and state, rather than hatred towards the enemy, among the students reading the text.

The chapter dealing with the conflict concludes with a subchapter entitled "The Issue of Nagorno-Karabakh Republic in Peace Negotiations." It presents a perspective that more or less coincides with the Armenian point of view on the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process. Thus, efforts of the OSCE, particularly the Minsk group, are described quite sympathetically, while Azerbaijan is blamed for a non-constructive approach, particularly its refusal to deal with the leadership of Nagorno-Karabakh directly. According to the text, "the presidents of the Republic of Armenia have had numerous meetings with the presidents of the Republic of Azerbaijan in order to solve the question through peaceful means... unfortunately, none of these meetings and negotiations led to significant results" (Barkhudaryan, 2008, p. 158).

Compared to Azerbaijan, Turkey occupies limited place in the discussion of the post-Soviet period in the textbook. Armenian-Turkish relations are discussed in one paragraph in the chapter "International Situation of Armenia." The textbook states the importance for Armenia to establish relations with its Neighbours, "especially Turkey" (Barkhudaryan, 2008, p. 148). Then it proceeds to describe Turkey's insistence on preconditions, particularly "to give up the issue of the genocide of 1915" and "to accept the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan," as the main cause for the lack of relations between Armenia and Turkey. As the textbook was published in 2008, it was still unclear when it went to press the extent to which the thaw in Armenian-Turkish relations that had begun that year would continue. The textbook does not address these developments, but it laconically states that "later there was some improvement in economic relations between Armenia and Turkey" (ibid.).

However, related to Armenian-Turkish relations is the issue of international recognition of the 1915 genocide. The same chapter also discusses the process of international recognition of the Armenian genocide in detail, with a separate subchapter (Barkhudaryan, 2008, pp.150-151). However, Turkey is interestingly not mentioned in this subchapter at all. The text describes the successes of the campaign for international recognition of the genocide. It stresses that more than 20 countries, the International Council of Churches, and the European Parliament have recognized the genocide, and some countries have even passed legislation that criminalizes genocide denial. The

textbook also highlights that the genocide recognition campaign became one of the priorities of Armenian foreign policy after 1998. The authors specifically point out Slovakia's recognition of the genocide in 2004. According to the text, this event marked the beginning of a new stage in the genocide recognition campaign, in which countries without Armenian communities began to officially acknowledge this element of Armenian history (while previously it was mostly countries with numerous Armenian communities who had recognized the genocide). The subchapter also contains a specific reference to this issue in the US: "Though the majority of the states have recognized the Armenian genocide, the Congress and the Senate, for political reasons, have not solved this issue so far" (Barkhudrayan, 2008, p. 150).

Apart from the issue of Armenian-Turkish relations, the relations with Armenia's other two Neighbours, Georgia and Iran, are also briefly discussed. The textbook mentions Armenian-Georgian relations in one paragraph only, which argues that "development of mutually beneficial cooperation" between these two states "stems from the interests of both countries." Their relations play an especially important role because during the years of the blockade, it was through Georgia's territory that Armenia "kept its connection to the outside world." The relations with Georgia are also considered significant due to the presence of a large number of Armenians in that country, "particularly the existence of the Armenian community of Javakhq"... (Barkhudaryan, 2008, p. 148). The reference to Armenia's relations with Iran is even briefer: the text mentions that Iran, along with Georgia, was a country that helped to ease the negative effects of the blockade of Armenia, that several agreements have been signed with Iran, and that Iran is one of Armenia's largest trade partners (Barkhudaryan, 2008, p. 149).

Relations with Russia occupy relatively more space in the discussion of Armenia's foreign relations compared with its ties to some of its immediate Neighbours, however, in absolute terms the reference to Russian-Armenian relations is also quite laconic. The textbook claims that "after the collapse of the USSR, the foreign policy of the Republic of Armenia did not stray from historically formed approaches to Russian-Armenian relations" (Barkhudaryan, 2008, p. 147). Then the textbook proceeds to describe "multifaceted cooperation" between Russia and Armenia and the "hundreds of agreements and contracts regulating cooperation in different spheres" that have been signed since 1992. It particularly mentions the 1995 agreement, "giving legal grounds

to the presence of Russian military forces in Armenia,” as well as the 1997 agreement “on friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance.” The paragraph also mentions “large credits” that allowed Armenia to “restore and re-launch the third energy block of the Metsamor nuclear station” (Barkhudaryan, 2008, p. 148).

References to other post-Soviet countries are quite scarce. The textbook also mentions the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), noting that it “first of all has importance in terms of security” (Barkhudaryan, 2008, p. 147). In contrast, relations with European institutions receive relatively extensive coverage in a subchapter called “The Republic of Armenia and the Council of Europe” (though almost half of this subchapter is actually devoted to Armenian-American relations). Armenia’s relations with the Council of Europe are referred to as “an important step in the direction of European integration”: the textbook explains that “membership in the Council of Europe and the commitments emerging from this membership are a warrant for Armenia’s democratic development” (Barkhudaryan, 2008, p. 149). The subchapter goes on to describe briefly the cooperation with the EU, “which has helped Armenia to overcome economic transition” (Barkhudaryan, 2008, 149). The text also contains a reference to “an important initiative of the EU, which promises an opportunity to become a member of that organization in the future” (Barkhudaryan, 2008, p. 150). The text does not specify which initiative it refers to, however, it probably refers to the EU’s European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), rather than the Eastern Partnership, which in 2008 was still in the stage of internal discussions. If this is actually a reference to the ENP, then it must be quite a liberal interpretation of that initiative, since official EU statements usually stress that the ENP does not entail a perspective of admission to EU. However, this sentence reflects a perception common among Armenian political elites, even though it is rarely pronounced openly, that the ENP and other EU cooperation programs are actually a path to integration within the EU.

That the subchapter “The Republic of Armenia and the Council of Europe” also describes Armenia-US relations is indicative of the perspective that the authors instinctively perceive relations with that organization as part of the larger issue of relations with “the West,” which includes both the EU and the US. This attitude is not a specific to the authors of the textbook, rather it reflects a common perception among Armenian society at large. The textbook presents Armenian-American relations in a favourable light, stating that they “are

developing, involving political, economic and cultural spheres” (Barkhudaryan, 2008, p. 150). The authors stress that diplomatic relations between the two countries were established as early as January 1992, and that the US was the first country to open a foreign embassy in Armenia. Moreover, they state that “throughout the most difficult years,” the US has provided “humanitarian assistance [to Armenia] worth millions of dollars.”

Summing up, the textbook’s representation of countries of the region, along with other international actors, follows the logic of Armenia’s foreign policy. As the Nagorno-Karabakh issue and the conflict with Azerbaijan remain the most pressing concern for Armenia today, they also receive extensive attention in the textbook. The discussion of relations with other countries also mirrors the perspectives of official Armenian foreign policy throughout the last 20 years. In particular, the depiction of relations with Russia and the West reflects the so-called paradigm of “complementary foreign policy,” according to which Armenia needs to develop equally good relations with Russia and the West (Zolyan, 2009). According to that paradigm Armenia cooperates with Russia in the field of security policy, yet it also develops its relations with the West and implements democratic reforms in order to become a part of European institutions, particularly the EU. Of course, the “complementarism” paradigm seems much more coherent on paper, while its implementation is quite challenging, to say the least. However, it would be unrealistic to expect the authors of the textbook to go beyond general conceptions of Armenia’s foreign policy and provide a critical assessment.

While writing about Armenia’s foreign policy throughout the latest 20 years is quite a delicate task, it is still relatively “harmless” compared to the topic of Armenia’s internal situation during the same period. Armenia’s current political scene is dominated by figures who were active in the 1990s, and the analysis of the last 20 years is currently a matter of fierce public debate. Since Armenia’s first president, Levon Ter-Petrosyan, heads the opposition, his adversaries are extremely critical of his government. They refer to the 1990s as a period of complete chaos and disaster, the so-called “cold and dark years³.” Ter-Petrosyan’s supporters, who criticize the current President Serzh Sargsyan’s administration, as well as that of former president Robert Kocharyan, argue

³ This expression, which became a common cliché especially during the 2008 election campaign, contains a reference to the collapse of the central heating system and power cuts that made the life of most Armenians extremely difficult in the early 1990s.

that the “cold and dark years” were exclusively a consequence of external factors, such as the war in Nagorno-Karabakh, the blockade, the collapse of the Soviet system, as well as the earthquake in 1988. Moreover, they argue that the Armenian leadership in the 1990s deserves high praise since it not only managed to steer the country despite such difficult conditions, but it also emerged victorious in the conflict with Azerbaijan, while the subsequent leaders established an authoritarian and corrupt political system. Both positions are quite far from an unbiased historical appraisal of the 1990s. While they reflect certain facts and realities, at the same time they ignore many of the intricacies and complicated details of the historical reality, replacing it with a “black and white” picture. It is out of the scope of this paper to reflect on the debate, however, the existence of this heated debate in current Armenian society should be taken into account when dealing with the history textbooks.

Against this explosive political background, the decision of the textbook authors to include the period up to 2008 was quite courageous. The latest event mentioned in the textbook is the presidential election of February 18, 2008. Thus, the textbook not only discusses the events of the 1990s, a subject of controversy today, but also includes developments that took place just months before the textbook went to press. While discussing the contested recent past, the authors mostly maintain a neutral tone, refraining from overtly negatively or positively assessing political leaders and events mentioned in the text and expressing open political sympathies. There is somewhat more criticism aimed at the former leaders than those of the present: particularly, the economic policies of the 1990s are described in a critical manner (Barkhudaryan, 2008, pp. 136-138). However, the general tone of the text remains mostly impartial, and the bias toward the current administration is not so strong, at least against post-Soviet standards.

In some cases, such a neutral tone is achieved at the cost of avoiding controversial topics, and even omission of certain events, in spite of their importance for the post-Soviet history of Armenia. This becomes especially obvious when we look at the description of electoral processes in post-Soviet Armenia. Since 1991 Armenia has gone through several presidential and parliamentary elections. Serious irregularities have occurred in many of these elections, according to the assessments of local and international observers, with the opposition disputing the results. Moreover, at least three times, in 1996, 2003, and 2008, mass protests against the officially announced

outcome took place in the aftermath of elections, leading to serious internal political crises (Human Rights Watch, 2009; O' Beachain & Polese, 2010, pp. 83-100; Astourian, 2001). The issue of disputed elections and post-election developments is central to post-Soviet Armenia's domestic political situation. The authors of the textbook have in general attempted to avoid this controversial subject, however. Thus, when describing the parliamentary elections of 1995, 1999, 2003, and 2007, the textbook fails to note that in most of these elections the opposition refused to accept the official results of the elections. It simply states which parties won and describes the coalitions created after the elections (Barkhudaryan, 2008, pp. 143-144).

Discussing presidential elections, the textbook mentions the main contenders and the outcomes of the elections, but again stays silent on controversial aspects of the elections. In particular, it fails to discuss the post-election protests, despite the fact that in at least two cases, in 1996 and 2008, these protests led to deep political crises (Barkhudaryan, 2008, pp. 143-145). This omission sometimes leads to a lack of coherence in the text. While describing the elections of 1996, the textbook says that they led to "alienation between the government and the society," which in turn resulted in a political crisis that ended with the resignation of the president in 1998. However, since the textbook does not discuss the opposition's refusal to accept the elections' results and the post-elections protests, it is not clear why the elections led to society's alienation from the government. Similarly, in its discussion of the elections of 2008, the textbook does not mention the opposition's refusal to accept the official results. It also ignores the mass protest movement that ended with a violent crackdown, even though given Armenia's current political climate, it is hard to imagine that the students reading the textbook have not heard about these events, particularly the bloody post-election clashes on March 1, 2008 that left 10 people dead.

Of course, the issue of contested elections is a sensitive topic and it is not completely clear why the authors of the textbook avoid this issue. If this had been done simply to please the current rulers, as one could suspect, then the text would have probably mentioned the election irregularities that took place in the 1990s, when the current leader of the opposition was in power. Therefore, it is possible that the decision to avoid the topic of contested elections was taken with other considerations in mind: the authors were probably wary of writing a text that could be interpreted as supportive of one political force over another.

Another possible explanation for this choice is the desire to present the state institutions of modern Armenia in a favourable light, rather than discrediting them in the eyes of the younger generation. While the general tone of the chapters deals with post-Soviet Armenia sympathetically, clearly the authors hope to produce feelings of pride for modern Armenian statehood and trust in the institutions of the Armenian state.

Conclusion

The description and analysis of the representation of contemporary Armenian history in the textbooks may lead us to several conclusions. First of all, it is obvious that the authors have carefully taken the official positions of the Armenian government into account. This is particularly clear in discussions of international politics and Armenia's foreign policy. In accordance with Armenia's policy of "complementarism," both Russia and the West (or more precisely, the US and EU) appear in a positive light. The Armenian history textbook especially exhibits this attitude by stressing Armenia's cooperation with Russia, the US and the EU. In comparison, while the world history textbook hints at criticism of the US foreign policy, in general it also depicts the West favourably.

The textbook also follows the Armenian government's official line when it describes Armenia's relations with its immediate Neighbours. Describing the conflict with Azerbaijan and disagreements with Turkey, the authors present the Armenian point of view using diplomatic language. The discussion of the war also uses a tone similar to official government discourse. No attempt is made to present the other side's view, even in a critical perspective. However, to be fair to the authors of the textbook, they do not use any hate speech or negative ethnic stereotypes regarding the Armenian forces' adversaries. In general, the language of the textbook is mostly calm and detached, without extensive emotionality, even when conflict and warfare are described.

The authors also discuss internal developments in a neutral manner. In the narrative, the textbook attempts to include leaders and politicians belonging to different political forces, including those who have had bitter confrontations. The text is mostly impartial; in most cases the authors refrain from passing judgment on the actions of post-Soviet Armenian leaders, even though they offer some criticism of the economic policies of the 1990s. However, in order to create a coherent narrative and remain neutral with regard to different leaders

and political forces, the authors have in certain cases avoided discussing certain controversial topics and themes, such as disputed elections or anti-government protests.

In general the representations of post-Soviet Armenia in different textbooks serve the same aim: to create among the students a feeling of belonging to the Armenian state and a resulting sense of pride. For centuries, Armenian identity had mostly been based on ethno-cultural characteristics, as Armenians lived as communities within larger empires. The textbooks that this paper analyzes reflect a new stage of development of Armenian national identity, one in which civic or state-based narratives complement the ethno-cultural definitions of nationhood. The representations of post-Soviet Armenian history in the textbooks locate the idea of independent nation-state in the center of the narrative. This may seem somewhat outdated or old-fashioned within a wider European context, since it does not align well with the latest trends in European history textbook writing that emphasize transnational, multi-perspective approaches to history (e.g. Stradling, 2003; Stradling, 2006). However, this trend is to an extent a natural consequence of the current situation in Armenia, as well as in other countries of the former Soviet Union. To use E. Gellner's metaphor, they are part of the "fourth time zone" of nation-building, i.e. part of the region where the process of emergence of nation-states was frozen as a result of the creation of the USSR and restarted again after 1991 (Gellner, 1997). While different parts of Europe have gone through these processes centuries or decades ago, the newly emerged post-Soviet nation-states need to form their own narratives of statehood and nationhood in order to provide legitimacy for their own state institutions. This is a process that takes many years, and it would be idealistic to expect other approaches until the citizens of these newly emerged states are confident in their sense of belonging to a certain nation-state. What we can hope for, however, is that this feeling of nationhood is built on the basis of participation in certain institutions and recognition of common rights and responsibilities, rather than upon shared hatred towards enemies.

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APRIL 9, 1989 AS A SITE OF MEMORY: THE POLICY OF COMMEMORATION AND HISTORY TEACHING IN GEORGIA

Ruslan Baramidze

Introduction

The years 1989-1991 mark the time of a mass national movement in Georgia. In a sense, the movement reached its climax with Georgia's secession from the USSR¹. Naturally this period holds a special place in Georgian history textbooks even though a lot of events that are equally important to the country have happened in the twenty years that have followed.

¹ I am not claiming here that the national movement, which unfolded in Georgia at that time, was one of those that led to the dissolution of the USSR. There are several opinions based on various grounds (economic, political, etc.) on what the factors driving the collapse of the Soviet Empire were. Despite the fact that this complex and fascinating topic is not the subject of this article I should still note that a number of experts emphasize the important role played by the national movements of the time in the process of the Soviet Union's (and the whole Soviet camp's) dissolution and their specific influence on the matter (see Brubaker, 2000; Beissinger, 2002; Kotkin, 2003).

Without a doubt, the collapse of the Soviet Union itself should be emphasized among these events. In the words of Eric Hobsbawm, “the downfall of Soviet socialism... became the most sensational event of the crisis decades that followed the ‘golden age’”² (Hobsbawm, 2004, p. 19). According to this well-known historian’s opinion, the “short 20th century” was over in the same year that the Soviet Union ceased to exist. Georgia came out to be one of those republics for which the process of the Soviet Empire’s dissolution became an important part of their contemporary history. Besides, the very specifics of the USSR’s collapse are also reflected in the fact that those years were the period of Georgia’s transformation from a soviet, socialist republic into an independent, national state in which the ruling elite had to build relationships with Neighbouring countries on a totally different level.

Certainly no serious foreign policy could exist before the dissolution of the USSR. What is meant here is rather the first attempts to look differently at the world that was hiding behind the Iron Curtain. It was those first, and at that stage still poorly organized, endeavors to tell the democratic “West” about what was happening in Soviet Georgia and the first efforts to find support from the outside. During that time, the tradition of perceiving “our country” as one of the European countries and the “Georgian people” as one of the European nations was being established.³ The key question that I pose in this article is, “How have these trends related to collective identity’s transformation and how has perception of the outside world been represented in history textbooks?”

Seen through the prism of the last two decades, the events of 1989-1991 by all means find new interpretation. Now they are built into the narrative of the “Georgian people’s age-old struggle for independence.”⁴ The history of “this struggle” has special moments around which “collective memory” is currently being constituted, events that are assigned a special role in commemorative policy. In my mind, the breaking up of the April 9, 1989 demonstration in Tbilisi is one of such events.

On the one hand, we are talking about a special site of memory that plays an important role in the post-Soviet commemoration of the “struggle for independence.” According to Pierre Nora:

² The “golden age” refers to the period of unprecedented economic growth of Western countries in 1947-1973.

³ “Though they don’t have cognate ‘worlds’ outside the Caucasus, Georgians consider themselves Europeans” (Khaindrava, 2008, p. 55).

⁴ In this case I use quotation marks to show the distance that must be kept by a researcher who does not have an opportunity to interpret events using the language of praxis. That is, I employ the terminology of the nationalistic discourse itself for the purposes of this analysis.

History is always a problematic and incomplete reconstruction of something that is no longer there. Memory is always a timely phenomenon, the connection we experience with the eternal present. History is a representation of the past. Due to its sensual and magical nature, memory gets along only with the details that it finds convenient (Nora, 1999, p. 20).

To my mind, the events of “April 9”⁵ are just that – a timely phenomenon. History textbooks evidence that even further, despite the fact that over twenty years have passed since these traumatic events. Suffice it to say that the language of political discourse related to the commemoration of these events is practically the same as the historical discourse provided in textbooks. That is to say that textbooks have become an important, integral of the “April 9” events’ commemorative policy.

On the other hand, historical narrative as a significant component of the policy of commemoration is built in such a way that for the first time ever, it allows for a discussion of external relations. For the first time ever, the outside world’s reaction to these events has become important for Georgia and Georgians. Moscow used to be the main powerhouse with whom the leaders of Soviet Georgia had built direct relations, and then everything changed. The reactions of other, still Soviet, republics became important. Hence the tendency to consider most everything that was happening in those republics a part of the narrative of “our common struggle” for independence from the Soviet Empire. Finally, as I have already mentioned, we see the first signs of directly appealing to the countries of the “West” for help and support. We also see the unfolding of the tendency to review “our development” as a journey towards democratization. Therefore, the choice of this event or, in other words, this memory site has not been incidental.

April 9, 1989

I should start with a general description of the events in question:

At 4 a.m. in the morning of 9 April, 1989, a gathering of around ten thousand demonstrators outside the House of Government in Tbilisi was brutally dispersed

⁵ Hereinafter I will use quotation marks to show my attitude to the analysis of the events from a perspective, their commemoration and representation in textbooks, or as a “site of memory.”

by Soviet Interior Ministry troops. The manner in which the demonstrators were broken up was unprecedented in its savagery. According to observers, Soviet troops used toxic gas and sharpened shovels to attack unarmed demonstrators. Twenty protestors were killed and over two hundred were injured. Most of the dead were women and teenage girls (Wheatley, 2007, p. 41).

Surely one can find another example of a brutal crackdown on mass protests in the history of Soviet Georgia. However the last time any such thing happened was in 1956 just when de-Stalinization was gaining speed. Since then there had been nothing of the kind in Tbilisi. Even during mass demonstrations of students and intelligentsia in April 1978 the Soviet authorities chose not to resort to force.⁶ Apparently residents of Tbilisi were not expecting such violence from the authorities. In fact, the deceased may be considered the first victims who opened the new post-Soviet era in building up Georgia as a nation. “9 April 1989 was a defining moment in the history of modern Georgia and henceforth became a recurrent theme in Georgian nationalist discourse” (Wheatley, 2007, p. 41). Jonathan Wheatley believes this very day to be the “critical phase” responsible for the chain of events that have had “an indelible impact on the subsequent evolution of the Georgian political regime” becoming in the long run the starting point of the “nationalist mobilization in Georgia” (for further discussion, see Wheatley, 2007, pp. 41-66).

In addition to what has already been said it should be noted that these events could be easily used by practically any political party or movement as a means to showcase their patriotism. It is rather hard to privatize the memory, which is now being constituted around these events, though various representatives of the authorities have nevertheless been trying to do just that throughout the post-Soviet years. In summary, all of the above determines the reasons for allocating “April 9” the most important place in the policy of commemoration of

⁶ In Georgia, de-Stalinization or the process of “eliminating the cult of personality” was met with far greater resistance than in other Soviet republics. After all, Stalin was originally from Georgia. Public mass protests against de-Stalinization started on March 5, 1956, also in Tbilisi. There were a lot of young people (including students) among the protesters. They gathered downtown, around Stalin’s monument on the bank of the Mtkvari river in order to observe the anniversary of the ‘Leader’s’ passing away. On March 9 the army and militia troops used firearms to brutally break up those mass demonstrations. The exact number of victims of those events is unknown. In Ronald Suny’s opinion dozens of people were shot and hundreds of people were wounded (Suny, 1994, pp. 302-303). The next time Tbilisi had mass protests unsanctioned by the Soviet authorities was on April 14, 1978 (Suny, 1994, p. 309). This was at the time when new Soviet Constitutions were being discussed. There was a heated debate on the subject of abrogating the article which granted Georgian official language status. That time the local authorities actually supported the public outcry.

events that were taking place during the times of the USSR's dissolution and establishment of the mass national movement in Georgia.

Commemoration and Textbooks

Now is the time to mention that to a certain extent the beginning of these events' commemoration coincides with a much more widespread increase in interest and attention to commemorative policy in the US and the countries of the European Union. Andreas Huyssen notes that "memory discourses accelerated in Europe and the United States by the early 1980s." This was connected to the spread of the Holocaust debate as well as with several "anniversaries" of the Third Reich's demise (the 40th and the 50th). Besides, that spike in interest was tied to other traumatic events as well (e.g., ethnic cleansings in Bosnia and Kosovo, etc.). As a result, in Huyssen's opinion, we can now talk about the "globalization of Holocaust discourse," since this term has become a metaphor applicable to many other events (Huyssen, 2003, pp. 12-14).

Certainly, it would be an exaggeration, to say the least, to use such categories when speaking about the events of April 1989. However, even in this case, we are, in a way, talking about a metaphor, when all victims of the Soviet regime, from its establishment to its demise, are viewed within the bounds of the single Soviet imperial policy. Besides, commemorative policy towards the victims of those April events can be reviewed in the context of a much wider growth in influence of practices of commemorating the victims of totalitarian regimes. Nevertheless, it should be kept in mind that quite often upon achieving independence the epithet "heroic" is added to the doleful "victim" status.

Connection to, and often direct dependence on, the dominating political regime is another important aspect of the policy of commemoration. As Anver Ben-Amos puts it, any "political regime ... constructs its own version of the past, which becomes the official memory of the state" (Ben-Amos, 2000, p. 4). Here is where social scientists and humanities scholars take the center stage. Historians who develop school textbooks and teach history in schools hold a special place in their ranks. Textbooks are approved by the Ministry of Education. Considering the fact that over twenty years have passed since the events in question, new generations of citizens learn about them primarily from the narratives in these textbooks.

In Ben-Amos's opinion on the matter, the state uses all available means to promote the official memory. A definite, significant contribution is made by television and other mass media, as well as involvement and participation in public events related to the commemoration of the events of 9 April 1989. However, the mandatory history course for general education schools still remains one of the most convenient tools (Ben-Amos, 2000, p. 4). One should remember that "history as a school subject unites the social science disciplines and makes the attainment of such knowledge into something systematic" (Reisner, 1998, p. 413).⁷

Georgia in the "Circle of Neighbours"

The South Caucasus region is often regarded as geostrategically important, being situated at the junction of Europe and Asia. The Islamic Republic of Iran, which is among Georgia's Neighbours, has rather complex relations with the US and the states of the European Union. In contrast, in the future⁸, Georgia sees itself joining the club of the European Union member countries and being a close partner of the US. Still, despite major differences in foreign-policy priorities, in the 20th century Iran was a much less difficult Neighbour for Georgia than Russia. Russia, which is seen as the legal successor to the Russian Empire and the USSR (or the Soviet Empire) in Georgian public consciousness, is the only Neighbouring country with which Georgia has an overtly conflicting relationship.

In August of 2008, that tension in bilateral relations spilled over into a war. From that moment on, the conflict has been practically insoluble – at least in the context of the current situation that has developed since Russia recognized the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and considering the political elites currently ruling both countries. In Georgia the way things stand now, Russia's actions are seen as the annexation of a part of the territory of an independent nation. Obviously this current state of ever escalating tension (and this is exactly the way to describe relations between Georgia and Russia that have developed in the post-Soviet period) was bound to affect history textbooks.⁹

⁷ For further reference on the development of the science of history and traditions of history teaching in the republics of the South Caucasus, see Shnirelman, 2003; Rouvinski, 2007.

⁸ Certain experts who are very skeptical about Georgia's actual prospects of becoming a member of the EU would probably say in the "obscure future."

⁹ For further reference on the situation in Georgia following the August 2008 war with Russia, see Khaindrava, 2011; Gegeshidze, 2011, p. 39.

Under these circumstances, other Neighbours, specifically Turkey, Azerbaijan and Armenia are perceived as friendly but not close partners.¹⁰ Georgia is partners with Azerbaijan and Turkey in the largest regional project – the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline. A railroad connecting Azerbaijan with Turkey will go through Georgian territory. All-in-all Georgia is an important strategic regional partner for Azerbaijan and, to a lesser degree, for Turkey. Georgia was fighting for independence from the Soviet Union together with its region-wise Neighbours Azerbaijan and Armenia, and to a certain extent this fact helps to keep up friendly relations with these Neighbours. In one way or another, this intricate network of ties and relations finds its representation in textbooks, sometimes in quite unique ways. As we go forward, we will attempt to examine the specifics of representing relations with Neighbours through the prism of the “momentous” 9 April, 1989 events in the history course for schools.

“April 9, 1989” and Commemorative Policy

I should touch upon the policy of commemoration of these events before we proceed to analyze the history courses. In the year following the dissolution of the USSR, the “April 9” events had already been habitually woven into such clichés as the “common pain” and “tragedy” of “all Georgian people.” At the same time, this “common pain” becomes an integral part of the pride discourse that celebrates patriots who “have given their lives for their motherland’s independence.”

The day of the 9 April, 1989 tragedy has become historical in the chronicles of the Georgian people. On this day, the bells don't toll in mourning. Their knoll heralds patriots' immortality. We owe it to the cherished memory of the victims of April 9 to proclaim this day the day of national consent, reconciliation and mutual support. At 12 o'clock on April 9 Georgian people with veneration will hold a moment of silence in honour and in loving memory of the deceased. At this moment all operations will stop for a minute at every manufacturing site and every office, all transportation vehicles and educational institutions.¹¹

¹⁰ For further reference on the depth of differences among the three dominating ethnic groups in the South Caucasus, see Khaindrava, 2008, pp. 55 – 57.

¹¹ “From the State Council of the Republic of Georgia and the government of the Republic of Georgia”. “Sakartvelos Respublika” (“The Republic of Georgia”) newspaper, 8 April 1992, №56 (329), p. 1.

The events of the “nationwide” protest in Georgia in 1989 turned into a certain controversial instance of a “national split.” The country had only begun to start to recover from the “civil war” between the supporters and opponents of the first President Zviad Gamsakhurdia. Confrontations were still ongoing, and the new regime, represented by the former First Secretary of the Georgian Communist Party Eduard Shevardnadze, who was back to rule the republic, was searching for resources to establish “national consent.” The “April 9” events were being turned into a special memory site, which was intended to facilitate the unification of all “Georgian people.” In the long run, joint participation in the collective ritual of honouring the memory of “victims and heroes” was to help stabilize the situation in the country.

The main and majority of “April 9” patriotic discourse clichés were formed as early as 1992. This discourse utilizes many verbal clichés familiar to the ear of a former Soviet citizen. In point of fact, discourse resources of honouring the memory of “victims and heroes” are derived from familiar Soviet texts. “April 9” is “our pain,” the day of the “cherished memory,” the day to “bow down to our estimable children” and “untimely departed fellow men.” Key new development lies in the attempt to gradually include religious rhetoric: “the bells of immortality knoll,” “we” will “light up as candles” honouring the deceased. The Patriarch’s participation in the rituals has become essential.

Attempts at making a tradition out of this day’s rituals could already be observed as early as 1992; 1992 marked the fourth time that the “candles” were “lit.” A discussion started on the subject of establishing an institution of some sort dedicated to the “immortalization” of the events. Thus the “Fund for Perennializing the Memory of the Deceased on April 9, 1989” is opened. Money is collected to build a memorial and a museum. A convention of the events’ participants whom suffered from toxic gas as well as the days other events was held. Finally, “April 9” got nationwide status. “All of Georgia paid tribute to the memory of the deceased in the course of the events of 9 April 1989. A minute of silence was held; there were tears and flowers. The spirit of freedom was high in the free country.”¹²

The country’s political elite’s laying of flowers at the memorial is at the center of commemoration. Moreover, the memory site (that is, the actual space where “victims and heroes” are being honoured) – the same square in front

¹² “Sakartvelos Respublika” newspaper, 10 April, 1992, №58 (331), p. 2.

of the House of Government – is also the center of political life. This fact, in its turn, helps to keep up the tradition of memory as the “living connection” with the heroes of that day. In 1993 Georgian elites’ ties with the “West” were emphasized; the US ambassador to Georgia, Kent Brown, and his wife took part in the ceremony.¹³ From then on the ritual of commemorating the memory of “victims and heroes” of “April 9” has not changed much. Neither has the commemorative discourse.

Six springs have passed since that tragic day... All of Georgia has been lit up by six new Aprils, but 9 April 1989 has etched itself in our hearts and minds, the blood of innocent people, their last breath. For all Georgians April 9 is the day of remembrance. On this day residents of Tbilisi and the capital’s guests come to the site of this horrible tragedy – the square in front of the House of Government – and light candles honouring the memory of the deceased... This year it has not been different. On Sunday, April 9, the Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia – the leader of the state Eduard Shevardnadze, the city’s Mayor Niko Lekishvili, members of the Republic’s Parliament and other high-level officials laid flowers at the memorial of the deceased of 9 April, 1989. There were wreaths from the Parliament and the Cabinet, from the Merab Kostava Society at the memorial. “To eternal patriots of free Georgia” – such was the inscription on the wreath from Mr. Eduard Shevardnadze. Those who have died for freedom are indeed immortal. The country will “light up with candles” in their memory from this day on, forever and ever!¹⁴

However there gradually appeared accusations against political activists – the protest’s initiators who also played a noticeable role in the national movement. At the same time, we hear directions for new opponents of the political regime. According to then President Shevardnadze, the first mistake was that the government did not support the protesters in April 1989. “The second big mistake relates to politicians’ responsibility. When you encourage people to certain actions you must be able to guarantee their safety,” noted Eduard Shevardnadze, “Leading people and fighting together with them is one

¹³ “The Day of Unity, the Day of Mourning”. The “Sakartvelos Respublika” newspaper, 13 April 1993, №76 (620), p. 2

¹⁴ Gabaridze M., “Immortal is the Memory of Eternal Patriots in Free Georgia”. The “Sakartvelos Respublika” newspaper, 11 April 1995, №39 (1055), p. 1.

thing, but gathering thousands of people not knowing what it will lead to is quite another. This was the second fatal mistake of April 9, 1989.”¹⁵

In contrast, at least in official rhetoric, the anti-Russian rhetoric is practically non-existent in the discourse surrounding the rituals of commemorating “victims and heroes.” This is perhaps with the exception found in the most general clichés condemning the Soviet regime. For instance, in the year of the 10th anniversary of the events, the President of Georgia and former high-level Soviet official Shevardnadze states that,

*April 9 is known not only in Georgia, it will not be an exaggeration to say that the event was followed by reverberations throughout the world. April 9 showed the whole of mankind how rotten the regime built on blood and violence had become and how it had gone against its own people.*¹⁶

Then the regime changes, but the commemorative ritual remains practically the same. It still involves “high-level officials” and the Patriarch. Nonetheless, the new regime, represented by President Mikheil Saakashvili, hints at the need to finalize the construction of the “victims and heroes” of “April 9” cult.

*The day before yesterday, the President of Georgia, Mikheil Saakashvili laid flowers at the April 9 memorial. Mr. President mentioned that by September 1st of next year a special memorial designed by Georgian sculptors would be erected on the site where Soviet troops dispersed Georgian protesters on April 9, 1989.*¹⁷

It must be said that this memorial has yet to be built. In contrast, the rhetoric, which condemns the actions of Soviet troops and draws explicit parallels between the USSR and modern day Russia, is becoming more vivid. Direct comparisons with current events are becoming more and more concise.

I think that 9 April, 1989 is an important day in history. In Georgia we have not turned the page on this day yet. On April 9, 1989 the most heroic and battle worthy members of our community sacrificed their lives to free Georgia. Since that

¹⁵ “April 9 – A Grim Lesson for the Future”. The “Sakartvelos Respublika” newspaper, 11 April 1997, №82 (2455), p. 1.

¹⁶ The “Sakartvelos Respublika” newspaper, 9 April 1999, №93 (3134), p. 1.

¹⁷ “Flower and Tears to the Heroes”. The “Sakartvelos Respublika” newspaper, 11 April 2004, №83, p. 3.

day there has been an ongoing struggle for the ideas of independence. Nowadays Georgia is close to freedom like never before. Withdrawal of the other country's troops from Georgia has already started and it will be finalized. Now more than ever Georgia is close to the restoration of its territorial integrity. I believe that for us April 9 is the day of keeping up the fight, and another important thing is that this is the day of declaring the restoration of Georgia's independence. ... We must put aside all confrontations, and people of different viewpoints must stand united; only when this is done will we be able to reach our common goals. ... Despite our foe's hysterical attempts to strangle Georgia using all kinds of measures and activities against our people, we must be able to safeguard our people and maintain freedom and democracy in Georgia. We are moving towards our goal in a fast and assured manner. I am sure that no one will be able to stop this movement. We owe it to our people's past, to the April 9 heroes and future heroes of our country.¹⁸

Thus we see that the “April 9 events” are once again transformed into the “living tradition” of fighting for independence. On the one hand, old clichés can also be found in this new version of political discourse. “April 9” still remains the day when the country's current rulers believe in their duty to call for the integrity and unity of the Georgian nation. That is, this day as a site of memory remains an ideal example of “national solidarity.” In this case however, the tradition is not complete, it is “alive.” The enemy image re-emerging in the political discourse helps to “liven up” this tradition of the ongoing struggle for the motherland's independence. This “enemy” is not even named since every Georgian knows which “enemy” is being talked about. In this discourse the Soviet Union is reincarnated in Russia and “April 9” is presented as the starting point of a long journey ahead, which is still far from being finished.

Moving on to the analysis of textbooks, it should be mentioned that to a certain extent political discourse appears to be more sophisticated than a history textbook's text. This hardly comes as a surprise since a textbook requires a much clearer language of narration. Therefore in textbooks “the image of Neighbour” in the context of “nationwide” “April 9” events becomes much more concise.

¹⁸ 9 April, 2006. “President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili Makes a Statement Regarding April 9”. Accessible online at <http://www.president.gov.ge/print.aspx?t=1&i=2671>

“April 9” as a Special Feat in the Process of Fighting for Sovereignty

A textbook attempting to create a new historical narrative was published in Georgia as early as 1991. This textbook was actively used in secondary schools, and the author of this article himself studied Georgian history based on this very interpretation. The “April 9” events were included in a much wider context of the struggle for national independence against the Russian / Soviet Empire, which had been going on throughout the 20th century. The unit dedicated to those events was titled “On the Road to National Sovereignty.” Since then, this has been the primary denomination (with minor incidental modifications) attached to this period. This was also in line with the generally accepted political rhetoric. The chapter starts with a review of the state of affairs in the Soviet Union and the head of the USSR Mikhail Gorbachev’s policies, and musings on the inevitability of the demise, etc.

Historians who wrote the textbook believed that the processes that had become a prelude to “April 9” began unfolding in 1988. Per the authors’ opinion, the reforms felt contrived and discord and mistrust of the authorities reigned supreme among the public at that time (Georgian History (Reading Book, 1783-1990), pp. 308-310). According to the textbook’s authors, during that time:

Despite the limitations imposed on free thinking, the Georgian public was gradually leaving the fog of obscurity. Young people found themselves in the avanguard of the struggle for perestroika. The first confrontation between the public, who had already started to see things in a new light, and the authorities, which continued to cling to the old ways, was built around the environmental debate (Georgian History (Reading Book, 1783-1990), p. 310).

The authors believe that the national movement was gaining strength with the student community and “artistic intelligentsia” (fully in line with Soviet rhetorical clichés) in the lead. Step by step the movement was getting more and more politicized.

Starting in 1988 Georgian youth’s struggle against the social and political routine left the confines of the environmental debate. The idea of reclaiming national sovereignty was beginning to germinate in that community. At that stage the leadership of the national liberation movement had concentrated in the hands of Merab Kostava, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, Tamar Chkheidze, Giorgi Chanturia,

Irakli Tsereteli, Irakli Shengelia and others. The number of informal groups had increased Establishment of the Rustaveli Society was an important event. Also, the People's Front was founded (Georgian History (Reading Book, 1783-1990), p. 310).

So, to sum up, according to the textbook's authors the movement for the recognition of Georgia's independence began in 1988. The movement consisted of a number of groups, which had different opinions on how to achieve that goal. Georgia's party leaders proved unfit to spearhead the movement. The wall of estrangement was rising between the "public" and "party bureaucracy," and finally spilled over into unsanctioned protests. In July 1988 the Soviet power responded with a ban on those public and mass manifestations of disaffection. The "law-enforcement authorities" began to use force to break up demonstrations.

In response, the regime's opponents radicalized. The confrontation transformed into the fight against not only the Soviet rule, represented by, among others, local bureaucrats, but also against Russia's imperial ambitions.

In the state of confrontation between the government and the public, political processes in the country became almost fully uncontrollable. The national liberation movement brought to the fore the issues of illegal annexation on February 25, 1921 and genocide in 1921-1924¹⁹, which had been a direct consequence of the Soviet regime. Condemning the annexation suggested the need to restore the May 7, 1920 agreement between Soviet Russia and democratic Georgia (Georgian History (Reading Book, 1783-1990), p. 311).

Protests became truly massive in November 1988. Rallies were taking place in front of the House of Government in downtown Tbilisi. The standoff with the Empire that had initiated conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia was gradually escalating. In the textbook's authors' opinion, those conflicts were artificially created in order to curb the "people's liberation movement."

¹⁹ The first date is considered the start of the Sovietization (or occupation, as it is customary to say these days) of Georgia. On that day, the government which consisted primarily of the Mensheviks left Tbilisi and the Bolsheviks entered the city. Repressions against former officials and 'class enemies' followed later on. Textbook authors had already dubbed those events genocide in 1991 (for further reference: Suny, 1994, pp. 209-236).

The third party (the imperial force) supported ethnic conflicts on purpose, as it was not ok with separate intentions of Georgian youth. That force tried to neutralize them by way of fomenting tension in interethnic relations. Secret direction of the Empire's reactionary forces that aimed to worsen the ethnic crisis could be seen everywhere in Transcaucasia. Different nations and ethnic groups of the Transcaucasian region were being pitted against each other, which in fact demonstrated the revival of the age-old Tsarist policy - "divide and conquer" (Georgian History (Reading Book, 1783-1990), pp. 311-312).

Russia did not want to abandon its imperial ambitions, and doing Russia's bidding, the Abkhaz, in their turn, started to demand independence from the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic. Next, the same happened with Ossetians. Therefore, the authors of the 1991 textbook blame the "third party," that is, Russia, in inciting those two internal Georgian conflicts. Thus, already in what is actually the first post-Soviet textbook, the negative image of the "other" is represented by Russia. Here is what such actions on the part of the "Neighbour" led to:

On April 4, 1989 unsanctioned rallies started happening all over Tbilisi. One part of the protesting youth started a hunger strike in front of the House of Government. Participants of the demonstrations and hunger strikes demanded nothing more than the republic's sovereignty. The movement was growing by the day. The artistic intelligentsia – well-known scientists, writers, artists and directors, took the youth's side. Public protests were peaceful; they did not pose any threat to the republic's official authorities. However the movement was unusually mass, and that really scared the party and Soviet leadership. On April 7, the Central Committee's office made a decision to use force to break up the rally. A motion was put to the Soviet authorities requesting permission to use military force to "restore order" in the capital (Georgian History (Reading Book, 1783-1990), p. 313).

Thus we learn that it was local party leadership who initiated the procedure that led to the tragic "April 9" events. However the role played by local officials is not emphasized. In contrast, the authors again refer to the "third power" – Russia. The republic itself had none of the resources necessary for the repression of protests. That is why the help, represented by uniformed services,

was expected from the “Center.” The troops had already arrived in Tbilisi on April 7. The decision had been made in private, supposedly with Jumber Patiashvili, the First Secretary of the Georgian Communist Party, as the only Georgian in attendance. Still the authors note that the local party core group was also in favour of the military crackdown.

That’s how the bloody operation that would take place on April 9, 1989 at 4 a.m. on Rustaveli Avenue before the House of Government was set up. A heavily armed military detachment attacked peaceful demonstrators – women, children, old people, young people, and perpetrated a massacre using shovels and toxic chemical substances. A curfew was imposed, however reprisal against people continued well after the demonstrators had been broken up. As a result of this savage operation twenty people died on April 9, thousands and thousands of people were wounded and asphyxiated by gas (Georgian History (Reading Book, 1783-1990), p. 313).

Many emotional clichés can be found in this narrative. However the main point of interest is that for the first time the authors do not single out any specific group of people (“protesters,” “youth,” “intelligentsia”) but rather talk about the reprisal against “people.” At the same time they don’t make a break with the “Neighbour.”

April 9 vandalism outraged not only all Georgian people but also the forward-minded public in Russia, who came to regard that operation as the state’s unforgivable crime against humanity ... This protest was voiced in Russian mass media as well (Georgian History (Reading Book, 1783-1990), p. 313).

Then we learn about the attempt to go beyond the boundaries of imperial-type relations “the Center – provinces” and beyond the USSR’s borders as well. Ethnic resources (the Georgian diaspora in Europe and the US) were employed to that effect. It is those countries that the authors cast their eye on immediately after Russia:

The April 9 tragedy had much resonance internationally. Information agencies of all countries spread the news about the bloody massacre that had occurred in Tbilisi to their people and highlighted its illegitimate nature. The misfortune of their fellow countrymen shocked those Georgians who lived abroad. Georgian diasporas

in France, The Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Belgium and the US expressed their indignation through various protest rallies. For the whole year, the events of April 9 had been in the center of not only the Georgian public but the Soviet Union's public's attention (Georgian History (Reading Book, 1783-1990), pp. 313 - 314).

The authors don't specify who exactly represented the Soviet Union's public and don't provide any further details on this subject. However this unit of the textbook ends with a vehement denunciation of Russia:

The April 9 events have unveiled the great-power chauvinistic and imperial mindset of the Soviet Union's ruling apparatus and its military establishment. They have demonstrated the Soviet leadership's uncompromising attitude to the national liberation movement of non-Russian peoples, as well as their secret fascination with the idea of "one and undivided" Russia and their eagerness not to admit any system-wide changes in settling interethnic disputes. The imperial government allowed the April 9 tragedy to happen in order to scare other non-Russian nations by making it clear to them which measures would be taken against the Baltic States and other insubordinate ethnic regions. April 9 pulled Georgian people together in their fight for national sovereignty even more. The sacred blood that had been shed in front of the House of Government spurred on a powerful surge of accumulated national energy. April 9 became the new stage, the new turning point for the national pro-independence movement. Since that day, the movement has been incessant, systematic and irreversible (Georgian History (Reading Book, 1783-1990), p. 315).

As we can see, the authors conclude their analysis employing clichés from Soviet anti-imperial discourse. It is very easy to see here the similarity with the rhetoric used by the Bolsheviks themselves to condemn the rulers of the Russian Empire. It is important to highlight that the authors ultimately end up denouncing Russia in general as the Empire's heir, as well as Russians in particular as a "great-power" and "chauvinistic nation." That is, the legacy left by the period of the USSR's dissolution as well as the habit of associating Russia and Russians with the imperial idea and statesmanship lead to the fact that it is Russia that gets the role of the "Neighbour-enemy." It is this role precisely that would be permanently affixed to Russia throughout all the years that followed. At the same time we see this discourse as complete. "April 9" gives a boost to the struggle for independence becoming the climactic point of this process.

“April 9” as the Watershed Moment for the National Movement

The way course units are marked and titled in textbooks has not changed much. We should now cover the “restoration of Georgia’s state independence.” At the same time another textbook, published in 2002 and approved by the Ministry of Education for history teaching in schools, reviews these events within the much wider context of the dissolution of the whole set of pro-Soviet countries, the so-called Soviet camp.

*From the beginning of the 1980s the crisis in the socialist camp countries had been growing more and more obvious. The socialist camp’s demise began with Poland. In 1989 -1992 the communist regimes fell in **Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, The German Democratic Republic, and Albania**. The end to the oppressing system in those countries came after the so-called **velvet or tender revolutions**²⁰. Only in Romania the bloodshed could not be escaped. The reunion of the two German states in 1990 was the most significant event (Georgian History (19th-20th Centuries), p. 167).*

The events in Georgia are therefore built into the context of the events that were happening in parallel in Europe rather than those occurring in the Soviet Union’s territories. It is the events in Eastern Europe that, according to the authors, played a crucial role in the demise of the crisis-stricken USSR. Admittedly the situation in Georgia is also compared to that of the Baltic republics and the Ukraine (that is, in the “most European” Soviet republics). Therefore, we can clearly see how new shifting priorities in foreign policy and an orientation towards the European Union facilitated the choice of context for the “April 9” events. The start of the national movement is now transferred to 1987 when, in the authors’ opinion, there was founded:

*One of the first political organizations in Georgia – the **Ilia Chavchavadze Society** The Society’s mission was to fight for Georgia’s independence, democracy, a capitalist economy and market system. Many leaders of future political parties were members of the Ilia Chavchavadze Society (Georgian History (19th-20th Centuries), p. 168).*

²⁰ Hereinafter emphasis is original.

The 2000s put a different perspective on the movement's goals and thus they appear to be more clear and comprehensible to the authors. In 1988 the movement became more massive. From then on, the narrative provided by the authors of this textbook does not differ much from that of the previously discussed textbook's narrative. Once again we learn about the environmental movement, the start of strikes and rallies in front of the House of Government, and the actualization of the conflict in Abkhazia. However, the authors include some pointers as to what the "Center's" other motives could be. We find out that the "national movement in Georgia posed a threat to the biggest achievement of the Soviet movement – to the Empire's territorial integrity" (Georgian History (19th-20th Centuries), p. 168). At the same time the narrative describing "April 9" events is to a certain extent different than its 1991 analogue:

On April 9, 1989, at dawn, at 4 AM demonstrators were surrounded by punitive detachments on all sides. The chasteners were armed with clubs, sharpened shovels and toxic gas. All of a sudden a few hundred soldiers burst into the square in front of the House of Government and commenced severe beatings of protesters and hunger-strikers, most of whom were feeble women and young girls. The violence of the attackers went beyond expectation. In a matter of minutes they cleaned out the square, leaving nineteen killed, sixteen of whom were women. Many wounded made a safe getaway. Over two thousand people were asphyxiated by gas (Georgian History (19th-20th Centuries), p. 168).

One could easily spot a difference in describing the role of Russia as well. Not a single mention is made in the textbook of solidarity with Tbilisi residents on the part of some of the public in Russia. In contrast, "the pain caused by the April 9 tragedy was worsened by slanderous attacks from Moscow information agencies (press, radio, TV) and military raids in Tbilisi" (Georgian History (19th-20th Centuries), p. 169).

The image of Russia and Russians is that of a monolithic and united camp of "hostile forces." For the first time there appears a mention of the local leadership, who by that time had finally lost the trust of the "Georgian people." In its turn, "the bloody April 9 tragedy has showed the whole world the face of Soviet imperialism" (Georgian History (19th-20th Centuries), p. 169). Naturally, that "face of imperialism" was not only Soviet, but Russian, too. That is why it is of no surprise that representatives of the national movement demanded the

withdrawal of “Russia’s occupation troops” from Georgia, not the Soviet Union’s troops (Georgian History (19th-20th Centuries), p. 169).

Here it is interesting to make a comparison with a textbook published for higher education institutions at practically the same time. In that textbook the collapse of the USSR is reviewed in the context of the deepening confrontation between Russian and non-Russian “nations” inhabiting the “Soviet Empire”:

From the 1980s onwards national movements that had started in some Soviet Union republics were becoming increasingly more radical. Those movements were clearly anti-Russian. There was a confrontation between Russian and Yakut youth in 1986 in Irkutsk. In Alma-Ata in 1986 anti-Russian demonstrations were curbed by the military. In 1987 serious anti-Russian demonstrations started in the Baltic States (Georgian History, 20th Century, p. 217).

In this text Moscow is also represented as encouraging the separatism of certain ethnic groups in order to fight national movements. Georgia and its ruling elite are represented as consistently anti-Russian.

Georgia was the only one of the twelve countries not to join the commonwealth of states. Complete emancipation from Russian influence became Zviad Gamsakhurdia’s official foreign policy and this approach demonstrated his political maximalism as well as his romanticism. Such an approach was absolutely unacceptable for Russia and thus it immediately put into action various warfare tactics against the small insubordinate country (Georgian History, 20th Century, p. 225).

According to the authors, Abkhazians and Georgians were fully capable of solving their emerging mutual issues bilaterally. However, here Russia once again emerges as the “third power” that hindered the conflict’s resolution, facilitating its escalation instead. Moscow was managing the events in Abkhazia and South Ossetia directly. All those actions were aimed specifically at denying Georgia its independence. Events in Georgia are once again examined in connection with events occurring in the “most European” Soviet republics (the Baltics). The fact that the Supreme Council of the USSR recognized their independence in September 1991, while denying the same request from Georgia, is represented as a “bitter blow” to the “national government.”

Finally, Georgia achieves independence and gets an opportunity to start building relations with Neighbouring countries. With some of them (Turkey and Azerbaijan), it manages to build mutually beneficial relations:

The launch of the Baku-Supsa pipeline in 1999 was the practical evidence of the success that had been reached internationally. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline was even more important. Besides their economic influence both pipelines also help to strengthen stability and safety in the region (Georgian History, 20th Century, p. 240).

In the case of Russia there is no talk about any joint economic projects. Nothing is said about the close connection between the two economic systems (Georgian and Russian). The tension remains, and it is only through the European Union’s interference that Russian military troops are finally withdrawn from Georgian territory.

“April 9” – The Last Version

By 2009 the tradition of including the “April 9” events into the wider context of the Soviet camp’s collapse and the national movement in Georgia has actually been cemented. The situation in Georgia is once again examined in the context of the events in Eastern Europe and the Baltic states (Georgian History. 9th Grade, p. 440). The authors provide more documents than narratives, but from these documents as well, we once again learn about the beginning of the environmental movement, the historical monuments preservation movement, etc. However, in this textbook, parallels are drawn between other similar events in other republics. The authors mention brutal crackdowns on anti-Soviet “people’s protests” that happened on January 20, 1990 in Baku and on January 13, 1991 in Vilnius. As a result, a hundred and seven protesters died in Baku and fourteen in Vilnius. These three events are lined up together (Georgian History. 9th Grade, pp. 443-444). The textbook is full of anti-Soviet rhetoric, but the authors steer clear of directly pointing at Russia as the Soviet Empire’s successor.

Another attempt to combine world history and Georgian history courses naturally facilitated assigning an even more important role to the Eastern European context in the textbook’s narrative. At the same time the “April 9” events are placed into the context of national movements that by that time had emerged not only in Georgia but also in all three Baltic republics. An exception

is made only for one Neighbour – Azerbaijan, which becomes the fourth directly mentioned republic (World and Georgian History. 12. Learner's Guide, p. 285). There are practically no judgmental statements in the textbook's text, only information, notably, from very different sources.

For example, there is an excerpt from the memoirs of a lance corporal who participated in breaking up the demonstration. He claims that there were no more than three hundred protesters and the military had no gas or shovels. Moreover, it was demonstrators who provoked the military with their violent behavior. At the same time, there is another eyewitness account from a rally participant who talks about tanks and a brutal crackdown on protesters. Comparisons are made with the "fomentation of ethnic discord" between Azerbaijan and Armenia. Besides, the textbook provides the text of the open letter from Leningrad intelligentsia where they harshly condemn the actions of security officials.

We, Russians, are ashamed that there were members of our ethnic tribe among those who lifted their hand against the unarmed and defenseless. They have insulted the honour of Russian arms, betrayed the honour of a Russian soldier. We will always respect Georgian culture, nobility and the generosity of Georgian people, the sonority of their language (World and Georgian History. 12. Learner's guide, p. 285).

Therefore the only Neighbour that still receives the bulk of attention is represented from very different angles. It should be stated that last generation textbooks are reasonably pluralistic and have no overly emotional clichés initiated by their authors as well as no "enemy images." Thus, the development of the educational narrative can be seen as a long journey. At the end of this journey we see textbooks, which are much closer to being in accordance with modern requirements that operate in democratic countries.

Paradoxically, at the same time, in contrast, public political discourse is radicalizing. On April 9, 2011 the President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili met with students at his residence. In his speech he highlighted that,

Twenty years ago the Supreme Council of the Republic of Georgia declared that national independence, suspended by the Bolshevik occupation of 1921, had been restored. That day was also the second anniversary of the 9 April, 1989 tragedy, when albeit under new circumstances the Soviet Empire reminded us of

*its destructive image. Unfortunately this was not their first reminder and certainly not the last one. For the very last time it reminded us of itself in August 2008, but these forces keep making regular attempts at reminding us of their existence.*²¹

Conclusion

Thus it can be acknowledged that the circle is closing. First generation textbooks were quite radically and consistently building the “enemy image” out of Neighbouring Russia (as the successor of two empires). The information in recently published textbooks is much more restrained. Their authors avoid direct parallels and judgmental statements. In contrast, political discourse is gradually radicalizing. It is becoming more and more blunt and straightforward, appealing to the “historical enemy” image, which is once again represented by Russia.

That said, the most important conclusion is that Neighbourhood appears of immediate interest only when it comes to relations with Russia. Friendly relations with other countries are out of focus. In substance, these Neighbours don't play an important role in the narrative of Georgia's contemporary history. In the context of current foreign-policy priorities, the US and the countries of the European Union become much more important. It is in this context precisely (in the general outline of events that have occurred during the process of the Soviet camp's collapse in Eastern Europe and the Baltic republics' succession from the USSR) that the authors place the narrative of the events in Georgia that are connected with “April 9.” Russia remains the central Neighbour image, and is consistently represented as “hostile” towards Georgia.

At the same time the “April 9” events are assigned a significant role both in political discourse and in educational discourse in history textbooks. They mark the start of the journey to an independent existence. This tradition is still alive, since political discourse tells us that the journey started by the “victims and heroes” of “April 9” will be completed when Georgia is able to “restore its territorial integrity.” For now this issue is put on hold, becoming the obscure future's prerogative, and so the prospects for “April 9” to remain a “living site of memory” continue to stay quite high.

²¹ 9 April, 2011. President of Georgia Meets with Students at the Presidential Palace. Accessible online at http://www.kuwait.mfa.gov.ge/index.php?lang_id=GEO&sec_id=595&info_id=10469

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THE “SINGLE NATION, TWO STATES” IDEA: TURKEY-AZERBAIJAN RELATIONS IN THE POST- SOVIET PERIOD

Elif Kanca

Introduction

In the establishment of the Turkish Republic’s national identity, “Turkishness,” along with Anatolia as the place where it was built and reproduced, plays an important role. History serves as one of the foundational elements of this identity, starting in Middle Asia and including the migrations, religious transformations, and the states that have been founded and fallen. It reaches the “perfect” state of Turkish civilization with Islam in today’s Anatolia. Regarding Anatolia-based national identity ideology, various concepts have been developed in accordance with the policies in different periods to classify and define the societies of the Turkish Republic that speak Turkic languages and practice Islam.

For instance, the “Captive Turks”¹ concept has first been used by some Turkish politicians and academics to define the situation of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kirgizstan, which are among the former Soviet republics where Turkic languages are spoken. The “Soviet invasion” has been shown as the primary reason for the significant cultural, economic, and political distance between these states and Turkey, as well as the main excuse for any unjust event that the states in question may have experienced.

“Outside Turks” live outside the boundaries of the Turkish Republic. This conceptualization refers to a homogeneous Turkish identity that stems from the same roots, shares a common culture, and speaks the same language. As a result of such an understanding, it is suggested that Azerbaijanis, Uzbeks and Kazaks are all Turkish people, ignoring all differences regarding religion and language. Turkey is the centre of this perception of “Turkishness,” the model of the super-ordinate identity presented to other Turkic societies. For this reason, some Turkish politicians and academics argue that “Outside Turks” are in need of Turkey’s protection, and only Turkey can provide a model for them.

In fact, when we look at it briefly, no state other than that founded by the Turkish Turks could fulfill the responsibilities of being a state in its real meaning throughout the past or in the present. That is to say, we still see these political formations with a structure based on a spirit of tribalism. In order to change the current understanding and adapt to the modern world, considering agreements signed with politicians and bureaucrats coming from the Turkish world, they have been educated in subjects such as politics and state government and they are still being educated. They entered international institutions such as the UN and CSCE (Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe) with the support of Turkey. In addition, many states were interested in the countries in this region after they declared independence. Accordingly, it was quite normal for Turkey to have close contacts within the framework of its own laic and modern state structure (Gömeç, 2007, p. 120).

Conceptions of “Captive Turks” and “Outside Turks,” as expressions belonging to the policies of national identity, highlight the political, cultural and economic relations that Turkey has established with these states through “otherness”

¹ Regarding the concept of “Captive Turks” see Ayan, 2011, Polat, 2008.

rather than “brotherhood.” This study focuses on the “hierarchical” structure of the relationship between Turkey and its Neighbour Azerbaijan. It is defined as “Single Nation, Two States” but has been subjected to “hidden otherization” under national identity ideology. The structure in question is examined during the post-Soviet period for two reasons. First, Azerbaijan is a nation state that gained its independence during that period, hence the intensity and equality of the political dimension of the relationship between two countries has increased. Second, the relationship between the two states has developed an economic dimension with the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline.

This study looks at textbooks and supplementary textbooks approved by the Ministry of Education and used at different levels of the education system to compile clues regarding the potent identity questions assumed to exist in the relationship between Turkey and Azerbaijan. Textbooks serve as the main source for this study because the education system is the tool that strengthens the state’s influence over its citizens. A nation state’s establishment of its own identity is a process that directly builds citizens’ consciousness, with the education system playing a central role. In order to understand the background needed for researching the textbooks in question, firstly it is necessary to consider the relationship between Turkey and Azerbaijan within the context of Turkish national identity.

The Issue of Common Origin and Language between Turkey and Azerbaijan

The criteria of “common origin” and “common language” maintain their central place in the definition of nation-state identity. Considering this, the researchers who study the origin of Turks have stated that they, as one of the oldest societies of the world, have established large states and formed great civilizations throughout history. According to the same historians, Russians are the first people responsible for “the forgotten Turkishness conscious” and the dividedness of “Turks” who currently live in different countries and who form separate Asian states:

When looking at Turkish history, it should not be understood as the history of a society in a specific place, but as all of the histories of Turkish communities with different names and in various regions but that carry the same ‘national’ culture with their religion, language, traditions, and customs. The Turkish nation, which has es-

established many states and administrations throughout history, has been divided into parts with separate names because of Russian politics, which are beyond their control. Throughout various periods of the 19th century, Russians have applied a “divide and conquer” policy on the lands of Turkish countries where the Turkish Republics of today have been founded following the invasions. Moreover, they have applied all types of administrative, educational, and cultural pressure in order to estrange Turkish peoples from the idea that they are all part of a Turkish nation. As a result of such pressure, names such as “Uzbek,” “Kazak,” “Kirgiz,” “Turkmen,” “Azerbaijani” etc. have been used and these people have been called by the names of their tribes, dynasties or regions. It has been grafted into their minds that they are different peoples and they do not have any relationship with ‘Turkishness’ (Ulusoy, 2009, p. 359).

Considering “common origin” or “common social memory” as some of the most important criteria of ethnic identity, can it be said that Turks and Azerbaijanis represent a single and homogeneous group? Taking a historical perspective, the Azeri Safevid states and Turkish Ottoman Empire not only competed but also represented two separate ideologies, respectively espousing Shiite and Sunni Islam. The only common social memory of the communities, containing the people of the states in question, is that of the mutual war and massacres. For instance, the Ottoman sultan Yavuz Sultan Selim is not only the sultan who conquered the Shiite Şah Ismail in the Çaldıran War, but he is also considered as the first Sunni sultan to hold the caliphate title.² In spite of this, Azerbaijanis and representatives of Shiites in Turkey remember Yavuz Sultan Selim as a butcher.³

² As a matter of fact, the relationship between Ottomans and Safavids is expressed as it follows in the seventh grade history textbook: “Safavids in Iran sought the disintegration of Anatolia and the spread of Shiism. As a result of their activities, the Şahkulu Rebellion occurred in 1511. This rebellion was quelled only with many difficulties. The Safavid State continuously provoked the people in Anatolia during this period. The relationship between the Ottomans and Iran was disrupted by the Shiite activities in Anatolia conducted by Safavids. Yavuz Sultan Selim marched upon Iran, since he believed that Iran posed a threat. Yavuz Sultan Selim won the Çaldıran War against Şah Ismail in 1514.” (See <http://trtarih.com/turk-tarihinde-yolculuk/7.-sinif-3.-unite-turk-tarihinde-yolculuk-konu-anlatimi-4.-bolum.html>).

³ According to the information provided by Dedeyev (2009, p. 131), “Against the Safavid propaganda in the Ottoman State, Yavuz Sultan Selim had approximately forty thousand Şah Ismail supporters killed or imprisoned in the areas of Anatolia with high populations of Safavids. Also, cultural precautions were taken against Safavid expansionism, in particular by attempting to organize Sunni cults. Later, when actions against the Safavids had reached a dangerous level in the Ottoman State, Yavuz Sultan Selim cooperated with Helvetiyye, who came from the same origin as the Safavid Cult and was united in Zahidiyye. He also sought help from famous Ottoman ulema and took fatwas from Kemal Pasha-Zade, Ali B. Abdulkерim, Hasan B. Ömer, Müftü Hamza and Molla Arap regarding the massacre of Safavids. The fact these fatwas not only had religious but also political contents legitimized the actions taken against Safavids both in and out of the country. In addition, a rumor suggesting that Safavids are not “sayyid” was spread among the public. This provided a basis for the Shiite Iranian Safavid State to emerge against the Sunni Ottoman State.”

Another example of a historical dispute between Ottomans/Turks and Shiite Azerbaijanis emerged long after the Çaldıran War when members of the Committee of Union and Progress (İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti) tried to draw in the Azerbaijanis. This group represented Turkist ideology and managed to stay in command in the Ottoman Empire until the end of World War I as per their “Pan Turkism” ideology. However, the Azerbaijanis did not respond positively to this effort and took the side of their co-religionists in Iran instead, in spite of the dominant Farsi language and culture in the area (Atabaki, 2005, pp. 33-42). On the contrary to the Turkists’ claim and the resulting expectation of unity, this situation reveals that the identities of Azerbaijanis and Turks have been established upon different variants. Among these, religion plays a very important role. The fact that most of the Azerbaijanis are Shiites whereas Turks are Sunnis has caused significant distance between these two communities. For this reason, Azerbaijanis have preferred the Iranians, who belong to the same religious sect, instead of their “linguistic relatives,” the Turks.

Finally, the discussions regarding whether the official language of Azerbaijan should be “Turkish” or “Azerbaijani” or whether the people of Azerbaijan should be called “Azerbaijani” or “Turk,” remain after the Soviet Union’s disintegration officially proved the fact that “Turkish” and “Azerbaijani” identities, which are “the others” for each other, cannot reconcile. Those who oppose the idea that Azerbaijanis are Turks and their language is Turkish have indicated that this situation will disturb other ethnic communities and disrupt their freedom:

The intellectuals who promote the slogan ‘my language is my existence’ have claimed that the people on the “other side” are trying to make Azerbaijan a colony of Turkey. Among the people who defend this opinion, Afet Gurbanova’s words, ‘If our language becomes Turkish and our people become Turkish, what will we have left?’ have strengthened those who defend the Azerbaijani identity. Intellectuals and politicians from other ethnic groups, particularly Lezgi, Talish, Russian and Kurdish people, have been among those who defend the Azerbaijani identity against Turkish identity and language. As a matter of fact, in response to the Turkists’ slogan ‘Hey Turk, shake and return to yourself, you will be great when you return to yourself,’ Lezgis say ‘Lezgi, you will be great when you return to yourself too’. These different perspectives have resulted in heated discussions. As a result of the continuous debate, an article stating ‘Azerbaijan is the name of the state and the official language is Azerbaijani’ has been included in the con-

stitutional amendment, officially legalized with the referendum on November 17, 1995 (cited by Süleymanlı, 2006, pp. 299-307).

Two states display different political and academic points of view regarding a common language. The following quote highlights the commonly accepted perspective on Azerbaijan among academics in Turkey: “Azerbaijani Turks, who speak Turkish with a dialect that is unique to them, are a developed society in terms of language, art and literature...” (Devrimci, et al., 1951, p. 84). While the Azerbaijani language is mentioned as a developed language on the one hand, the scholar hierarchically places it under the Turkish language by underlining that it is a Turkish dialect. So, the hegemonic understanding observed in Turkish politics also dominates in the academic approach to the Azerbaijani language. The reflection of the idea that Azerbaijani is a “Turkish dialect” on the daily life and popular culture is a way to use it as a source of humor. This view allows the language to be categorically lowered when contrasted with the “Istanbul dialect,” accepted as “the basis of Turkish language,” and in this reduction it may be associated with rural people. In turn, this connection opens the avenue for association with “the humor related to peasantry and womanhood” (Sanders, 2001).

The use of popular dialects as a subject of humor in Turkey is related to political traditions. According to this tradition, which associates the government with serious matters, making fun of a subject also decreases its influence. According to Belge (2008, p. 360), government leaders fear being the subject of humor in the ideology of Turkish national culture, as they are concerned that their influence will suffer if the people they govern laugh at them:

If the public starts to laugh at the government, they may have begun to understand its deficiencies and not take the institution seriously. They may no longer fear the government, which is a serious institution/issue. Laughing at the government is not acceptable (Belge, 2008, p. 361).

So, the Azerbaijani language, viewed as a “dialect” and turned into a source of humor, loses some of its significance as a fully recognized language. The hegemonic understanding in question here takes as its basis the Istanbul dialect, understood to be the true and real Turkish. The idea suggesting that Turkish societies should speak the Istanbul dialect of Turkish, and that this version of Turkish is natural, is clearly expressed:

One of the initiatives to spread the common usage of Turkish among Turkish societies is Turkey's and Azerbaijan's joint effort to institute the 34-letter Turkish alphabet in 1993. Also, there have been some efforts to write a common history for the Turks. There have been some activities since the 1990s to teach this history and culture and to spread the usage of the Turkish language in many Turkish republics and autonomous regions by means of the "Turkology Project" that the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA) has carried out. Maybe it will be useful for Turkey's Turkish to be a literary language (Gömeç, 2007, pp. 119-120).

For this reason, the national ideology of the Turkish Republic, which considers itself the leader of the communities defined as politically and culturally Turkic, views these groups as "brothers" in a "single nation," with Turkey as the "big brother" and "protector." According to the ideological point of view that places itself in the centre of these groups, Turkey is the most advanced nation in terms of civilization and culture. Turkey sees its role within this context as teaching its own "advanced" culture to these "Outside Turks" who barely survived from "captivity" and who have been "held back"; hence, Turkey must help them.

Turkey, the "Protector" and "Big Brother"

Although the "Single Nation, Two States" expression and accompanying emphasis on "brotherhood" implies the sharing of a homogenous culture, this expression is actually an implicit "otherization." Historically, the criteria of the "otherization" and classification in question finds its definition with "Outside Turkishness." This concept makes a reference to a "Turkishness" that does not fit into the format of national ideology and is separate from "us." The myth of sharing the same origin and the widely expressed term of "brotherhood" actually serves no significant purpose other than building a "me/us" concept in the center. Millas (2005, pp. 426-427) expressed the "otherization" function of the "brotherhood" concept as follows:

The nationalist paradigm does not repeatedly promote the expression of 'peace' and 'brotherhood'; both of these concepts can coexist without conflict. The nationalist paradigm provides a classification and assessment; it is not necessary for the people who are associated with this ideology to be absolutely ag-

gressive and against peace and friendship. However, the lack of aggressive language and titles does not mean that the nationalist ideology has been overcome.

In terms of the “Turkishness” ideology, which places its own national identity at the centre, “Outside Turks” are viewed as passive societies. This group does not have its own will and need Turkey’s protection in every aspect. And Turkey deserves this protectionist role more than anyone:

Since the Turkish Republic is the inheritor of the great Ottoman Empire and has had influence over Eurasia for many years, the country has a greater right to express her ideas and speak on behalf of the region than anyone else in the region. Also, during a period in which Turkey lost its strategic significance for institutions such as the European Union and NATO, its resulting exclusion has caused Turkey’s relationship with the Turkish world to become extremely important (Gömeç, 2007, p. 120).

Turkey’s hegemonic attitude is a natural result of its approach as the “protector” for Turkic republics. For example, regarding Azerbaijan, Erdoğan (1996) states: “Turkey supports this sister country both in political and economic terms.” This comment reveals Turkey’s dominant point of view. Even if the expression “single nation” implies the idea of a unified entity, this phrase does not describe Turkish identity, either throughout history or today. When considering one of the recent crises between these two countries, it can clearly be seen that in fact, a deep and real separation exists between the two states.

Armenia as the Breaking Point of Turkey - Azerbaijan Relations

Although the discourse on relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey has shifted throughout history from one of conflict, between Ottomans/Turks and Azerbaijanis in the Safavid and Ottoman states, to an expression of “brotherhood⁴,” their relationship actually remains quite fragile and inconsistent. Relations, which became more active upon the disintegration of the Soviet Union, have been inconsistent since Haydar Aliyev came to power in 2002. In spite of the policy “Zero Problems with Neighbouring Countries” of the Adalet

⁴ Although we ignore the desire for positive relations underlying this expression, it still does not seem possible to define these relationships as compliant.

ve Kalkınma Party, which came to power in Turkey on November 3, 2002, the relationship with Azerbaijan has never reached the desired level. In 2009, a crisis occurred between the two countries regarding the humiliation of flags, as they each consider them “holy symbols.” Armenia, which both Turkey and Azerbaijan have placed in the category of “enemy,” has been blamed as the apparent cause of the crisis.

This crisis began with the convergence process between Turkey and Armenia that sought to normalize relations between these two countries within the framework of the “Zero Problems with Neighbouring Countries” policy. Azerbaijan reacted negatively to this attempt of Turkish foreign policy. Baku has claimed that “the relationship between Ankara and Yerevan should not be normalized as long as the armed forces of Armenia remain in the invaded lands of Azerbaijan” and stated that this situation “does not fit the national interest of Azerbaijan.” The Azerbaijani government’s reactions intensified during this period. It was prohibited to wave an Azerbaijani flag during the football match on October 14, 2009 between the Turkish and Armenian national teams and Turkish flags at the Turkish Martyr’s Memorial in Baku, along with flag posts, were removed. This situation has caused tension between the two countries⁵.

The Azerbaijani government has stated that the removal of the Turkish Republic flag in the Turkish Martyr’s Memorial in Baku is related to the newly issued Flag Law. Turkey has not been indifferent to this situation and various leaders made statements demanding it be reversed, including the foreign minister at the time, Ahmet Davutoğlu. In response to increasing tensions between Turkey and Azerbaijan over the protocol signed with Armenia and the flag crisis, Davutoğlu stated during a visit to Baku that “we consider the invaded Azerbaijani lands as our own. If necessary, 72 million people of Anatolia are

⁵ The tension in question has been mentioned in the Turkish press as it follows: “Aliyev, who removed the flags and who silenced the Azan: The protocol signed between Turkey and Armenia has led the administrators governing Azerbaijan to commit unbelievable acts. The Azerbaijani government’s reason has collapsed. It has removed the flags in Turkish Martyr’s Memorial in Baku and closed two mosques that the Religious Affairs Foundation built and opened for service...We will not ignore the disrespect that these people have showed against Mehmetçik (Robins), who defended Baku against the Russians and who were martyred on these lands. Removing flags from the memorial is a situation related to a nation’s honour. The people who govern Azerbaijan cannot be exempted from the concept of honour. Today, our flag with the star and crescent is waved even in the Martyr’s Memorial in South Korea. Would they remove the flag at the memorial if we had trouble with South Korea? Never...We believe that even Koreans, who are Christians, would not do that. Azerbaijani leaders neither know the meaning of the flag with the crescent and the star that they removed, nor are they aware of its spirit. They silence the Azan by closing two mosques that the Religious Affairs Foundation had repaired. And then they defend the idea that we are a single nation. They do not know that the crescent on the flag represents Islam and the star represents Turks. What is strange here is they are not concerned with learning and embracing. It is clear that the Azan they silenced does not have any meaning for the Azerbaijani government.” (http://www.medyatrabzon.com/author_article_print.php?id=2749)

ready to die in Azerbaijan today. Keep this in mind.” Davutoğlu has also viewed the actions regarding the Azerbaijani flag as a provocation (Gaytancıoğlu, 2010, pp. 47-48).

In the meantime, Sayyad Salahlı, at the time Istanbul Consul General of Azerbaijan, the country that had received unexpectedly harsh reactions from Turkey, claimed that people who sought to disrupt the relationship between the two countries had instigated the flag crisis over the Turkish Martyrdom Monument. Salahlı stated that not only the Turkish but also the Azerbaijani flag had been removed from the monument for “repair” purposes. Turkish Centre for International Relations and Strategic Analysis (TÜRKSAM) chairman Sinan Oğan also argued that referring to Turkey and Azerbaijan with the slogan “Single Nation, Two States” may have disturbed some countries. He also considered the throwing of Azerbaijani flags in a box labeled “WC for ladies and gentlemen” during the football match between the Turkish and Armenian national teams in Bursa as a provocation (Gaytancıoğlu, 2010, p. 48).

The official spokesmen of Turkey and Azerbaijan have blamed provocateur parties regarding the latest developments in the crisis between the two countries, attempting to reflect relations as having normalized. However, the incidents have revealed that Turkey’s and Azerbaijan’s relationship is inconsistent in spite of the clichés of “single nation” and “brotherhood.” In the case of a crisis, these countries can become aggressive to the extent that they insult each other’s sacred national values.

Azerbaijan and Azerbaijanis in Turkish Textbooks

Considering the intensity of the “single nation” cliché in daily and political life in Azerbaijan, it does not occupy a significant place in Turkish textbooks. At different stages of Turkish primary and secondary education and in various subjects, including social science, history and geography, Azerbaijan, *sui generis* has not been considered a unique country. Instead, it is mentioned as part of the identity of the Turkish Republic and given a role which has been sharpened by the context of inducing factors that have been used in the creation of this “Turkish Republic” identity.

In history textbooks, Azerbaijan is not directly discussed. Indirectly and implicitly, Ottoman/Turkish and Safavid/Azerbaijani relations are mentioned within the context of the Safavid-Ottoman conflict, with negative references to the

Safavids led by Şah İsmail. For example, according to the seventh grade history textbook, “Safavids in Iran were engaging in activities aimed at the disintegration of Anatolia and the spread of Shiism”⁶. The Turkish World Handbook (Türk Dünyası El Kitabı) (Devlet, 1992, p. 73), used as a supplementary textbook, states that Azerbaijanis are religiously different people but those living in the Republic of Azerbaijan feel a stronger connection with Turkey:

According to 1987 data, Azerbaijanis make up 90% of the republic. Azerbaijan differs from other Turkic societies in terms of its geography, strategic importance and population. Another element that differentiates Azerbaijanis from other Turkic societies is that most of its people are Shiite Muslims (70%), which brings them closer to Iran in terms of religion. However, we should note that national consciousness was stronger than religious consciousness in Soviet Azerbaijan. In that sense, they feel closer to Turkey.

The book, *Türk Dünyası Tarihi ve Türk Medeniyetleri Üzerine Düşünceler* (Köseoğlu, 1991, pp. 753-754), which is also used as a supplementary textbook, provides brief information about the national history of Azerbaijan. Russians are viewed as invaders in accordance with the general approach in Turkey:

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Azerbaijan had a vibrant economy and cultural life. Azerbaijani intellectuals led Turks in Russia on the issues of “Turkishness” and political independence. After the Russian rebellion, Azerbaijan was declared a Turkish Republic on May 28, 1918 under the leadership of Mehmet Emin Resülzade. Istanbul’s government recognized the government immediately and supported it with the army led by Nuri Pasha. The Caucasian Islamic Army laid siege to Baku, which was under control of Local Soviets, and they entered the city on September 19, 1919. The national government worked to gain recognition from European countries; some allies recognized the Azerbaijani republic. However, the Bolshevik army’s invasion of Azerbaijan on April 27, 1920 could not be prevented. As a result, the Azerbaijani Soviet Republic was formed.

Azerbaijan is considered in a relatively unbiased manner in the subject of geography and its sub-branch, countries’ geography. These textbooks and the

⁶ See <http://trtarih.com/turk-tarihinde-yolculuk/7.-sinif-3.-unite-turk-tarihinde-yolculuk-konu-anlatimi-4.-bolum.html>.

supplementary resources of the lesson in question include basic information regarding Azerbaijan's geographic location, economy, and demographic structure. For instance, Güngördü includes the following short section regarding Azerbaijan in his work *Devletler Coğrafyası* (2006, p. 43)⁷: "Today, the Azerbaijan Republic is a Turkish state that has been recognized by most of the countries in the world and is a member of international organizations such as CE and CSCE."

As part of the topic of modern Turkish literature outside Turkey, Azerbaijan is mentioned in the lessons on Turkish language and literature taught at the high school level in Turkey. The textbook "dEdebiyat-3" (Literature -3) prepared by Mahir Ünlü and Ömer Özcan (2001, p. 185), mentions the drama *Ölüler* (The Dead) by Celil Mehmet Kulizâde under the topic of "Azerbaijani Turkish Literature." The book also includes, a poem by Azerbaijani poet Vahapzade entitled "Başlangıç."

In addition to the information used to introduce Azerbaijan, the primary education, fourth grade social science textbook refers to the "friendship" and "brotherhood" between Turkey and Azerbaijan (Kolukısa, et al., 2005, pp. 201-203). It also includes a map of the Azerbaijani Republic. The sixth grade social science textbook, with the same publisher, contains information regarding Kirgizstan, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan under the heading "Turkish Republics." It also refers to "the common cultures of the Turkish world" and includes a map of the "Turkish World" (Kolukısa, et al., 2006 pp. 98-103).

Conclusion

During the period after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the relationship between Turkey and Azerbaijan, which became an independent state, has gained a new economic and political dimension. This situation has particularly intensified with the establishment of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline. Although the "Single Nation, Two States" formulation seems to indicate "equality" and "smoothness" for mutually positive relations, it actually shows itself to imply some other intentions when examined carefully.

The structural transformation and intensification in the relationship between these two countries after the end of the Soviet period shows itself directly in

⁷ For other geography textbooks with similar information, see Devrimci, et al. 1951.

Turkish textbooks. Their depiction reflects the meaning attributed to Azerbaijan in Turkey's nation-state ideology. Although primarily positive regarding Azerbaijan, negations and hostilities also feed the nation-state ideology; these favourable references thus do not sufficiently serve Turkish ideology.

Moreover, this affirmation, established with the expression of "brotherhood," actually serves a type of implicit "otherization." This view argues that Azerbaijan shares a common origin and language with Turkey. However, this commonality exists only until a certain period in the history. Turkish national identity, which originates from Anatolia, is a perfect civilization for today to the extent that it serves as a model for the whole "Turkish World." Turkey locates its national identity, which provides a criterion, at the center, and presents relations with Azerbaijanis beginning with Safavids and extending until the Soviet period, as a history of captivity and damnification. Language is treated similarly as the issue of history. Azerbaijani is reduced to a dialect of the Turkish language; moreover, it is degraded as a source of humor. These reductions serve to promote Turkish national identity's hierarchical superiority in comparison with Azerbaijani identity.

Textbooks provide clues regarding the potent identity questions that are assumed to exist in the relationship between Turkey and Azerbaijan. In contrast to the expression of "brotherhood" and "single nation" repeated within political and academic environments, textbooks have not portrayed Azerbaijan in the same light. The limited information provided regarding Azerbaijan does not describe it as an independent state, but places the society on a lowly rung within the hierarchal order based on a Turkish political and cultural establishment. The "brotherhood" emphasis that we see in the discursive level of the establishment in question actually functions to cover the hegemony and "otherization" process, which the ideology of the Turkish nation state promotes.

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LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

Editor

Sergey Rumyansev, Sociologist, Research Fellow at the Institute of Philosophy, Sociology and Law at the National Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan, Head of the Independent Research Group “Novator” (Baku), Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, Institute for European Ethnology, Humboldt University, Berlin.

Turkey

Çakır Ceyhan Suvri, Department of Anthropology, University of Yüzüncü Yıl, Van.

Elif Kanca, Department of Anthropology, University of Mustafa Kemal, Hatay.

Georgia

Nino Chikovani, Professor, Institute of Cultural Studies, Faculty of Humanities, Iv. Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University.

Ruslan Baramidze, Ethnologist, Academic Doctor in History, Scientific Researching Institute of Niko Berdzenishvili (Batumi), Senior Researcher.

Armenia

Mikayel Zolyan, Historian, Independent Analyst.

Satenik Mkrtychyan, Research fellow at the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography, National Academy of Sciences, Armenia. PhD student in Anthropology at the Faculty of Humanities, Iv. Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University.

Azerbaijan

Ilham Abbasov, Historian and Sociologist, Research Fellow at the Institute of Philosophy, Sociology and Law, National Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan and Independent Research Group “Novator” (Baku).

Sevil Huseynova, Sociologist, PhD Student in Sociology at the Institute for European Ethnology (DAAD), Humboldt University, Berlin. Research Fellow of the Independent Research Group “Novator” (Baku).

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