Today the regional processes are developing in the interests of the most influential regional actors: the "factors" adjusted to the Southern Caucasus and its individual regions, including Javakhetia, stem from their short-term interests.

COLLECTIVE MEMORY IN ETHNOPOLITICAL CONFLICTS: THE CASE OF NAGORNO-KARABAKH

Rauf GARAGOZOV

Ph.D. (Psych.),
leading research fellow
at the Institute of
Strategic Studies of the Caucasus
(Baku, Azerbaijan)

There is a general agreement among those who study ethnic conflicts that collective memory may fan them, quench violence, or even prevent such conflicts,[1] but it rarely becomes a subject of political studies. Strange as it may seem collective memory and its role in creating or settling ethnopolitical conflicts attract even less attention.

It seems that the concept is too vague and multifaceted to serve as an analytical category. Collective memory frequently includes such notions as "bad histories" of the groups involved, historical myths, "ancient hatreds," or is identified as the aggregate of individual memories. The absence of clear-cut differentiations is probably responsible for the researchers' excessively cautious treatment of collective memory issues. Naturally enough the researchers want to avoid any accusations of abusing the "old ethnic hatreds" thesis. We all know that public opinion is prone to use it to explain ethnic conflicts, while experts invariably criticize this approach.

Those who study ethnic conflicts often point out that it is wrong to explain conflicts by "ancient hatred" between the sides, "bad" stories about one another, past atrocities, and dreams of revenge. This is a simplified approach, since "ancient hatred" per se does not necessarily cause conflicts. This is amply confirmed by numerous examples, former Yugoslavia being one of them: it is thought that the ethnic conflicts there were politically induced by the elites.

Finally, there is a widely shared opinion among experts that it is very hard to prove that it

[1] See: R. Petersen, *Understanding Ethnic Violence: Fear, Hatred, and Resentment in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002; P. Rich, "Identity and the Myth of Islam: A Reassessment," *Review of International Studies*, No. 25, 1999, pp. 425-437; J. Rothschild, *Ethnopolitics: A Conceptual Framework*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1982; S.J. Kaufman, *Modern Hatreds: The Symbolic Politics of Ethnic War*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 2001; D.R. Smock, *Religious Perspectives on War*, USIP Press, 2002.

is "centuries-old ethnic hatred" that cause ethnic conflicts in the first place. They say that conflicts are fanned by many different causes, old grudges being pushed to the fore a posteriori after the conflict has been raging for some time. As a result, the idea that collective memory may play an important role in an ethnic conflict is often reduced to simply stating that it was merely one of the factors among others.

Despite this I remain convinced that collective memory is an important, or even the key, factor in an ethnic or national conflict. The inability to track down and discern the specific role collective memory may play in an ethnopolitical conflict has undoubtedly infringed on our ability to prevent or resolve such conflicts. This makes it important to supply political scientists and politicians with a collective memory model to be applied to conflict analysis.

The above has posed two major aims: first, to formulate a collective memory conception that might be applied to an analysis of an ethnopolitical conflict; second, to demonstrate the possibilities of such a conception using the Armenian-Azeri conflict around Nagorno-Karabakh as an example. If collective memory is indeed an important factor, this is especially true of the majority of conflicts that emerged in the Caucasus in the last years of the Soviet Union and immediately after its disintegration. Contrary to the widespread opinion that the socioeconomic factor plays the central role in the genesis of conflicts and that cultural and/or religious factors come into play at later stages of conflict escalation, the key Caucasian conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan stemmed from the two nations' collective memory, the Armenians' collective memory in particular. I shall present my arguments below.

Sociocultural Model of Collective Memory: Schematic Narrative Templates and Patterns

Some of my earlier works contain a detailed description of the collective memory model,[2] therefore I shall limit myself here to a concise description of this model, without which my further analysis would be impossible. Certain ideas and categories created within the sociocultural approach are indispensable for this collective memory model.[3] This approach looks at collective memory as a phenomenon shaped by all types of narratives, historical narratives in particular. Historical narratives (annals, chronicles, history textbooks, etc.) are regarded as cultural instruments employed to promote collective remembering. Certain *properties of narratives* affect the collective remembering process in a very specific way. J. Wertsch identified an abstract and generalized form of narrative as one such property, which underlies numerous narratives and which he describes as the "schematic narrative template."[4] According to him, they differ from one cultural setting to another, require special reflection to be identified, and are used to mold stories about key historic events,

[2] See: R.R. Garagozov, "Collective Memory and the Russian 'Schematic Narrative Template'," *Journal of Russian and East European Psychology*, Vol. 40, No. 5, 2002, pp. 55-89; R.R. Garagozov, *Metamorfozy kollectivnoi pamiati v Rossii i na Tsentral'nom Kavkaze*, Nurlan Publishers, Baku, 2005; R. Garagozov, "Collective Memory and Memory Politics in the Central Caucasian Countries," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 6 (36), 2005, pp. 51-60.

[3] See: J.V. Wertsch, *Voices of Collective Remembering,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002.

[4] Ibid., p. 62.

even in cases when historical events do not fit certain templates. By way of illustration, the author uses the specifically Russian schematic narrative template, which he describes as "*triumph over alien (external) forces*."[5]

My studies[6] showed that the templates were a product of interaction of many conditions and circumstances—political, religious, sociocultural, historical, and even psychological. The state and the Church, which largely control history-writing and the teaching of history, have a special role to play in the process of production, preservation, and reproduction of such templates. Being implanted in the mass consciousness through various forms of cultural and historical socialization, these templates may create a certain collective experience structure—*the collective memory pattern*—by which I mean a group's tenacious and structuralized ideas about its past, the actions and motivations of its heroes, and the deeds of aliens. The pattern may blend with other sides of collective experience or even become "explicated in individual and group behavior," to borrow an expression from Kroeber and Kluckhohn.[7]

Its ability to blend with other sides of collective experience explains the narrative template's amazing tenacity: it has the ability to reproduce itself under new conditions and in new generations which managed to escape the traditional historical brainwashing programs. This explains why the patterns are inevitably present in group identities.

Samuel Huntington based his poly-civilizational paradigm, which largely explained the conflicts in the world today by cultural and civilizational factors, on this type of cultural pattern.[8] This thesis attracted a lot of critical comments; some of his critics said in particular that he had failed to analyze whether the culture was prepared to resort to conflict, violence, or aggressive behavior.[9] The collective memory theory I intend to develop here will help us to readjust Huntington's thesis and counter this criticism using the following arguments. Even if we leave aside the thesis that some cultures are intrinsically more aggressive than others, collective memory still dwells on old grievances, anger, and hatred to be used, in specific circumstances, by political elites to start a conflict or a war. We can say that this collective memory model operates according to a principle that is the opposite to Freud's model of individual memory, which suppresses negative emotions and recollections of negative and traumatic events. Collective memory, on the contrary, cherished the memory of past insults and tragedies. This stems from my version of collective memory: it relies on the traditions of medieval narratives that registered tragic events disrupting the normal course of life, such as wars, invasions, famine, etc. Indeed, what could the chronicler describe amid peace and general prosperity? This explains the very specific ideas about the past and the very specific forms of collective memory.

The above suggests several hypotheses. First, ethnic entrepreneurs and political elites can abuse collective memory patterns to start an ethnopolitical conflict. To achieve this they merely have to exploit "memory politics" to revive the old templates, which include those cultural patterns that mobilize the people and remind them of old insults, humiliations, and violence. Second, a conflict can be settled in

[5] The author offers his own idea of the elements that together form the narrative template: 1. The original situation … "the Russian people are living peacefully without threatening others" is cut short: 2. by difficulties or aggression of an external force or an agent that leads to: 3. a crisis and suffering, which: 4. are overcome by the triumph of the Russian people fighting heroically on their own" (ibidem).

[6] See: R.R. Garagozov, "Collective Memory and the Russian 'Schematic Narrative Template'."

[7] A.L. Kroeber, C. Kluckhohn, "Culture: a Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions," *Papers Peabody*, Mus., Vol. 47, No. 1, 1952, ðp. 181-198.

[8] See: S.P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order,* Touchstone Books, New York, 1996.

[9] See: D. Senghaas, *The Clash within Civilizations. Coming to Terms with Cultural Conflicts,* Routledge, London, 2002.

a final and acceptable form only if the "memory politics" has been changed radically. This will encourage a critical attitude toward historical texts and history textbooks; produce new historical narratives freed from the "hatred texts," etc.

The Karabakh Conflict: Theoretical Approach

Like any other ethnopolitical conflict, the Karabakh conflict is very complicated and highly confusing; its destructive potential, which threatens one of the world's key geopolitical regions, is huge.

It differs from many other conflicts because, under the impact of numerous factors, it has already produced a vast number of wrong ideas and erroneous interpretations. There are at least two important factors: first, shortage of objective and carefully verified information obvious at the conflict's initial stages—in the Soviet Union information was carefully dosed and even distorted by the communist authorities in the center and the republics; second, too many observers and analysts were ignorant of the region's historical and cultural specifics. The list is much longer, but this is not the main thing. After the more than 18 years that have elapsed since the beginning of the conflict (filled with historic changes: the Soviet Union's disintegration and independence of the South Caucasian states, which allowed analysts and observers to frequent the region), much about the conflict and especially its causes remains unclear and open to discussion.

A researcher of conflict situations[10] has pointed out that ethnopolitical conflicts stem from causes very different from those that need to be resolved in order to quench them. I am convinced, however, that a lasting peace in the Caucasus is impossible without a clear understanding of the causes behind the Karabakh conflict; they should be investigated, removed, or at least neutralized.

This suggests that we should go back to the conflict's initial stage, the scope and impact of which caught many unawares. It is not my intention to go into details: they are well known and described in numerous publications. I would like to dwell on one aspect only, namely, ethnopolitical mobilization[11] of the Armenians of Karabakh and Armenia. This is the key to a correct understanding of the past and present events. There are seven episodes[12] described in the press that correctly reflect the pace, scope, and dynamics of the Armenians' political mobilization:

- Episode 1 (beginning): on 13 February, 1988, several hundreds of Karabakh Armenians organized an unsanctioned political rally in Stepanakert on Lenin Square to demand "reunification of Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia (Armenian S.S.R.)."
- Episode 2: on 15 February, 1988, at a meeting of the Union of Writers of Armenia, prominent Armenian poet Silva Kaputikian supported the demands of the Karabakh Armenians.

[10] See: Ch. Kaufmann, "Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Civil Wars," in: *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict*, ed. by M.E. Brown, O.R. Cote, S.M. Lynn-Jones, and S.E. Miller, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 2000, pp. 265-304.

[11] Ethnopolitical mobilization is a process, in the course of which an ethnic group driven by collective interests becomes engrossed in political developments and organizes itself into a collective subject wielding resources adequate to political action (see: M. Esman, *Ethnic Politics,* Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, 1994, p. 28).

[12] Information is taken mainly from the book by Thomas de Waal *Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan through Peace and War*, New York University Press, 2003 and verified, as closely as possible, with other sources.

- Episode 3: on 18 February, a meeting that protested against environmental pollution was held in Erevan (according to observers political demands were camouflaged by environmental slogans).
- Episode 4: on 20 February, 30,000 attended a rally in Erevan to support the demands of the Karabakh Armenians.
- Episode 5: on 22 February, an over 100,000-strong rally in Erevan supported the Karabakh Armenians.
- Episode 6: on 23 February, a 300,000-strong rally in Erevan supported the Karabakh Armenians.
- Episode 7: on 25 February, a 700,000-strong rally in Erevan supported the Karabakh Armenians.

In less than two weeks, the Armenians' ethnopolitical mobilization in the form of ethnopolitical protest reached its peak.[13] How did the level of ethnopolitical mobilization rise to its peak in such a short time?[14] None of the relevant publications at my disposal offered a special analysis of this phenomenon, but I believe that many observers are still inclined to agree with *Pravda*, which set forth its own ideas about the Armenian rallies.[15]

Certain researchers still think that the conflict was caused either by "social, cultural, economic, or political discrimination of the Armenian minority of Nagorno-Karabakh by the Azeri majority," "ancient hatred" between the Armenians and the Azeri, "incompatible ethnic or religious identities," or a combination of these factors.[16]

S. Cornell (whose desire to find a theoretical formula for the Karabakh conflict makes his work much more superior than other books on the same subject) explains the Armenian-Azeri conflict by several factors, including the clashing "antagonistic identities" fed by "ancient hatred," support of the Armenian diaspora outside the conflict area, the absence of democratic institutions in the Soviet Union that offered no outlet for the local Armenians' dissatisfaction and complaints, etc.

Having based his study on T. Gurr's conception of ethnopolitical action, Cornell explained the Armenians' ethnopolitical mobilization, which caused the conflict, by the high level of cohesion that existed among them. No matter how high, this cannot lead to a group's social or political mobilization. His work does not elaborate on the causes of the local Armenians' dissatisfaction. He has admitted,[17] however, that there was no cruel social, economic, cultural, or even political discrimination of the Armenian minority: compared with other regions of the Soviet Union, the local Armenians were

[13] See: T.R. Gurr, *Minorities at Risk: A Global View of Ethnopolitical Conflicts,* USIP Press, Washington D.C., 1993.

[14] The meetings, especially the earlier ones, were organized by clandestine or semi-secret Armenian nationalist organizations that had been stepping up their political involvement for some time (see: Th. de Waal, op. cit.). At the same time, they were not strong enough either organizationally or administratively and had no information facilities to mobilize the people within a very short period.

[15] In an article about the Karabakh events *Pravda* wrote: "What forced tens of thousands of Armenians in Stepanakert (former name of the Karabakh capital.—*R.G.*) and Erevan to pour into the streets? Tens of thousands of Armenians took to the streets of Stepanakert not only because they wanted to unify with Armenia. They were pushed into the streets by the inadequacies of Karabakh's socioeconomic development and infringements on their national and other rights" ("Emotsii i razum. O sobytiakh v Nagornom Karabakhe i vokrug nego," *Pravda,* 21 March, 1988).

[16] See: S.E. Cornell, *Conflict Theory and the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: Guidelines for a Political Solution?* Triton Publishers, Stockholm, 1997.

[17] Ibidem.

well-off and enjoyed cultural-political autonomy. We can assert that the conflict was not caused by "ancient hatred:" Armenians and Azeris have much in common in the cultural sphere; until the end of the 19th century they lived peacefully side by side.

What was behind the conflict then, if socioeconomic factors and cruel discrimination have been ruled out? Was it the "hand of Moscow?" As distinct from former Yugoslavia, the communist rulers of which in Belgrade fanned ethnic hatred, the central Government in Moscow can hardly be accused of similar policies in the corresponding period. These considerations have left the cause of the intensive ethnopolitical mobilization of the Karabakh Armenians in the shadows. We are still confronted with the question: "What forced tens of thousands of Armenians in Stepanakert and Erevan to pour into the streets?"

Thomas de Waal was one of the first to point to the inadequacy of the above approaches to the interpretation of the Karabakh conflict and, instead, to attract attention to such aspects as the conflicting sides' different historical ideas about their past, official propaganda of hatred, myths, etc. The author has pointed to the following factors: This conflict was inevitable to a much greater extent than any other conflict in Yugoslavia or the Soviet Union: it was deeply rooted in the inner structure of the two sides' relationships in the communist system's last years. Four elements—different national versions of history, a debatable frontier, a shaky security system, and lack of dialog between the sides—chipped away at the foundation of these relations. Unrest caused the cracks to spread into a yawning abyss between Armenia and Azerbaijan. So far the problem's novelty and its deep-cutting nature have made it impossible to construct a mechanism to deal with it.[18]

In his *Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan through Peace and War,* de Waal wrote by way of explanation: "Uncomfortable as it is for many Western observers to acknowledge, the Nagorny Karabakh conflict makes sense only if we acknowledge that *hundreds of thousands of Armenians and Azerbaijanis were driven to act by passionately held ideas about history, identity, and rights* (italics mine.—*R.G.*). That the vast mass of these ideas was dangerous and delusory does not make them any less sincerely felt... The ideas expanded inside the ideological vacuum created by the end of the Soviet Union and were given fresh oxygen by warfare. The darkest of these convictions, the 'hate narratives,' have taken such deep root that unless they are addressed, nothing can change in Armenia and Azerbaijan."[19]

His conclusion about the great role the conflicting historical ideas, or even myths, played in the conflict's origins is significant. The author has limited himself to a general conclusion, but has chosen the right road. Three things, however, can be disputed.

- First, he has virtually ignored the much vaster context of Turkic-Armenian relations (for example, the causes of the Armenian-Azeri conflicts early in the 20th century), without which the fierceness of the present conflict cannot be explained.[20]
- Second, "bad stories" abound in tales about the past of many peoples, yet they do not start wars. It seems that conflicts are started by very special "bad stories" and by specific conditions that should be identified.
- Third, the "hate narratives" de Waal mentioned in his book date to a much earlier period than the last years of the Soviet Union, as the author seems to believe. In fact, they had existed long before the Soviet Union or the Armenian and Azerbaijanian

[18] See: Th. de Waal, "Konflikt vokrug Nagornogo Karabakha: istoki, dinamika i rasprostranennye zabluzhdenia," available at [URL http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/nagorny-karabakh/russian/index.php] 14 August, 2006.

[19] Th. de Waal, *Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan through Peace and War*, p. 272.

[20] This context is presented in detail in J. MacCarthy, C. MacCarthy, *Turks & Armenians. A Manual of the Armenian Question.* Committee on Education. Assembly of Turkish American Association. Washington D.C., 1989.

Union Republics came into being. I shall demonstrate below that the "hate narratives" continue the old Armenian historiographic tradition that repeatedly reproduces the specifically Armenian narrative template rooted in the Middle Ages.

Armenian Narrative Template: The "Loyal People Living among Enemies and Tortured by Them"

I have already demonstrated[21] that the Armenian historiographic tradition has been developing the narrative schematic template of "*loyal people living among enemies and tortured by them*." It consists of the following key components:

1. *The original situation*: the Armenian people are living in glorious and valiant times cut short by enemy intrigues that result in
2. enemy attacks,
3. the Armenians suffering a great deal,
4. the fact that if they remain loyal to their faith, they overcome the enemies, if they retreat from their religion they are defeated.

This template is not the only one typical of the Armenian historical narrative; there are also so-called "hate narratives" relating to those who followed other confessions and belonged to other cultures explained by the desire of the Armenian Church as the main institution responsible for history-writing and preserving the texts to secure its influence on the minds and hearts of the people and even increase it.[22]

Between the late18th and early 20th centuries, this template was actively planted in the Armenians' collective memory through mass publications of the Armenian history books church schools used to teach history. As time went on, this template, which had already blended with different sides of collective experience, developed into a *pattern* of the Armenians' collective memory, which greatly affected collective behavior, ideas about the world, and the nation's way of thinking. Later, in the 19th century, which can be described as a secular "age of nationalism," Armenian intellectuals deemed it necessary to readjust the Armenian schematic narrative template to place it on a nationalist, rather than religious, basis. They succeeded in replacing the "Armenian faith" with the "Armenian people" or "nation;" in this way, the nationalist-minded Armenian intelligentsia modified the religious ideological formula *"the fate of the Armenians depended on their loyalty to their faith"* to what sounded like a national formula, but remained as religious as ever: "*the fate of the Armenians depended on their loyalty to their people*."

In other words, the Armenian schematic narrative template created by the Armenian Church and transformed by the Armenian nationalists to serve their own political purposes and ambitions emphasizes the traumatic experience of the past and orientates all layers of Armenian culture, collective memory included, toward a very specific perception of "us" and "them." The results can be traced in

[21] See: R.R. Garagozov, *Metamorfozy kollektivnoy pamiati v Rossii i na Tsentral'nom Kavkaze*.
[22] Ibidem.

the Armenians' very specific psychic organization that bears traces of a "besieged mentality" and awareness of themselves as an "island of civilized Christian 'Europeans' amid a hostile sea of untamed Asian Muslims."[23]

The Armenians' tragedy that took place in Ottoman Turkey in 1915 added a very specific content to the already existing Armenian template: "the Christian Armenians surrounded by Turkic Muslims and tortured by them."

Collective Memory Patterns and Ethnopolitical Manifestations: The Karabakh Conflict

I am convinced that the specific pattern of the Armenian collective memory was the main factor in the Karabakh conflict. For want of space, I shall limit myself to the most important arguments.

"Loyal people living among enemies and tortured by them" is the collective memory pattern and one of the Armenian national myths presented under certain conditions. The tragic events of 1915 in Ottoman Turkey filled the main pattern with concrete images of the Turks and the Azeris, who counted as Turks, as the main enemies. This created the image of an enemy in the Armenian minds, while the Azeris, who had no such patterns in their collective memory, for a long time refused to look at the Armenians as enemies.

This pattern planted apprehension and constant fear for their future in the minds of the Armenians.[24] In their conception of strategic interactions between ethnic groups, Lake and Rothschild described this fear as "ethnic fear."[25] They write that more often than not acute ethnic conflicts are rooted in the groups' fear of their future: (a) fear of assimilation; (b) fear of physical extermination. They come to the fore during times of anarchy when the state is too weak and cause so-called dilemmas of group strategic interaction, which lead to conflicts. Ethnic fears might be created by rational (choice in ambiguous situations) as well as irrational (political myths and emotions) factors. In our case, ethnic fears fanned by increasing anarchy and weakness of central power stem from the specific features of the Armenians' collective memory and the pattern described above.

We can surmise that when triggered this pattern can produce "ethnic fears" among the Armenians by creating narratives multiplied by the media, ethnic entrepreneurs, leaders, etc. Since this article is limited in scope, I shall offer one, although highly typical, example of the narratives that appeared in great numbers in Armenian public debate and that contained the most typical arguments used by the Armenians at the conflict's earlier stages. I have in mind a leaflet of five chapters called *Nagorny Karabakh: Istoricheskaia spravka* (Nagorno-Karabakh. Historical Information)[26] prepared by the Academy of Sciences of the Armenian S.S.R., 45,000 copies of which were published in 1988.

---

[23] See: S.E. Cornell, op. cit.; E.M. Herzig, "Armenia and the Armenians," in: *The Nationalities Question in the Post-Soviet States,* ed. by G. Smith, Longman, London, 1996.

[24] An Armenian respondent admitted to de Waal that "Fear of being destroyed, and destroyed not as a person, not individually, but destroyed as a nation, fear of genocide, is in every Armenian" (Th. de Waal, *Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan through Peace and War*, p. 78).

[25] See: D.A. Lake & D. Rothschild, "Containing Fear: The Origins and Management of Ethnic Conflict," in: *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict,* pp. 97-131.

[26] See: *Nagorny Karabakh. Istoricheskaia spravka,* ed. by G.A. Galoian, K.S. Khudaverdian, Academy of Sciences of the Armenian S.S.R. Publishers, Erevan, 1988.

Significantly, this work, which claims to contain scientific reference information,[27] is structured in full accordance with the major components of the Armenian schematic narrative template.

- Chapter One, "Nagorno-Karabakh since Ancient Times to 1917," supplies bits and pieces of information about the area's past intended to prove that it belonged to the Armenians and Armenia from time immemorial. The story reconstructs the "glorious" past of the region populated mainly by Armenians. This fully coincides with the first component of the Armenian schematic template ("the Armenian people are living in glorious and valiant times").
- Chapter Two, "Nagorno-Karabakh between 1918 and 1923," looks at the events that ended with the creation of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region within the Azerbaijanian Republic and presents the result as an absolutely erroneous decision associated with Stalin's sinister figure (in full conformity with the second component—"enemy intrigues result in enemy attacks").
- Chapter Three, the shortest of all, "The Nagorno-Karabakh Problem in the Light of Lenin's Conception of Nations' Self-Determination," does not fit into the narrative template: it was obviously a concession to communist rhetoric and traditional ideological Marxist-Leninist formulas accepted in the society that professed the communist ideology.
- Chapter Four, "Certain Aspects of the Autonomous Region's Demographic and Socioeconomic Development," essentially reproduces the third component of the Armenian schematic narrative template ("the Armenians suffering a great deal"), set forth in the context of an economic, cultural, social, and, most important, demographic decline (the share of the Armenians was diminishing compared to the share of the Azeri population).[28]
- Chapter Five, "On the Events in Nagorno-Karabakh and Around It," fully corresponds to the last element of the Armenian narrative template ("if they remain loyal to their faith they overcome the enemies, if they retreat from their religion they are defeated"). The chapter says that the Armenian rallies in Karabakh and Armenia were neither spontaneous, nor "inspired from outside." They reflected the nation's desire to remedy the injustice. The chapter points to the Armenians' (local and those living in other countries) cohesion in the face of the hardships that befell them and their readiness to continue fighting.

The work draped the Armenian narrative template in more or less academic garb as befits an academic publication; many other narratives of the same period are much less refined and inflexible when following the template.[29]

The narratives that reproduced the specifically Armenian schematic template undoubtedly revived the pattern of the Armenians' collective memory ("loyal people living among the Turks and tortured by them") accompanied by ethnic fears.

It was this revival of the Armenian pattern that stirred up tremendous force, which within a very short period brought about ethnopolitical mobilization of the Armenian people. De Waal wrote: "Af-

[27] I have not set myself the task of discussing whether the arguments are correct or erroneous. I shall limit myself to saying that since it was written to justify the claims of one side on Nagorno-Karabakh, it, as any other work of the same sort, is one-sided, tendentious, and selective when it comes to the information offered and the interpretation of events.

[28] The only table found in the work is called "Size and National Composition of the Autonomous Region's Population," in: *Nagorny Karabakh. Istoricheskaia spravka,* p. 47.

[29] A relevant example is the book by Armenian journalist Z. Balaian *Ochag* published in 1987 in Erevan that reminded the Armenians about "their enemies, Turks"; the same applies to 10,000 leaflets distributed on 12-13 February, 1988, on the eve of the rallies in Stepanakert (see: Th. de Waal, *Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan through Peace and War*).

ter the protests in Karabakh, Soviet Armenia rose up in a series of vast street demonstrations. Armenia was one of the most homogeneous and self-confident republics in the U.S.S.R., yet no one, including the leaders of the demonstrations themselves, anticipated what energy they would release. It seemed that the Nagorny Karabakh issue had the capacity to touch a deep nerve inside Armenians. Explaining how Karabakh could suddenly bring hundreds of thousands of people onto the streets, the political scientist Alik Iskandarian uses the term 'frozen potential.' 'The Karabakh factor was frozen, but it needed absolutely nothing to bring it to the surface,' he says. Even those who knew almost nothing about the sociopolitical situation in Karabakh itself felt that they could identify with the cause of Armenians encircled by 'Turks' (a word that in the Armenian vernacular applies equally to Turks and Azerbaijanis)."[30] To a certain extent, the Armenians' imagined fears served as a powerful catalyst for political mobilization.

The above collective memory model offers a much better explanation of the phenomenon of the Armenians' political mobilization and of the Karabakh conflict. As such, it may suggest many ways to settle it.

Some Conclusions about How to Resolve the Conflict

The above analysis has made it possible for the author to outline a set of potential political initiatives which could lead to peace in the region. Since collective memory has been identified as an important factor, all efforts at settling the conflict should be concentrated on "memory politics"[31] and "identity politics"[32] carried out in Azerbaijan and Armenia. Both sides are concentrating on historical myths, something that interferes with the peace efforts. We should create a new history which, as distinct from the current historical narrations, should not only abide by the principles of the nations' development, but could also reconcile them. The local political elites should abandon the habit of reviving the old patterns and "order" new narratives capable of introducing new interpretations designed to quench animosity on both sides. The idea of a new history will obviously arouse no enthusiasm on either side; those wishing to resolve the conflict by force will probably oppose this idea. The weak democratic institutions and the absence of truly independent academic structures, universities, and the press in both countries interfere with radical readjustment of the currently pursued memory politics. The international community, which wants a settlement, should elaborate a program of action designed to change the current memory politics obvious on both sides. It would be useful to compare history textbooks and identify misinterpreted or erroneous facts, crudely nationalist interpretations, obvious biases, etc. Since no one can claim perfect knowledge of the truth, we cannot impose on the sides versions of their histories selected by others. We can, however, demand that the sides take part in an international discussion of their histories, because only a free exchange of opinions can help them arrive at common ideas. We can demand that the states present their history textbooks for schools to inde-

[30] See: Th. de Waal, *Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan through Peace and War*, p. 22.

[31] J.R. Gillis, "Memory & Identity. The History of Relationship," in: *Commemorations: the Politics of National Identity,* ed. by J.R. Gillis, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1994, pp. 3-24.

[32] *Identity Politics and Women: Cultural Reassertions and Feminisms in International Perspective*, ed. by V.M. Moghadam, Westview Press, Boulder, 1994; E.E. Sampson, "Identity Politics. Challenges to Psychology's Understanding," *American Psychologist,* Vol. 48, No. 12, 1993, pp. 1219-1230.

pendent reviewers abroad and publish reviews at home.[33] Similar programs realized in Western Europe in the wake of World War II played an important role in educating new generations of the German, French, and other European nations, who in this way delivered themselves from the burden of the prejudice and grudges of their recent bloody past.[34] The peoples of Azerbaijan and Armenia, who also suffered in the war, should and can, with international assistance, open new prospects for the conflict's peaceful settlement.

[33] See: S. Van Evera, "Hypotheses on Nationalism and War," in: *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict*, pp. 26-60.
[34] See: E.H. Dance, *History the Betrayer: A Study in Bias,* Hutchinson, London, 1960.