

Liberated Karabakh

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Can the Two Nations Reconcile?

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The answer to the question “can the two nations can reconcile?” is obviously in the affirmative. Equally obvious is that the pace, scale, and scope of this ultimately affirmative answer depends on the transformation of a number of conditions and approaches by the two communities and their respective leaders. To start with, it should be noted that the historical record contains lengthy periods of genuinely peaceful coexistence between Armenians and Azerbaijanis. And overall, any tension that is borne out of nationalism or “ancient hatreds” is largely socially constructed and thus subject to change. Although the scholarly literature on ethnic civil wars is not uniform on the root causes of ethnic conflict, a considerable amount of it puts emphasis on the role of elites in the instigation of war, tension, or peace between groups.¹ Thus, according to this view, hatred at the societal level is not born or given by nature; it is socially constructed by the forerunners of the nation and, in that regard, elites play a large role in not only directing such hatred or tension in dangerous directions, but also in its very generation—and, of course, in its termination. If such a theoretical approach to ethnic conflict is accepted, then any ethnic tension can be deconstructed and reconstructed—the process being subject to the severity of the previous level of violence, and both the pragmatism of leaders and their relevant political positions (and strengths) within the particular political system in which they operate and the society to which they belong. Last, but not least, reconciliation may start with smaller steps, leave out the big political issues to the end, and proceed.

IS RECONCILIATION POSSIBLE WITHOUT RESOLVING THE CONFLICT'S ROOT CAUSES?

It is important to note that any conflict resolution process requires addressing the grievances raised by the conflict parties at the onset of the conflict: the normalization of relations between Armenians and Azerbaijanis, especially the achievement of sustainable peace, may also be subject to such a process. In certain circumstances, such a process (along with the issue of the commitment of the conflict parties to the agreed peace) is guaranteed by third parties like great powers or interstate organizations.

However, the key role is still played by the conflict parties themselves, and when a genuine intention is absent, then no third party can make a peace treaty work in anything resembling a sustainable manner.² On such occasions, peace prevails between the conflict parties only so long as the third party is present and fails as soon as it withdraws. It is therefore important that the conflict parties genuinely accept, see no alternative to, and express their practical desire for peace. When this context is absent, then the peace will simply be a replication of a model: the peace will be, for all intents and purposes, all text and no context. And for such a genuine peace to result, the conflict parties (with or without the participation of third parties) need to address the underlying grievances, usually stage-by stage: for example, first achieving a negative peace, then moving to some sort of transitional justice framework, and, finally, the achievement of a positive peace.³

In this particular case, the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict owes its causes to a number of factors. These include nationalism and the attempt to recuperate a "historic homeland," the recovery of hurt national pride (especially after the 1915 massacre, which took place in another geography and did not involve Azerbaijanis), and security concerns, which, however, became marginalized over time in favor of the aforementioned factors. Although security became an issue at a later stage of the conflict, at its onset (back in 1987) when an appeal was made by the Armenian communist authorities to the Central Committee in Moscow for the transfer of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO) and the Nakhichevan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic within Azerbaijan to the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic, the focus on the formal justification was more

on historic grounds (it should be noted that Nakhchivan, at the time of the aforementioned petition, had a very small Armenian population). This point was later reiterated by numerous Armenian politicians, including Robert Kocharyan, that the conflict over Karabakh was less about security or socio-economic grievances than the restoration of historical injustice.⁴ A key trigger was therefore the Armenian conviction that NKAO had never been Azerbaijani land and had forcibly been made a part of Azerbaijan by the Soviet authorities; and now that the Soviet Union no longer exists, this reality no longer holds, either.

IMMEDIATE CAUSES OF THE CONFLICT: IDENTITY-RELATED PERCEPTIONS

The primary cause of the outbreak of the conflict in late 1980s was thus identity-related perceptions rather than socio-economic or security-related grievances. Although there were certain grievances, most of these were actually perceptual and could be substantiated primarily in the context of identity-related perceptions. As such, Karabakh's Armenian community was unhappy about the level of the region's integration with Armenia and its political subordination to Baku.

The objective reality was different: Karabakh Armenians in fact had a lot of privileges at the time, as established by various academic studies.⁵ Although living standards in Azerbaijan were lower than those in Armenia, living standards within NKAO were higher than the rest of Azerbaijan. The appeal to transfer NKAO to the Armenian SSR in the 1980s was therefore more related to identity, less to security or socio-economic concerns. For example, every time the central authorities in Baku referred to Karabakh as Azerbaijani land, discontent in Karabakh's Armenian community would result.⁶ Therefore, although there were certain grievances within the Armenian community, it was largely other, more complex factors that had turned these into an armed ethnic conflict. In other words, the Karabakh conflict was to a large extent disputed on historic grounds, and only to a lesser extent on alleged grievances; when these last are examined in detail, it becomes clear that they were more a result of identity-related perceptions.

The bottom line is that such grievances would not have had much substance without those perceptions. As the Karabakh Armenian politician who later served as President of Armenia, Robert Kocharyan, put it: “even if it had been good in Azerbaijan, then these problems would have risen all the same. There is something more than good or bad life that people understand and that pushes those people towards independence.”⁷

It should also be noted that the unhappiness of the Karabakh Armenians about NKAO being a part of Azerbaijan was not new in 1980s; what was new, was the platform of expression. In other words, despite the decision by Moscow for Karabakh to remain within Azerbaijan in 1923, the Armenians living in Karabakh, Armenia, and the diaspora never accepted this perceived “loss.” Therefore, starting in the 1950s and in nearly every subsequent decade, there was an appeal to Moscow for the transfer of the region to the Armenian SSR. The idea that Karabakh was a part of a republic that was run by “Turks” or that the region was ruled by non-Armenians generated hardship in Armenia’s collective identity. This is partly because the massacre of Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire in 1915 had left a deep trace on Armenian collective self-consciousness, which has had implications for relations with Azerbaijan.

The inability of the Soviet Union to facilitate any direct negotiations between Armenians and Azerbaijanis regarding the airing and eventual resolution of their respective grievances towards each other, on the one hand, and the lack of politically mature leaders in both countries, on the other hand, greatly contributed to the start and escalation of the conflict. All claims had to be channeled through Moscow; communication between Armenia and Azerbaijan on the status of NKAO went through the center as well. This resulted in a unilateral interpretation of events by the authorities, intellectual elites, and societies of both republics. As Marina Kurkchyan puts it, “poor reporting and inadequate mass communication forced people to rely on hearsay, while the lack of democratic means of public debate facilitated the rapid growth of stereotypes, prejudice, narrow vision, and hostility.”⁸

Furthermore, it was during the period of political liberalization characteristic of perestroika that a favorable moment appeared for the resolution of frozen problems and for raising frozen claims. The emergence

of the conflict was therefore closely linked to liberalization; had the loosening of the center’s control over the periphery occurred in 1970s, the conflict likely would have been sparked then.⁹ The point is that the conflict was largely a result of self-perceptions and the need to correct a “historic injustice” rather than an attempt to improve socio-economic grievances in the region.

ROLE OF PERCEPTIONS

Various studies have attempted to categorize and explain the outbreak of violence between Armenians and Azerbaijanis after 70 years of basically peaceful coexistence.¹⁰ These explanations have included, but were not limited to, ancient hatreds and mass nationalism, elite entrepreneurship, reviving historic enmities in light of the collapse of the central state or empire, and nationalist narratives or promotion of a form of ultra-exclusionary self-perception by the elites. Most such studies have been complimentary to each other and offered plausible explanations to the question of why ethnic relations between Armenians and Azerbaijanis deteriorated so severely after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

One explanation that is all encompassing, perhaps, is the one that emphasizes the role of perceptions and narratives.¹¹ Self-perception played a key role in the instigation of nationalism and the formation of an enemy image. For example, on the Armenian side, one could observe the rise of a self-perception of a great nation: a cradle of Christianity that had been resented by non-Christians for centuries but that was now presented with a historic opportunity to correct this putative injustice—to take back what “belongs” to them. Thus, many Armenians had developed a self-perception of some form of victimhood.¹² The self-perception as a great nation and the narratives borne out of it became the basis of a nationalistic rhetoric that basically led the course of events in the conflict. That said, as mentioned elsewhere in this chapter, the elites in Armenia played a big role in defining the content and direction of the movement on Karabakh.

The self-perception of a great nation that has maintained an existence for centuries despite harshly oppressive circumstances was further strengthened by its relationship to the significant other, namely the Azerbaijanis, which were perceived to be a group of people whose

nationhood was very much brought into question by the Armenian society.¹³ Things have been further complicated by the fact that Armenian society typically equated Azerbaijanis with Turks, projecting onto the former all their negative feelings towards the latter. This association partly explains the special cruelty of the massacre of Azerbaijani civilians in Khojaly and other places, and its justification on the grounds of it constituting some sort of local revenge for the 1915 events; on the other hand, such massacres were also understood as justified on the grounds of a “who are you as an inferior tribal group to raise any claim to an historic nation?” argument. Thus, what could be observed on the Armenian side—especially during the Second Karabakh War—included a certain level of surprise about the adversary’s high level of societal sophistication as well as anger that these “illegitimate tribal people” are able to take back what should belong to the Armenian nation.

In the light of these factors, combined with a 30-year complacency resulting from its victory in the First Karabakh War and the resulting occupation, Armenia failed to develop any form of empathy towards those people that had been expelled from their homes, who had lost their loved ones and buried them in the yards of their own houses, and so on. Thus, in neither of the two societies, but especially not in Armenia—since it was the occupier and perpetrator of the injustice—was there a critical debate on trying to understand each other’s wounds and trauma. Things got worse when successive Armenian leaderships refused to apologize for Khojaly or even accept responsibility for the massacre, and even kept adding fuel to the fire by making statements that the “liberated territories” constitute only one portion of the overall territories that need to be liberated: hence, for example, the calling for commencing preparations for a “new war for new territories” in late March 2019 by Armenia’s then defense minister, David Tonoyan.¹⁴

Thus, the enmity and rivalry between the two nations continued to rise throughout the last 30 years and culminated in the Second Karabakh War. Hence the fact of Armenia’s ongoing occupation and confusing statements on Yerevan’s commitment to return the occupied regions outside the former NKAO, and various provocative statements as well as political decisions like moving the capital of the “Republic of Artsakh” (the Armenian secessionist entity encompassing the territories occupied during the First

Karabakh War) to Shusha, which exacerbated feelings of injustice and hurt pride within Azerbaijani society, and so on. Therefore, Baku’s high level of preparedness to fight and die in a campaign to regain the occupied lands coupled with an overall political and social unity in Azerbaijan during the Second Karabakh War showed that Azerbaijani society had unanimously committed itself to a war that would reverse a period characterized by severe injustice and national humiliation.

WERE THE TWO WARS AVOIDABLE?

There is no direct sequence between the emergence of an ethno-territorial dispute and its evolution to a violent ethnic civil war—in other words, not every ethnic dispute ends up becoming a violent confrontation. In that regard, the question as to whether the two Karabakh Wars could have been avoided can be answered in the affirmative.

Both wars could indeed have been avoided: the conflict over Karabakh might have moved to a political context and might have been soothed overall. So, why did these processes fail to happen, and instead two tragic wars were fought that resulted in a large number of deaths?

The First Karabakh War was largely the result of increased nationalistic sentiment in Armenia that had emerged in the perestroika period, compounded by the presence of political immaturity in both countries. As indicated above, calls for the unification of Karabakh with Armenia had been present in Armenia’s political discourse in the past but had become latent until activated with the loosening of the nationalities question in the final years of the Soviet Union. That said, the Karabakh movement in Armenia could have evolved into a more peaceful and inclusive form of nationalism—had mature political elites been present on the scene and in power. In other words, as Erik Melander indicates, the violent phase of the conflict was rather the result of certain social processes, and in that regard conflict should be considered coincidental rather than inevitable.¹⁵ For example, in June 1991, immediately after an operation by Azerbaijani and Soviet police forces to disarm Armenian armed groups, a high level delegation of Armenian leaders from NKAO travelled to Baku from Khankendi (then still called Stepanakert) and agreed on a higher level of

autonomy for the territory as a solution. However, upon their return, the chief of the NKAO communist party was shot dead, and all the peace plans dissipated.¹⁶ Thus, the presence of firm and pragmatic leadership on both sides in the early 1990s could have resulted in a more pragmatic rather than an exclusively nationalistic agenda in Armenia, and the First Karabakh War could have been avoided, in this way saving over 20,000 lives.

The Second Karabakh War could also have been avoided. Indeed, Azerbaijan's president had made many attempts to achieve a mutually-acceptable agreement through peaceful means (negotiations). There is no doubt that Azerbaijan's ruling elite (and Azerbaijani society in general) was pushed to war by Armenia's intransigence in the peace process, which had become structural (as opposed to substantive) in the past few years. The OSCE Minsk Group-led peace process had reached an impasse; there were various calls within Armenian political and social circles that even the occupied regions outside the former NKAO should not be returned; there was no firm commitment by Yerevan to return even the Kalbajar and Lachin districts, which had been heavily populated by ethnic-Azerbaijanis prior to the First Karabakh War and heavily settled by ethnic-Armenians in its wake. Moreover, numerous statements had been made by senior Armenian politicians that had undermined the genuine commitment of Armenia to the peace process. A series of provocative statements and decisions (such as the one that moved the capital of the Karabakh Armenian occupation authority to Shusha, a city widely considered to be the cradle of Azerbaijani culture) added fuel to the fire, very much disturbed the pride of the Azerbaijani people, and demonstrated a lack of empathy towards Azerbaijanis. Taken together, such moves led to the outbreak of a full-scale war in Karabakh for the second time—a war that again produced thousands of losses for both sides. Thus, the Second Karabakh War could have been avoided had Armenia truly given its consent to the Madrid Principles in the years preceding the onset of the war: had it agreed to withdraw from all the occupied regions outside the former NKAO. To be clear: the key issue at stake in the context of the Minsk Group-led negotiations was Armenia's willingness to unilaterally withdraw from the occupied regions outside the former NKAO. Here it is important to underline the original thinking of Armenian decisionmakers at the time of the First Karabakh War: the occupation of the regions surrounding

the former NKAO was treated as a security buffer and was understood to be a bargaining chip in the peace process that would revolve around the status of the former NKAO. By the onset of the Second Karabakh War, the Armenian perception of the value of these surrounding regions had changed: they had become a key knot in the conflict.

The reasons why Armenia came to demonstrate a certain level of intransigence in the peace process and defying all international calls to agree to the Madrid Principles lie in a number of factors that are explored briefly below.

First, an unnecessarily high level of self-satisfaction could be observed in Armenia, premised on the conviction that Azerbaijan will not wage a war to recover its territories, or that it will be prevented from doing so by the "international community" (notwithstanding the fact that international law was clearly on Azerbaijan's side), or, even if Baku chose war and this was not prevented, Armenia would defeat Azerbaijan on the battlefield. Second, there was a firm belief in Armenian decision-making circles that Russia, Yerevan's key ally, would not leave it to fight alone in the event of a war breaking out. Such considerations strengthened nationalistic sentiments in Armenian society, which in turn contributed to its intransigence in the peace process. One could also observe in Armenia some form of a failure to properly assess geopolitical realities, which led to miscalculations of both its own and Azerbaijan's military potential. A cursory examination of various postwar videos featuring, *inter alia*, the parents of Armenian soldiers killed in action demonstrates at least some level of confusion in certain swathes of the Armenian population that began to ask the question of whether the outcome of the Second Karabakh War could have been achieved peacefully instead of through war, with its high casualty figures.¹⁷

OVERCOMING THE EMOTIONAL LEVEL: THE TOUGHEST CHALLENGE

We can now return to addressing more directly the question as to whether the two nations can reconcile. Again, the basic answer is yes, but we need immediately to add that reconciliation is a long-term process that will require pragmatic steps at every stage. There are currently both opportunities and

challenges for this on the table: the biggest opportunity is predicated on the fact that the military phase of the conflict is over, that a new large-scale military phase is unlikely (especially as long as the Russian peacekeepers are present in the region), and that Russia is supportive of reconciliation between the two nations and the opening of communication. Moscow is also, seemingly, interested in the establishment of long-term peace in the region insofar as such a peace contains a firm Russian element, such as a continued military presence. That being said, there are still many challenges. First and foremost, the wounds are very fresh on both sides. There is also anger over what has happened in the past thirty years (the high level of atrocities for which, by and large, no one has been held accountable): a lot of effort has been spent on maintaining the justification for a high level of animus and hatred.

Thus, it would be naive to expect any of this to change within a short period of time. Moreover, there is still resistance in Armenian society to accept the new reality on the ground and there are various calls for a military consolidation for the sake of a campaign of revanchism—although some of these calls may be largely for domestic political purposes. The nationalistic sentiment within Armenian society and on the political scene is further exacerbated by calls in Azerbaijan for the right to return to Zangezur, which is the strip of land (and an ancestral home for many Azerbaijanis) that separates Nakhchivan from the rest of Azerbaijan. This stands despite numerous statements by President Ilham Aliyev that Azerbaijan has no territorial claims to any part of Armenia, irrespective of historic population patterns. However, the latter issue is not the major cause of the resistance towards the restoration of Azerbaijan's territorial sovereignty over the formerly occupied regions: the real problem lies in the Armenian resistance to the “loss” of Karabakh and Yerevan's acceptance of the status-quo.

WHAT IS THE WAY FORWARD?

CAN THE TWO COEXIST DESPITE EVERYTHING?

What then is the way forward? Is the conflict really settled, as President Aliyev indicates? Is there room for peacebuilding?

The phase of the conflict that would pave the way for the parties to build a long-term peace was commonly understood to be predicated on one that would free the occupied regions outside the former NKAO; the Second Karabakh War produced such an outcome, which means that this phase is now over. So is the military phase of the conflict—and the renewal of military hostilities is unlikely so long as Russian peacekeepers remain present in the region. Moreover, as mentioned above, Russia also seems to be interested in stabilizing the situation in the region and taking gradual steps towards building a genuine peace. These are important factors that could contribute to peacebuilding between the two countries. In addition, it is envisaged that, at some point, the opening of transport communication between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and between Armenia and Turkey, will happen, which would further contribute to peace in the region.

A comprehensive peace treaty will need to be prepared between Armenia and Azerbaijan. In such a document, Yerevan and Baku would need to recognize each other's territorial sovereignty, include security guarantees for Karabakh Armenians, resolve current issues such as the provision of all landmine maps, provide a mechanism to release Armenian detainees that are not entitled to POW status, and so on. Accomplishing this is obviously easier said than done, especially taking into consideration that the wounds are still fresh. Moreover, the intransigence demonstrated by Armenia in the peace process prior to the start of the Second Karabakh War and the fact that what could have been achieved peacefully has now been achieved by human losses has changed Azerbaijan's position in the peace process. Baku no longer offers territorial autonomy to the Karabakh Armenians: the only form of autonomy that could now be offered would be cultural: extending territorial autonomy to Karabakh Armenians after all this loss of life and the now-visible destruction of the formerly occupied lands would in no way be acceptable to Azerbaijani society. Taking into account all of these sensitivities, a peace treaty could explicitly address the issue of delimitation of borders, the detainees, and the landmine maps whilst only vaguely address political issues related to Karabakh Armenians. Such an approach—which envisages the restoration of communication and trust, the onset of political dialogue and the restoration of economic relations—would, over time, melt down or relativize the question of the former NKAO's status. Such a way forward has also repeatedly been emphasized by the Russian foreign minister. Thus, this envisages starting the

reconciliation process by smaller steps, such as opening airspace for flights, cooperating on reducing pollution in trans-border rivers, the provision of landmine maps and the release of Armenian detainees in Azerbaijan, the opening of Armenian communication with Azerbaijan and Turkey, and then move to a discussion of moderate issues such as working out a scheme for mutual relations between Karabakh Armenians and Azerbaijanis, and finally settling all political issues between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

It bears repeating: the reconciliation process is going to be lengthy, for a number of reasons. This is so because, firstly, the conflict parties are still distanced from each other; they are also far from being able to engage in genuine dialogue, be it at a political level or a civil society level. This is partly understandable because the enemy image of the other has not faded away. Armenia and the Karabakh Armenians still have a hard time coming to terms with their defeat in the Second Karabakh War and everything that goes along with that, especially at the psychological level. It should be noted that the former NKAO was perceived by the Armenian community, especially its diaspora, as a step towards the recovery of the borders of Greater Armenia that existed 2,500 years ago, as a revindication of the injustice done to their ancient nation by Muslims, and as a form of compensation for the 1915 tragedy that took place in another geography. Now all that is gone and has been replaced by the difficult task of having to accept the new reality and, in addition, in one form or another apologize for the destruction of the past thirty years.

This is expected by Azerbaijan, now that all the destruction that Armenia wrought in the former NKAO and the surrounding regions has become visible. Untold numbers of Azerbaijanis cannot find the graves or the remains of their deceased loved ones in different parts of Karabakh, they have seen their homes, cemeteries, and mosques completely destroyed, and so on. Added to these wounds are the fresh memories of the fallen soldiers, the large majority of which were very young people—this of course applies to both sides; and the Armenians also seem to expect some sort of apology from Azerbaijan. Thus, both at the political and societal level, there are structural factors that would seem to impede a rapid process of reconciliation.

It should also be noted that political dialogue is nearly completely absent: Armenia still does not seem to be prepared to accept the finality of the changes that have taken place over the past year: Yerevan remains puzzled about how

to go about accepting them. There are still various military and political maneuvers and accusations going on, all of which suggests that Armenia does not seem to be reconciled with the restoration of Azerbaijan's sovereignty over Karabakh. On the other hand, messages sent by Azerbaijan on the potential return of Azerbaijani people to Zangezur have been manipulated by certain political forces within Armenia, although President Aliyev has made it repeatedly clear that Azerbaijan has no territorial claims on this region or any other part of Armenia.

All this may point to a genuine security dilemma scenario, whereby Azerbaijan sends such and similar messages with the intention of pushing Armenia to sign a peace treaty and accelerate the opening of transport communication, as per the 10 November 2020 tripartite statement; whereas Armenia may be raising issues and voicing accusations against Azerbaijan (such as the destruction of churches built during the occupation) to secure some form of status for the Karabakh Armenians or with the hope of strengthening its claim to the areas of the former NKAO within the Russian peacekeeping zone. What is quite clear is that Azerbaijan is fully prepared to start the lengthy process of reconciliation, despite the injustice done to the country and its people through the thirty years of occupation and the loss of life in both wars. Such a pragmatic approach seems to prevail within the Azerbaijani ruling elite, which may succeed in bringing about reciprocity from the Armenian side.

NOTES

1. Paul Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Theory and Comparison* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1991); Valery Philipp Gagnon "Ethnic Nationalism and International Conflict: The Case of Serbia," *International Security* 19, no. 3 (1995), 130-166; John Mueller, "The Banality of 'Ethnic' War," *International Security* 25, no. 1 (2000), 42-70.
2. Kyle Beardsley, *The Mediation Dilemma*, (Ithaka: Cornell University Press, 2011), 1-18.
3. Johan Galtung, "Violence, Peace and Peace Research," *Journal of Peace Research* 6, no.3 (1969), 167-191.
4. Thomas De Waal, *Black Garden* (New York: New York University Press, 2003), 139-140.

5. Anatol Yamskov, "Ethnic Conflict in the Transcaucasus: The Case of Mountainous-Karabakh," *Theory and Society* 20, no.5 (1991), 631-660.
6. Kavus Abushov, "Refining the Line of Distinction between Ethnic Conflict and Security Dilemma: Towards a Theory of Identity Driven Ethnic Conflict," *Civil Wars* 21, no 3 (2019), 329-361.
7. De Waal, *Black Garden*, 139-140.
8. Marina Kurkchyan, "The Karabakh Conflict" in Edmund Herzig and Marina Kurkchyan, eds., *The Armenians: Past and Present in the Making of National Identity*, (London: Routledge Curzon, 2005), 153
9. Perestroika activated various frozen and suppressed self-determination campaigns disguised under Soviet nationalities policies. Interestingly, it was only during the period of perestroika that the long-established ethno-federal institutional structure came into full practice. See Carol Skalnik Leff, "Democratization and Disintegration in Multinational States: The Breakup of the Communist Federations," *World Politics* 51, no.2 (January 1999), 210. For Gorbachev's reforms vis-à-vis the nationalities, see Richard Sakwa, *Gorbachev and his Reforms, 1985-1990* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1991).
10. Barry Posen, "The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict," *Survival* 35, no. 1 (1993), 27-47; Stuart Kaufman, *Modern Hatred: The Symbolic Politics of Ethnic War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001); Erik Melander, "The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict Revisited: Was the War Inevitable?," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 3, no 2 (Spring 2001), 48-75.
11. See Kaufmann, *Modern Hatred*.
12. Ibid.
13. The idea that Azerbaijanis are either a young nation or a Soviet phenomenon, and as such should not have the right to claim anything, has consistently been entertained in Armenian political and social discourse. For example, Armenian activist Zori Balayan stated in an interview that "we can understand the terms Georgia, Russia, Armenia, but not Azerbaijan. By using such a term, we confirm the existence of such country," as quoted in De Waal, *Black Garden*, 150.
14. "David Tonoyan. 'Territories for Security' format will no longer exist" (translated from Armenian), Aravot.am, March 30, 2019, <https://www.aravot.am/2019/03/30/1032523>.
15. See Melander, "The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict Revisited."
16. De Waal, *Black Garden*, 118.
17. Daisy Walsh and Gabriel Chaim, "Nagorno-Karabakh: We Have Lost an Entire Generation." *BBC News*, November 15, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-europe-54942864>.