Armenia 3.0 Understanding 20th Century

Part 6

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Video material

Gevorg Ter-Gabrielyan (GTG) - So, hi! We are continuing our series of Armenia 3.0, and there are few methodological messages that I want to deliver first. One is that when we were talking about the past, about the 20th century, we used several concepts, and somehow mapped out in a conceptual way how to understand the 20th century of Armenia's history.

In that picture what was quite visible was **the voids, the fact that a lot of things have not been studied, a lot of things, there is no unified discourse about a lot of things that happened.**

Now, we are moving to the last part of the Soviet history, to the movement and to the years of independence. And here we are facing the same issue again, that (concerning) a lot of stuff there are big voids. A lot has not been studied, has not been collected, it's not known, it's not shared.

So, the other (issue), also connected with the methodological considerations, is that I, when I say something, or you in the audience, when you say something, we are all individuals and we do not present anything which is set in stone. We will present our impressions, our knowledge, bits and pieces, our thinking results. And again and again, one of the most important elements in all that story is that there are too many voids, there are a lot of voids, things that have not been studied, have not been made public, and have not been understood. And this is what we are facing now.

And partly this is the reason for this broadcast too: at least to determine some of the voids. And this is like social history, so we are using concepts from social, critical science, and going forward, along the timeline.

And one very, very rough methodological trick that I used was that, when going forward along the timeline, I was using this approach of plus to minus, meaning that positive events versus negative events, obviously, in my opinion.

Events, which can be considered important, valuable for Armenia's development, survival, future; and things which contributed to the problems, crises, etc.

Now, starting from perestroika, which started a bit later than Michail Gorbachov came to power, in 1985 he came to power. Major difference between that time and the previous time, the first noticeable difference was the fact that the Secretary General of the Communist Party was speaking, was speaking on TV[1] as an independent free person.

That was something unknown for the last 20 years. I hadn't seen anything like that since the year when I was born, because until then Secretary Generals Brezhnev, Andropov, Chernenko, they were all very old individuals who were like robots, so they would never speak really. They would read something in the best case.

There were a lot of jokes about the fact that they are like these, you know, old personalities, who cannot really govern, who are just like figureheads of the Soviet system. And suddenly you see someone on TV, who is speaking, and saying different things, and wants to do things, and wants to change things. That was a very big change. Because depending on the behavior of the first person, everybody else around him also changed their behavior. So if during Brezhnev's times his cronies were also behaving like him (and they were not that old), during the Gorbachov's times they all started gradually to speak, to express opinions. So this, like, you know, coming back to life of the political situation in the Soviet Union was one of the most important visible elements.

In Armenia nothing much changed. If in Russia, particularly in Moscow, in the center of the Soviet Union, you had already had examples of free speech, 'glasnost', so to speak, such as 'Огонёк' newspaper, or 'Московские Новости', 'Moscow News' newspaper; in Armenia no glasnost was really visible for a very long time. There were very few stories at the political level connected with perestroika. It seemed that everything was the same in 1985-86, up to 1987, almost to the second half of 1987. It seemed that everything was the same.

One example of a story that happened during these years, it was 86 probably, that I remember well, was that the secretary of Communist party of Hrazdan district (or whatever it was called), Hayk Kotanjyan rebelled against the leader of the Communist Party with criticism: that we need perestroika, we need change. That is important, because it was a kind of a strange occurrence in the situation that everything was seem to be frozen. And also important because Hayk Kotanjyan afterwards became, and he is now, a military officer, he is a General, and he established the research institute with the Ministry of Defense, he is an advisor to the Government, to the Minister of Defense, and he is also our good friend, and he cooperates with us in some of our projects.

The other thing that was noticeable was that when stuff started to be published in Russian, a lot of stuff started to be returned, stuff which was left on shelves by the writers who couldn't publish their stuff before; or who were killed, prosecuted; or who published only abroad. In Russia, in

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[1] XXVII Party Congress (1986)
   Projector of Perestroika (1986)

the Russian language that stuff started to return gradually. It was Solzhenitsyn's works and many other, many, many other works telling the story about Gulag, about all that stuff. In Armenia very little such stuff existed. People were looking into the shelves. Maybe some of the writers, who have done it, and very few stuff could be scratched out. Which is interesting. Some stuff which was scratched out was, of course, some of Gurgen Mahari's works, some of the, most of Ler Kamsar's work, Zabel Yesayan, who was still delayed, until now she is not fully published in Armenia. But very little of the Soviet writers who were prosecuted, etc., very little stories about Gulag, like one example was Gurgen Mahari's work. Why is that? And by the way Solzhenitsyn in his huge, huge 'The Gulag Archipelago' has only once or twice mentioned the name of Armenians, though Armenians, as we know, suffered in huge amounts during Gulag. Why is that?

Apparently they were, I don't know obviously why, but Armenians were adaptable people, so they tried not to produce something which is not going to be published, that's the first reason. Secondly, they were not so much in the criticism of the Soviet Union as much as in the rebuilding of the national, nationalist discourse. So this wasn't going contrary, fully contrary to the Soviet ideology. And as I said in the previous sessions[2] there was this contradiction that, on one hand, the nationalist discourse was prohibited, on the other hand, it was encouraged somehow.

So, when one wants to understand the Armenian history of the 20th century, not only in the years of independence nothing much has been studied and published, but also there was nothing left on the shelves to be published after the Soviet Union collapsed. However, gradually and very slowly, of course, already in the independence times, already today, the Diaspora writers' works started to be published in Armenia, or started to be accessible to Armenians living in Armenia, which wasn't the case before.

So, again, there was a huge amount of prohibited texts, texts which were not known in the Soviet Armenia, which came to Armenia. I've already said about that. But that was not something which was produced and prohibited in the Soviet times. Though we know some examples of such prohibitions, but again there was not so much substantial kind of flow of texts, as different from the all-Soviet context.

And now we move to 1988. And the most important thing about 1988 is that… I'll write it here (in the middle), it has just happened, it's neither good, nor bad, because it is also not studied well. What happened was that, what, what kind of studies do we have? We can mention Thomas De Wall's book 'Black Garden', which gives some kind of a timeline, quite thorough timeline of the events, but from the perspective of the Karabakh conflict. Also, similarly, Tatul Hakobyan's

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[2] Armenia 3.0 Understanding Armenia. 20th Century. Part 4 (Jam Session), Pages 9-14

[work](#)[3], which, again, is a timeline, and the official level of the discourse, and the documents, but again relating to the Karabakh conflict.

The 1988 was important not only because the Karabakh war started, but because the movement for Armenia's independence started. And because the foundations for the independence were being established. And there is not much from that perspective on the timeline. **There is no any kind of, you know, accessible summary or comprehensive account of the sequence of events which were happening, not only related to the Karabakh conflict escalation, but also, intertwined with that, related to the thinking of the Karabakh movement, of the leaders of the Karabakh movement, who then became the [Armenian Pan-National Movement;](#) and coming to power; and then setting up the independent Armenia structures, approaches, culture, traditions**, etc..

This is all not well studied. And you cannot find easily, or, at least, I don't know, but I think you don't know either, such a well-formed account. There can be some bits and pieces, something published, in Armenia there was this journal 'AIM' [Armenian International Magazine](#), some bits and pieces are published there, some in other places. You have the textbooks, students' textbooks, which are giving a very, very sketchy and sometimes wrongly colored account of the events. So, it is a big void, 1988 is a big void.

Of course gradually the Karabakh war was escalating. What does it mean? How did I perceive that situation? But before something about the movement, the movement of 1988: again, it is studied form the perspective of carnival culture, rituals, ethnology, from the perspective of the science of ethnology, particularly in the works of [Levon Abrahamyan](#) and his school of thought, but again, seriously, from many other perspectives, it has not been studied.

The problem is that we have most of the people who were there and had the leadership roles or just lived through these times available. So it could help to interview them even now. It may be late, later on. But interviews, which really would show this situation reevaluated, are not being taken from the leaders of the Karabakh movement in sufficient amounts. And when something is being done usually it is either from the perspective of struggle for power which started to take place there, or from the perspective of the Karabakh war again.

So, the one thing about this movement, which was, you know, these big rallies (some claim that up to one million people came to the Opera Square some point in time), which is not studied, is the attitude of those who disagreed with the rallies. For instance, I personally. It wasn't that I disagreed, I didn't have enough educational position, or political position, or intention to disagree. **But I was raised in humanistic paradigm which means that nationalism seems strange to me and not very well explainable**. And secondly, when I started to go to these rallies, I felt immediately something strange. Because **it is like in a theater, hundreds of thousands or tens of thousands of people are standing day and night, not working, and only**

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[3] [What happened in Khojaly: an excerpt from a book by Tatul Hakobyan "Karabakh diary: green and black", 2017](#)

waiting for a news to come from the scene. And on the scene you have some leaders. You don't know who decided that they are leaders, they themselves decided that. And they are trying to guide you and lead you, and you are wasting your lifetime standing there.

That was my opinion. I couldn't stand for so long. **I wasn't a participant, I was a part of the mass, of the body of the public, the body of the mass who was asked to be there for the leaders of the movement to legitimize their claim. And the claim was coming in the name of the entire nation. And it had quite some grounds, because almost the big part of the nation was just present there.**

But for me it was something quite strange: to waste your time standing there, not working. And, of course, the strikes started at that time. So you had the process of dismantling of the Soviet system in Armenia and in general. Of course, this was happening in parallel in different ways, in different other parts of the Soviet Union. This dismantling was happening in many different ways.

One way was the blockade which was established by Azerbaijan or strengthened, was strengthened. The other way was the gradual collapse of the Soviet Union, which means that the factories had to stop. Because they couldn't receive the raw material from the Soviet Union, and they couldn't send the product back to the Soviet Union. **The system, the infrastructural system of the Soviet Union was collapsing, but this was reinforced and accompanied by the blockade. So you don't know what was first: the infrastructural system collapsing because of the economic collapse or the blockade not allowing the infrastructural system to exist anymore. It was coming all together, in an entangled way. The third way was: people are not going to work for many weeks; schools stopped; people are not going to work. Obviously the system started to stop, and it came to a halt.**

So, when standing there in the opera, because I was living next to this big rally, I was thinking: **what are they thinking about, how will the society continue on functioning if nobody is working?** Of course, some people were thinking along the similar lines, so some people tried to continue on working, some professions, like people in medical profession, or especially emergency services, etc. But essentially this was the, you know, the halt of the entire society, and of the entire government structure. And it continued on for months and months. And afterward strikes were interrupted or rallies were interrupted. People were back to work. And there was nothing left to do.

But we have to look deeper into this situation, because the reason there was nothing left to do… you could see the traces of that already before the rallies. Because of the Soviet system, which I was explaining in [the previous times](#)[4], when people were receiving more or less assured salary, very low salary, but there was no really any check on what they do in many, many different offices. And in parallel they were living their own lives via, I don't know, reading, studying,

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[4] [Armenia 3.0 Understanding Armenia. 20th Century. Part 5 (Jam Session), Pages 9-10](#)

teaching or, you know, just having fun, or wasting time, sitting somewhere and drinking coffee; and making money via, for instance, selling goods brought via their relatives from abroad, or something like that.

So, **this double reality, dual reality that we talked about, was already undermining the effectiveness of the work in the Soviet Union, because work was not based on the market**. So the salary was kind of, you know, a given to somebody. And if you are a nice boss you won't fire those who don't do anything, because you don't like the Soviet Union anyway. And, so, all this was bringing about the inefficiency of the entire Soviet system. And this inefficiency was another contributing factor to the collapse.

And this inefficiency during the rallies' times became full inefficiency. If in earlier times at least some work could be done, and had to be done, during the rally times it became a situation that there was no reason to do any work. Moreover, there were a lot of reasons not to do any work. Because of the Karabakh movement in itself; the escalation of the conflict of Karabakh; the blockade, which created a lot of difficulties for people just to, you know, to take a shower or to have normal food at home; and the earthquake. All that together were creating this emotional situation of the impossibility to work.

And, for instance, in the university where I was working at the time, many teachers, I myself as well, were thinking what are we teaching, why are we teaching that. Okay, I was teaching something which kind of had a practical application and, in fact, the number of my students increased (as I said, it was Turkish language), but what could be taught? Not only by those who were teaching [scientific communism], which became deleted. No more need in that. But also even those who were teaching the history of the Armenian nation. They were teaching based on the Soviet approaches, and now all of the programs, all of the approaches had to change.

So, and plus to that the emotional situation: some people have gone to the war. There is all the time strikes and kind of negotiations between students and teachers; and all that stuff. The Soviet Union is collapsing. So the society came to a halt in terms of its productiveness, in terms of producing something for the future. Those who were conscious about that, like my very good friend [David Hovhannisyan] and people like him, when students were going to the strike in the Opera Square, they were going there and conducting lectures and studies in the Opera Square.

So, there was quite a lot of, of course, a lot of public's, people's creativity, as well, in that time. But essentially the system came to a halt. And, as I said, these elements of creativity, these very nice elements of support, solidarity, etc., of genuine concern, and attempts to do something for the good of the situation, of the nation - on one hand that was the nice thing, nice things. But there was this kind of - "to hell with the society, to hell with the former types of life, to hell with the government system, to hell with the production system that existed"… That thing was coming, so the process of collapse evolved. This is the 1988 feeling, I mean, and it continued in 1989 and etc.

And the next thing that was very obvious, was, of course, also the constituting of the leadership group. Very interesting. For instance, again not studied very well, how did the Karabakh Committee changed? There was one group of people in Karabakh Committee, and then some of them left and others were invited in. And how did they start thinking about next stages for quite a long time? Nobody really thought in practical terms that the Soviet Union could collapse. Some people among the Karabakh Committee had that idea from the previous time, but very few. Their ideas were not shared and they weren't shared by the public. For instance, Vazgen Manukyan had this idea that national Armenia should be independent for a long period of time. And he was imprisoned at that time.

But when they came to be the leaders of the crowd, did they have a clear-cut plan or skills of leading, or skills of management? Mostly not, because this was not studied in Soviet Union at all. They had to be reactive to learn via doing, by doing; and to be tactical, rather than strategic.

And if you take the Baltic states, for instance, or the former socialist states like Poland, Lithuania and Poland, they had huge diasporas in Canada, in the northern parts of the United States, who were political scientists and specialists in governance, who started to help them to design the possible developments. Moreover that Poland, for instance, was independent state, anyway, even though under the socialist control. They started to do the design of the possible developments of the government structure, how it can be, etc.

In Armenia they didn't have that, well, because the Baltic states were independent for twenty years, until 1939-1940, and that was an enough boost for the ethnic Estonians, Latvians, Lithuanians who left and who stayed. For those who stayed, they kept the European approach to the things. They, for instance, were not that corrupt. Giving back the change was something that was almost non-existent in the entire Soviet Union. If you buy a bread and you give 50 kopek and you ask 5 kopek back, you expect 5 kopek back. It is not given to you, if you are in Armenia, Georgia, Central Asia, most of Russia, other provincial places. Only in Moscow (in was given back) and even in Moscow not always.

But in St. Petersburg and in the Baltic states every kopek was given back. So the Baltic states had that potential, thanks to the independence times, and also thanks to the fact that their diaspora had this high hopes that they were going to be independent (at some point). Because their annexation was not recognized by UN and US, etc. So it was an issue that was going to be resolved. For countries, or republics like Armenia, Georgia, Ukraine, etc., it wasn't at all the case.

So, there was no clear-cut plan on how to move to independence or whatever. And even there was this rumor that, when Levon Ter-Petrosyan was in France, because of health issues, for a while, that he was being trained there to become a leader. I don't know if it's happened or not, it's very interesting thing, there was this rumor among the population that he is taking training

there to know, when he comes back, how to lead towards independence. Yes, it was before the independence. So, this was a situation, any comments on that, anything you want to ask, add.

Robert Ghazinyan (RG) – Yes, I think when we talk about perestroika and glasnost we shall also have in mind that those two things eventually contributed to the collapse of the Soviet Union itself, because, as one author put it, I don't remember now his name, it was "If oppressive regimes start to improve, they eventually collapse". And this is what happened, in my opinion, in and with the Soviet Union when Gorbachev gave rights to republics, to people, to express their opinions and to rally. So this was the end, the beginning of the end for the Soviet Union, in my opinion. And in terms of Armenian nationalism, I would argue, as paradoxical as it can sound, that the Soviet Union contributed to the revival of the Armenian nationalism, because in the end of 80s Armenians, the majority of Armenians had very, not very good, but good living standards. And when you have good living standards, then you start to think about other things, not connected with money or not connected with your life, but connected with your, let's say, more, let's say the things that you appreciate, like freedom, like freedom of expression, and people wanted more. So, they went to the streets, they started to protest, something that can hardly be imagined now, because the conditions of life now are worse, but people don't go out and protest in this big masses as it was in the Soviet Union, in the end of the Soviet Union.

GTG – Thanks Rob. Well, on your last point, I think, a lot of reasons for this process for coming together, and the rally was also due to the lack of other means of communication. Now you have internet, you have mobile phones, etc. It was all non-existent. So if people wanted to learn what happened, what is Sumgait, what was happening, what was the leadership thinking, what Ashot Manucharyan or Vazgen Manukyan, or Levon Ter-Petrosyan were thinking, and what to do, they has to somehow come, more or less, to the place.

Moreover, it was used as a lever against the Communist party rule. So people would say, the leaders would say "stay in here, stay in the Square". And we know over the 20 years of independence or more, that a lot of rallies have taken place despite the fact that there are now all these connection means. The fact that despite all these means they still have to come is one of the defining features of Armenian democracy movements. Be that small scale or larger scale, successful or less successful, with social demands or with political demands. We can see that some of the social demands are more successful, sometimes, in some respect, than political demands.

The second thing that you were saying was this connection between nationalism and progress, let's put it like that. But this is a very complex connection of course, because in some aspects nationalism is regressive, it is looking backwards. In other aspects, in some historical circumstances, it is progressive. Because in the Soviet times Armenians had this unresolved issue, the recognition of their genocide, of their past. Because nationalism, starting from Stalinist times, the Second WW, was slightly encouraged, if well governed, by the Soviet system.

All these things that we talked about. Desire of the freedom of thought, to a very large extent, went into nationalism. And when perestroika started, indeed, the Karabakh issue came to become a gluing element for this big crowd. But it started not from the Karabakh issue, it started from other types of demand, democratic demands, ecological, environmental demands. But then nationalism became this kind of a catalyst to unite a very big crowd. Because that was the easiest common denominator. Because it was echoing, resonating with people's 'genetic memory' of the Genocide.

So Karabakh was becoming a security threat. The ethnic cleansing could be repeated when clashes started. And there was also this ethnic, **this escalation spiral, when you are doing something not knowing what will be the result. But then the adversary, or the other party, is doing something (as well), and then you move to another level of the conflict, and then to another level of the conflict, and gradually, step by step, this becomes a war.**

But, on that war, I want to say something. Because in that time when it was happening, I was feeling like it is a private war. So the nationalism ideology was also, of course, not so much shared by everybody. Especially if that means you have to pay with participation in the war. And the Soviet tradition was also quite deep in the society. So I was calling it sometimes a private war. Because it was a war which was being faced by the people in Karabakh particularly, and volunteers, before the appearance of the army, volunteers who were going there, if they wanted to, or if they had to. For instance if the soldiers from other parts in the Soviet Union, Armenian, ethnic Armenian soldiers were being sent back to Armenia to finish their service, they could be asked, at that time I don't think it was kind of enforced, they could go to Karabakh, of course, from Armenia and other places of the Soviet Union, as well as from the Diaspora, like [Monte Melkonyan](#) etc.

So, it was like a war for pleasure of those who wanted to make war. **The society was quite divided. This is also not being studied, because after the war this nationalist ideology became the only one reflected in the textbooks, produced by the media mainly, repeated as mythologies.** And today it is quite difficult to imagine.

But we know these things, because our office also encouraged some writing on that issue. And, for instance, (there were) facts that a student could go to the war as a volunteer, and when he comes back he finds that he is ousted from the university, because he didn't attend the classes. Or an employee goes to war and he comes back and he is sacked, he is out of job. These cases were quite common. **Or somebody gets weapons from elsewhere to bring to Karabakh via Armenia, and from the perspective of the Armenian Soviet law they are criminal. But from the perspective of national ideology they are heroes[5].**

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[5] Please see a very recent case with striking similarity to the past such cases (in Armenian):
http://www.1in.am/2111857.html

This contradiction is very important to understand, this divisiveness. Looking back at the, kind of, schizophrenic situation of the Soviet times, of this dual reality[6]. And it became the next stage: the schizophrenic situation during already the Karabakh war, and the last Soviet years, and the collapse of the Soviet Union, in the first years of independence.

The good example of description of how people would feel about such situations is the very famous [interview](#) that Seda Mavian, the correspondent with the French 'Nouvelles d'Armenie', took from Ruben, the oligarch, I don't want to repeat his name, his nickname here. Rouben Hayrapetyan. It's a very big interview, and it exists, I think, in Armenian, in English, to understand a lot of things, also on how did the oligarchs appear there, which we will talk about more.

But essentially this duality of the situation, where, on one hand, the Karabakh conflict was encouraging people to participate in it, to become within the nationalism, stop being independent viewers, because people were threatened there, so it was the self-defense kind of thing.

On the other hand, also, it was a way to demonstrate their muscle: people would then go there, those who just liked fighting, or being in war, etc. On the 'third hand', unfortunately, again, something which is not at all studied, it was a way of making living, because they could, there were some cases of marauding[7]. And it is also not studied, and it is denied that such a thing existed. So for me, for instance, the story with [Khojaly](#) is one story of the fact that Armenians did not behave well enough, but there were several lower scale, less known stories of some cases of marauding, and conflicts inside the soldiers' groups, fighters' groups. [And some of the memories of Monte Melkonyan can tell that story.](#) And again it is not enough. We don't have much material digged out, and it is not well studied, it is not well understood.

But this situation that the fighting was a dual kind of thing, you know… How do you justify your participation in the fighting, apart from self-defense? If you justify it with the ideology that Karabakh should become a part of Armenia, or independent, then you know that it is not going to be well accepted. I mean only very naive people, which probably they existed, could believe that it was going to be accepted by the international community.

So, there is this duality: what do you want, you want independence of Armenia, or you want independence of Armenia with independent Karabakh, or with Karabakh united with Armenia, or you want security for Karabakh? Where is the line? How do you define that security in political terms?

All these things were happening, then as today, in fact, because the thinking has not moved much more forward since those times. And do you want to become a militarized society? No wonder that so many people left, even at that time, and it was not only because of that cold and the so

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[6] [Armenia 3.0 Understanding Armenia. 20th Century. Part 3 (Jam Session), Pages 8-10](#)
[7] An impressive description of this is presented in [Mesrop Harutyunyan's novel 'Abkay' (in Armenian, 2005)](#).

called 'years of cold and darkness'. **Most of them left, because they didn't want to take part in this polarizing situation, when you have to feel that you have enemy, and you have to feel that you are going to fight this enemy with no future perspective**.

So, nationalism was, you know, at one moment it was a unifying form, helping to establish independent state, at another moment it didn't provide the future perspective, a strategic future perspective. Because the versions of the strategic future perspective that were presented by it, were like "okay, they will recognize Karabakh, it will become an independent state, others will recognize as well", or "okay, we will unite with Karabakh and they will accept it, the international community". It was very naïve, and many people could understand that it was naïve, and this feeling that you are in a national struggle against the international system, that you are so much alone...

And yesterday I was just reading somebody on Facebook, he writes that they were in a workshop where there was Pakistan, Israel and a few other countries, Ukraine, etc. And he was thinking that these are all countries which do not like Armenia as an independent state, because of the Karabakh conflict. Pakistan, for instance, does not even established diplomatic relations. And that person was conveying his feeling of today, the feeling of being alone, and the feeling of being isolated in the international community, in the international family of people.

So, it is obvious that it was self-defense, escalation, which was outside of control of any, any one side to control. We couldn't, as an Armenian side, really control the escalation of the Karabakh conflict. It is obvious that the security of Karabakh people had to be assured.

But it is also obvious that we didn't find the right perspectives on how then we see realistically the way to resolve the Karabakh conflict.

And this duality affected very strongly the thinking of that time, the future of Armenia, independent Armenian state.

Anything to add? Essentially I finished these series, but if you want to make a comment that will be proper now.

RG – Well, we just talked about the feeling that people had about Karabakh in the 90s. I realized that not much has changed in 2017, because still we have the problem of security of Armenians in Karabakh, still we have the problem of unknown future of Karabakh. So in this respect, not much has changed, and this is very worrisome, in my opinion, because it shows that not enough steps, maybe, have been taken, or enough progress have been made so far.

GTG – Yes, **but good diagnosis is the first stage in making a plan on how to get on it. So, if we do a good diagnosis, we understand that nothing much has changed, what has not changed and what was the issue, we will set up the grounds for making the next step. This**

is what hasn't been understood well enough, because of this overwhelming flaw of nationalist ideology.

You know, for many years, many people, including those who live in Karabakh, would say "the conflict is over, we are independent", when there is not much fighting on the separation line. I think the April war made someone to wake up, also in Karabakh. They said "why do you need a dialogue with Azerbaijan, it is over, it is ours, full stop". So, and there are a lot of people in the Diaspora who uncritically say "yes, Karabakh is ours". So, there was a lot of this kind of… they say even "let's get the recognition of the Genocide and then reparations from Turkey and maybe our lands back from Turkey". **All this naive and romantic nationalist discourse, which at the core has, in fact, a denial of some, not just of the fact that Armenians are not strong enough to do that, but also of the rights of other people, essentially.**

So this nationalistic discourse is immediately not healthy. It means some kind of xenophobic attitude behind. And this image of the enemy, production of the image of the enemy, indoctrination of the image of the enemy, these all are the elements of the diagnosis.

So we should understand well enough the diagnosis: without denying the need in security, in doing something about that, in turning the time in our favor, in the favor of Armenians, but without, without affecting the rights of others.

But for that a lot of work has to be done; and without diagnosis you cannot do that work. And that is the work which is essentially not being done.

Thank you! This part is over.

Transcribed by Ani Babayan

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