THE "KARABAGH-ARMENIA" THEME IN THE ICONOGRAPHY OF ARMENIAN IDENTITY
(Based on Posters and Banners from the Karabagh Movement)

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Abstract

The images and written formulas depicted on banners and posters are a vivid manifestation of national identity and tend to appear and reappear in abundant quantities in times of societal crises. In this sense, the iconography of the Karabagh Movement represents a rich and broad field of study. What is distinctive about the posters created during the Karabagh Movement is that a great majority did not simply proclaim the programmatic ideas of certain parties or political trends but rather expressed the people's concerns, moods and wishes and their interpretations of events as they unfolded. The posters and banners of the Movement manifested in varying genres and revealed diversity in their content. They were the product of both Soviet and nationalist mentality.

The theme "Karabagh-Armenia" had many different manifestations in the iconography of the Karabagh Movement, such as quotations and the creation of posters using or based on "quote thinking"; unification of Karabagh with Armenia as a solution for the Karabagh issue; the theme of Mother Armenia and child-Karabagh; "Karabagh is ours"; manifestations of solidarity with the people of Karabagh; Karabagh and Armenia as one entity.

This article aims to present and analyse those banners and posters as manifestations of national identity.

Keywords: posters and banners, iconography, Karabagh Movement, national identity, Mother Armenia.

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Introduction

The Karabagh Movement was indeed the first truly nationwide insurrection in terms of the range of mass protests that occurred in succession in various parts of the Soviet Union. With no precedent, the Movement's characteristics came into being spontaneously in a situation where powerful state machinery needed to be opposed. Parallel to this rapid succession of events, Armenian identity underwent significant changes – the demonstrators of April 1990 were vastly different from those of February 1988.

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What is distinctive about the posters created during the Karabagh Movement is that a great majority did not simply proclaim the programmatic ideas of certain parties or political trends but rather expressed the people's concerns, moods and wishes and their interpretations of events as they unfolded. The posters and banners of the Movement manifested in varying genres and revealed diversity in their content. They were the product of both Soviet and nationalist mentality. In short, they were unmediated indicators of an unfettered, popular mentality of an iconographic nature. In the years of the Karabagh Movement, posters were mediators and tools in the relationships between individuals and authorities, and between society and state, which conveyed the perspectives of the people about society, their appeals to the authorities, as well as their evaluation of the latter. The posters were addresses not only to the authorities, but also to Armenians, to the people of Armenia, to Azerbaijan, to the wider citizenry of the vast Soviet state and, ultimately, to the world. In this way, the posters can be understood as a kind of soliloquy of the people, which they hoped would develop into dialogue.

The posters created in the years of the Karabagh Movement (1988–1990) are deeply rich material for study in terms of their significant quantity (we have been able to document and collect about 1000 posters from oral and written sources); their diverse content (about twenty thematic groups have been distinguished); and insofar as they express a wide but evidently specific range of mentalities.[1] In what follows, we focus only on one of the thematic groups under the conditional title "Karabagh-Armenia".[2]

This theme broadly reflects the Movement members' understanding of their history, the idea of justice in that context, and people's right to self-determination, which fed the Movement throughout its life. Simultaneously, it is evident that, while tackling complex

1 For the discussion of the issue see: Harutyun Marutyan, *Iconography of Armenian Identity. Volume 1: The Memory of Genocide and the Karabagh Movement*, Anthropology of Memory, 2 (Yerevan: Gitutyun, 2009), 4-7.

2 For a partial discussion of the issue, see: Harutyun Marutyan, Levon Abrahamian, «Հայ ինքնության պատկերագրությունը. քննության փորձ Ղարաբաղյան շարժման ցուցապաստառների մի խմբի նյութերով» [Iconography of the Armenian Identity: Examination Attempt on the Materials of a Group of Karabagh Movement Posters]. *Hayats'q Yerevanits': Hayagitakan. Razmavarakan yev azgayin hetazotut'yunneri haykakan kentron* 4 (1997): 55-68.

social phenomena, the creators of these posters often drew on a broader dimension of human relations (such as representations of mother and offspring, solidarity, the part and the whole, etc.) and cartographic thinking (such as representations of the contours of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabagh/NKAO maps). In addition, the posters' creators tended to offer a "humanizing" perspective, allowing more intelligible and empathetic messaging.

Quotations and the Creation of Posters Using or Based on "Quote Thinking"

To confer greater legitimacy for their oral and written statements, ordinary people tend to lean on quotations from famous people of the past: referring to pieces of writing or perspectives from persons considered wise or simply to the repository of popular wisdom. Therefore, the use of quotations is neither arbitrary nor, moreover, unique to Armenians. To present and justify one's perspective using "quote thinking" is an approach that has been used since ancient times. However, during the years of Soviet power, societal life was saturated with – often obligatory – "quotation mania".

In the early years, quotations were taken from the works of Marx and Engels, and later from Lenin too. From the 1930s to the 1950s, quotes were taken mostly from Stalin's works and speeches as well as from those of leaders at lower levels. Thereafter, it was the turn of other leaders of the Communist Party and the Soviet state, including Nikita Khrushchev, Leonid Brezhnev and Mikhail Gorbachev. For seventy years, the newspaper *Pravda* served as a boundless source of quotes. In the introduction to any, more or less serious, piece of writing, it was obligatory to include quotes from at least the classics of Marxism; from the materials of the Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union; and/or from the regular plenary sessions of the Communist Party. It is possible that the publication of "aid" materials distributed in the tens of thousands had been intended to facilitate doing just that.[3]

During the years of the Karabagh Movement, the use of quotations was also recurrent, reflected not only in speeches and appeals but in posters as well. However, over the years of the Movement, quotes were used differently. For example, quotes from a text pursuing other objectives were cited to emphasize an entirely different idea, and there were several, likely deliberate, misquotations or artificial "quoting" strategies, too.[4]

In the very first days of the Karabagh Movement (20-21 February 1988), a banner appeared on the platform of the Opera Square, which quoted a sentence pronouncing

3 See for instance Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Vladimir Lenin, *Կրոնի մասին* [On Religion] (Yerevan: Hayastan, 1977); Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Vladimir Lenin, *Պրոլետարիատի դիկտատուրայի մասին* [On Dictatorship of Proletariat] (Yerevan: Hayastan, 1981); Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Vladimir Lenin, *Կանանց հարցի մասին* [On the Woman Question] (Yerevan: Hayastan, 1983); Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Vladimir Lenin, *Բարոյականության և բարոյական դաստիարակության մասին* [On Morality and Moral Education] (Yerevan: Hayastan, 1989).

4 Marutyan, *Iconography of Armenian Identity*, 69-70.

Figure 1

Karabagh, Nakhijevan and Zangezur as part of Armenia. Further, the statement was attributed to Nariman Narimanov, head of the Revolutionary Committee of Soviet Azerbaijan. The banner read: "Карабах, Нахичевань и Зангезур были и остаются неотделимой частью Армении. Н. Нариманов. 2 декабря 1920, газ. Бакинский рабочий" [Karabagh, Nakhijevan and Zangezur have been and remain an integral part of Armenia: N. Narimanov, 2 December 1920, *Bakinskiy Rabochiy* newspaper] (Fig. 1).[5]

How, where, and with what precise phrasing was this statement made? This question has repeatedly been examined in Armenian and Azerbaijani historiography.[6] The

5 Taking into account the fact that the volume of the journal article is relatively limited, as well as the fact that the content of about six dozen photos is presented to some extent in the text of the article, the authors of the article decided to avoid making detailed explanations of the photographs and limit themselves only to the authors of the photos or, if they are not known, to the available sources noting. The author of the pictures no. 3-11, 13, 15, 16, 21-23, 31, 35-39, 42-44, 50, 51, 54, 55, 57 is Harutyun Marutyan, no. 2, 29, 49 – Levon Abrahamian, no. 32-34, 40 – Mayis Vardanyan, no. 14, 19, 20, 46 – Lyova Hambardzumyan, no. 24, 25, 45 – Valeri Petrosyan, no. 26, 27 – Rouben Mangasaryan, no. 52 – Vram Hakobyan. Pictures no. 1, 12, and 41 are stored in the "Artsakhian Movement" repository of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute (section 1, folder 103, pictures no. 1003, 1020, 1048), no. 17, 18 – are from the collection of Gagik Safaryan (section 1, folder 401, pictures no. 3107, 3097). Picture no. 30 is from the collection of Armen Shavarshi Sargsyan, pictures no. 47, 48, and 53 are taken from the Facebook page of the "Mayr Hayastan" museum, the sources for pictures no. 28 and 56 are mentioned in the appropriate references.

6 For the sourceological basis of the issue see: *К истории образования Нагорно-Карабахской автономной области Азербайджанской ССР. 1918-1925: Документы и материалы* [On the History of the Formation of the Nagorno-Karabagh Autonomous Region of the Azerbaijani SSR. 1918-1925: Documents and Materials], ed. D. P. Guliev (Baku: Azerneshr, 1989), 44-47; *Нагорный Карабах в 1918-1923 гг.: Сборник документов и*

issue has multiple historiographical nuances. In what follows, we briefly consider the matter of wording alone. The challenge is that this text does not exist in this precise formulation. According to Azerbaijani sources, upon learning about the establishment of Soviet power in Armenia, Azerbaijani leadership convened a session of the Central Committee (Politburo and Orgburo) of the Azerbaijani Communist (Bolshevik) party on 29 November 1920. The decision passed made mention of the transfer of Zangezur to Armenia and the provision of the right to self-determination to the mountainous part of Karabagh.[7] However, the issue of Nakhijevan was not discussed. On 30 November, the head of the Revolutionary Committee of Azerbaijan, Narimanov, and People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs, Huseynov, sent a telegram to the Revolutionary Committee of Armenia, the content of which differed from that of the decision adopted at the previous day's session. The telegram read, "From today, disputes over the borders between Armenia and Azerbaijan are declared liquidated. Nagorno-Karabagh, Zangezur and Nakhijevan are considered as part of the Armenian Socialist Republic" (published in the newspaper "Коммунист" [Communist] issued on 7 December 1920 in Yerevan).[8] In Narimanov's speech at the Ceremonial Session of the Baku Council on 1 December, on the occasion of the Sovietization of Armenia, it was specifically stated: "The working peasantry of Nagorno-Karabagh is granted the full right to self-determination. All military operations within Zangezur are being suspended and troops of Soviet Azerbaijan are being withdrawn" (published in the newspaper "Коммунист" [Communist] of Baku on 2 December 1920. There is no mention of Nakhijevan in the speech).[9] Furthermore, in the official Declaration of the Azerbaijani Revolutionary Committee, the foregoing statement was formulated as follows: "[…] Territories of the Zangezur and Nakhijevan districts [uyezd] are an integral part of Soviet Armenia, and the working peasantry of Nagorno-Karabagh is granted the full right to self-determination. All military operations within Zangezur are being suspended, and troops of Soviet Azerbaijan are being withdrawn" (published in Baku's *Communist* newspaper

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материалов [Nagorno-Karabagh in 1918-1923: Collection of Documents and Materials], ed. V. A. Mikaelyan (Yerevan: National Academy of Sciences, 1992), 600-608; *Нагорный Карабах в международном праве и мировой политике. Документы и комментарии* [Nagorno-Karabagh in International Law and World Politics. Documents and Commentary], Volume I, ed. Yuri Barsegov (Moscow: Krug, 2008), 599 (Document no. 630). For the discussion of the issue see: *Нагорный Карабах. Историческая справка* [Nagorno-Karabagh. Historical Reference], eds. G. A. Galoyan, K. S. Khudaverdyan (Yerevan: Academy of Sciences of ArmSSR, 1988), 23-30; Jamil Hasanly. "Вопрос о Нагорном Карабахе на Кавказском бюро ЦК РКП(б) в 1920-1923 годах" [The Question of Nagorno-Karabagh on the Caucasian Buro of the Central Committee of Russian Communist (Bolshevik) Party], *Kavkaz i globalizats'iya* 5, no. 1-2 (2011): 139-144.

7 *On the History of the Formation of the Nagorno-Karabagh*, 44.

8 "С сегодняшнего дня объявляются ликвидированными споры о границах между Арменией и Азербайджаном. Нагорный Карабах, Зангезур и Нахичеван считаются частью Армянской Социалистической Республики." *Nagorno-Karabagh in 1918-1923*, 602 (Document no. 420); *Nagorno-Karabagh in International Law*, 601 (Document no. 632).

9 "[…] трудовому крестьянству Нагорного Карабаха предоставляется полное право самоопределения, все военные действия в пределах Зангезура приостанавливаются, а войска Советского Азербайджана выводятся." *Nagorno-Karabagh in 1918-1923*, 604 (Document no. 423).

on 2 December 1920).[10] Our findings reveal the following inconsistencies between the sources and the quotation on the banner hung at Opera Square, (a) the words "have been and remain" [были и остаются] do not exist in the official texts, (b) the text of the telegram is signed by two people, not only Narimanov, and (c) in the archive collections for the place of publication dated 2 December, only the *Communist* newspaper of Baku is mentioned. Further, a publication on this issue in the *Bakinskiy Rabochiy* newspaper is dated 3 December 1920.

Consistent with the theme of "Quote Thinking", a banner, displayed at a rally near the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences of Armenia on 7 May 1988, boasted the words: "Карабахский вопрос есть вопрос чести советских республик. Орджоникидзе" [The Karabagh issue is a point of honour for Soviet republics. Ordzhonikidze]. The statement draws on the words of Sergo (Gregory) Ordzhonikidze in June 1921, when the issue of territorial belonging of Nagorno-Karabagh was decided. At the time, Ordzhonikidze was the Chairman of the Caucasian Bureau of the Russian Communist (Bolshevik) Party's (hereinafter, RC(b)P) Central Committee, created in April of 1920 (with Sergey Kirov as his deputy). It should be noted that the Caucasian Bureau was not a regional body governing the party organizations of the Caucasus region, but a regional responsible body of the RC(b)P) centre. The Bureau's activity was directed organizationally by the RC(b)P Central Committee and personally by the Chairman of Soviet Russia's Council of People's Commissars, the actual leader of the country – Vladimir Lenin.

The statement attributed to Ordjonikidze was made on 27 June 1921 in a telephone (teletype) conversation between the Chairman of the Azerbaijani Council of People's Commissars, Narimanov, and the People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, Huseynov. The person substituting Narimanov (named Shirvani) informed Huseynov that, on that very day, the senior leadership of Azerbaijan (the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party), had discussed the issue of Karabagh and, in fact, had decided to contest her transfer to Armenia, expressing their readiness to resign if the transfer were to proceed. Huseynov was likely responsible for informing Ordzhonikidze about this decision and was sure that the news "would be received very coldly". It was on June 26, that Ordzhonikidze had explicitly said to Huseynov: "The Karabagh issue is a point of honour for Soviet republics, and it should be resolved precisely in this sense; so that this is the last time, i.e. in the form that I relayed to you yesterday."[11] It should be noted that on the same day (June 26), in a telegram to Narimanov, Ordzhonikidze and Kirov had shared their opinion: "for the sake of resolving all disagreements/frictions once and

10 "[…] территории Зангезурского и Нахичеванского уездов являются нераздельной частью Советской Армении, а трудовому крестьянству Нагорного Карабаха предоставляется полное право самоопределиться, все военные действия в пределах Зангезура приостанавливаются, а войска Советского Азербайджана выводятся." *Нагорный Карабах в 1918-1923 гг.*, 601 (Document no. 419); *Nagorno-Karabagh in 1918-1923*, 599 (Document no. 630).

11 "[…] карабахский вопрос есть вопрос чести советских республик и его нужно решить именно в этом смысле, чтобы это было в последний раз, то есть в том виде, как я Вам передал вчера." *Nagorno-Karabagh in 1918-1923*, 647 (Document no. 447).

for all and establishing truly amicable relations over the solution of the issue of Nagorno-Karabagh, it is necessary to be guided by the following principle: not a single Armenian village should be annexed to Azerbaijan, just as not a single Azerbaijani village should be annexed to Armenia."[12] This approach clearly met with the opposition of the Political and Organizational Bureaus of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan.[13]

Why did banners of this specific content appear during the rallies at the Opera Square platform in February and near the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences in May, addressing hundreds of thousands of people? Evidently, the then leadership of the Karabagh Movement, Igor Muradyan in particular, identified the possibility of persuading the top leadership of the USSR to address the issue by a volitional decision, given that, in their time, the Communist leaders of Soviet Azerbaijan seemed to have made a fair, volitional decision about the transfer of Karabagh to Armenia. Therefore, they wanted to resolve the matter by employing the same "volitional" decision approach. However, in reality, the leaders of Soviet Azerbaijan had never used the wording "были и остаются" [have been and are] referring to the disputed territories in 1920 (that is to say, the Azerbaijani communist leaders were somewhat dishonest; they were very far from the ideas of historical justice and, especially, the proclaimed "proletarian internationalism"). Moreover, as evidenced by the documents, they were doing everything to hinder the radical resolution of the matter.

Note that, in the initial phase of the Karabagh Movement, the concept of "self-determination of peoples" was not necessarily pronounced, it was only referenced in several banners. In the decision passed by the extraordinary session of the Council of People's Deputies 20th convocation of NKAO on 20 February 1988,[14] for whatever reason (perhaps, assuming that it would be more purposeful to present the matter as a mere territorial issue under Article 78 of the USSR Constitution; such issues existed throughout the history of the USSR and were resolved by the volitional decisions of central authorities[15]), no reference was made to the right of peoples to self-determination.[16] However, the importance

12 "[…] в интересах окончательного разрешения всех трений и установления истинно дружественных отношений при решении вопроса о Нагорном Карабахе необходимо руководствоваться таким принципом: ни одно армянское село не должно быть присоединено к Азербайджану, равно как ни одно мусульманское село нельзя присоединять к Армении." *Nagorno-Karabagh in 1918-1923*, 645 (Document no. 445).

13 Ibid., 645 (Document no. 446).

14 The session has resolved: "Considering the wishes of the workers of NKAO, to ask the Supreme Council of the Azerbaijani SSR and the Supreme Council of the Armenian SSR to demonstrate a sense of deep understanding of the aspirations of the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabagh and resolve the question of transferring NKAO from the Azerbaijani SSR to the Armenian SSR, at the same time to intercede with the Supreme Council of the USSR to reach a positive resolution on the issue of transferring the region from the Azerbaijani SSR to the Armenian SSR." *Sovetakan Gharabagh* (Stepanakert), 21 February 1988, N 43.

15 For a comprehensive analysis of the perceptions of the Karabagh problem as a subject matter of legal-political, historical rights or land claims and the right to self-determination see Ashot Sargsyan, *Ղարաբաղյան շարժման պատմություն 1988-1989* [History of the Karabagh Movement 1988-1989] (Yerevan: Antares, 2018), 96-101.

16 There has been no mention of it also in the decision of the Plenum of the Nagorno-Karabagh Regional Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan dated 17 March 1988, or in the appeals of 119 deputies at

of this concept gradually began to come to the fore in the Armenian reality, which also provided an opportunity to rely on Article 70 of the USSR Constitution.[17] Thus, the matter was reframed from being within the domain of the "willingness or unwillingness" of the country's leadership to a constitutional domain.

It should also be noted that, before the decision on 20 February 1988, the actions of Nagorno-Karabagh Armenians (such as the posting of petitions with tens of thousands of signatures to the central authorities of the country, the departure of three delegations to Moscow, and the decisions of Executive Committees of Regional Councils of NKAO) were manifestations of the exercise of the right to self-determination by their very nature, albeit without a direct reference to this fundamental principle.[18]

Clearly, the highest authority among those who have spoken on the matter of Karabagh's status should be Lenin. However, since Lenin's attitude to this issue remains

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various levels dated 20 May 1988 to the Presidency of Azerbaijani, USSR and Armenian Supreme Councils and in those of the Bureau of the Regional Committee of Nagorno-Karabagh and the Executive Committee of the region dated 27 May 1988 to the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of the USSR. And only in the decision adopted by the extraordinary session of the Council of People's Deputies 12th convocation of NKAO on June 21 the importance of the "Leninist principle of the self-determination of peoples" was emphasized twice. See for details Vahan Arutyunyan, События в Нагорном Карабахе: Хроника. Часть I: Февраль 1988-январь 1989 [Events in Nagorno-Karabagh: Chronicle, Part 1: February 1988 – January 1989] (Yerevan, 1990), 60-61, 85-101.

17 It can be assumed that many of the participants in the rallies would have had the awareness that Nagorno-Karabagh Armenians have achieved self-determination; however, this awareness did not entail the linking of the continuation of the constitutional struggle with the promotion and implementation of the constitutional principle of the "self-determination of peoples". For the first time, the issue was voiced from such a perspective on 19 March 1988 in a leaflet of the organizational committee of the Karabagh Movement (renamed Armenian Committee of Karabagh Movement since the end of May 1988) under the title of "Our Political Principles" (author: Vazgen Manukyan). Point 2 of this eight-point document read: "The goal of the Movement is to achieve the satisfaction of the legitimate demand of the population of NKAO based on the principle of the self-determination of peoples and guided by the Soviet Constitution." See Vazgen Manukyan, *Հայկական երազանքը գոյապահման փակուղում: Ելույթների և հոդվածների ժողովածու* [Armenian Dream in the Impasse of Survival. Collection of Speeches and Articles] (Yerevan: V.I.V. Aysor yev Vaghe, 2002), 5. Later the statement of the "self-determination of peoples" found its place in Levon Ter-Petrossyan's speech about the proposed decisions to the Supreme Council of the Armenian SSR during the rally on 7 July 1988, in the decision adopted during the rally on 12 June ("respect the right of all Armenian people to national self-determination and reunite NKAO with the Armenian SSR"), then also in the draft decision to be adopted by the Supreme Council of the Armenian SSR published in the republican press on 14 June. See *ИБ* (Информационный бюллетень) [Information Bulletin] N 3 (1988): 7 (samizdat); *Հայության պայքարը ԼՂԻՄ-ը Խորհրդային Հայաստանի հետ միավորելու համար: Փաստաթղթերի և նյութերի ժողովածու* [The Struggle of the Armenians to Unite NKAO with Soviet Armenia. Collection of Documents and Materials], comps. Karen Khachatryan, Hrant Abrahamyan (Yerevan: n.p., 2011), 164; Ashot Sargsyan, *History of the Karabagh Movement 1988-1989*, 125-129.

18 Harutyun Marutyan, «Սահմանադրական պայքարը Հայաստանի անկախացման ճանապարհին. Սահմանադրության մասին պատկերացումները, ընկալումները, գնահատականները Ղարաբաղյան շարժման տարիներին», *Սահմանադրական մշակույթի արժեբանական ակունքները հայ ժողովրդի հազարամյա պետականության ծալքերում* ["Constitutional Struggle on the Way to Armenia's Independence: Perceptions, Apprehensions, and Assessments of the Constitution during the Years of the Karabagh Movement" in *The Axiological Roots of Constitutional Culture in the Millennial Annals of the Armenian People*], eds. Gagik Harutyunyan, Artak Movsisyan, Ter Ararat qahana Movsisyan (Etchmiadzin: Publishing House of Holy See of Etchmiadzin, 2020), 651.

Figure 2

unknown to this day, it has been elicited from Lenin's expressions of a more general nature. To be specific, Lenin had written only about the "self-determination of peoples" without any specific explanations, which, by the way, is the precise reason for the diametrically opposed interpretations of Lenin's national policy by the Armenians and Azerbaijanis. Nonetheless, a poster referencing Lenin's attitude on the issue was circulated in the first half of June 1988 when, at the request of the people, it was decided to convene an extraordinary session of the Supreme Council of the Armenian SSR on the issue of NKAO "becoming a part of the Armenian SSR". The poster featured the contour maps of the Armenian SSR and NKAO and claimed that «*Վերամիավորումը լիովին համապատասխանում է լենինյան ազգային քաղաքականությանը*» [Reunification fully complies with Lenin's national policy] (Fig. 2). What is important in the poster's statement is that activists of the Movement were indeed able to find a specific quote, which they believed related directly to the Karabagh issue as a manifestation of the right to self-determination (Fig. 3, 4). "*Право* на самоопределение... означает решение вопроса именно *не* центральным, парламентом, а парламентом, сеймом, референдумом *отделяющегося меньшинства*. Когда Норвегия отделялась в 1905 г. от Швеции, решала это *одна* Норвегия, которая вдвое меньше Швеции. В. И. Ленин, том 24, стр. 227" ["*The right* to self-determination... means resolving the matter by *not* the central parliament, but by the parliament, seim, a referendum of the *secessionist minority*. When

Figure 3

Norway separated (1905) from Sweden, the matter was resolved *solely* by Norway (which is twice as small as Sweden). V.I. Lenin, vol. 27, page 227"].[19]

19 The quote is from Lenin's «О национальной программе РСДРП» [On National Program of RSDRP [Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party] article published in December of 1913. In the following two sentences of this article the abovementioned idea is reinforced as follows: "The right to self-determination"…means *such* a democratic system where not only would democracy exist in general, but especially there *could not be* an *n o n-d e m o c r a t i c* solution to the issue of secession. …The proletariat demands such a democracy that *will exclude* forceful retention of one of the nations within the borders of the state. For this reason, "in order not to violate the right to self-determination" we have to "vote *not* for secession,"… but vote to leave the solution of this issue to the separatist region." See Vladimir Lenin, "О национальной программе РСДРП" в кн.: В. И. Ленин, *Полное собрание сочинений*, *т. 24* [On Nationalities Question of RSDRP in V. I. Lenin, *Full composition of writings, vol. 24*] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoj literaturi, 1973), 227. The part quoted in the text of the article was also used by the Chairman of the Writers' Union of Armenia, deputy of the Supreme Council

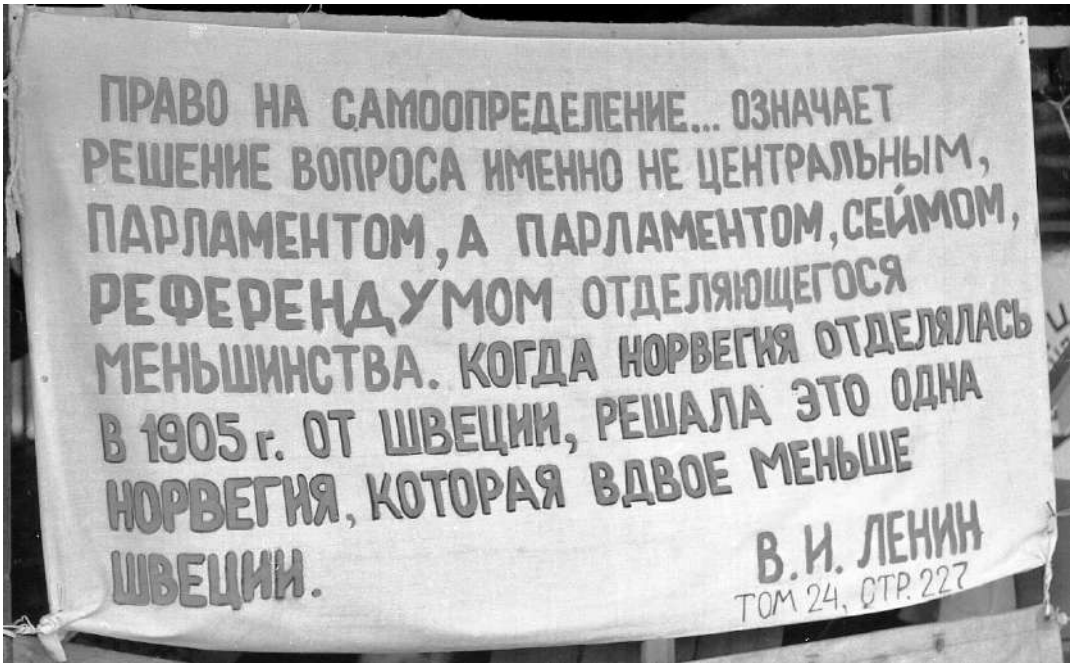

Figure 4

A compelling "Leninist saying" on the Karabagh issue was similarly developed during the last official Soviet demonstration on 7 November 1988. A large portrait of Lenin on a vehicle featuring the word "Academia" was complemented by a banner reading "Карабах – Армения: Один народ – одна республика" [Karabagh – Armenia: One nation – one republic] (Fig. 5). In those days, V. I. Lenin remained the most significant authority. In fact, in the background of Fig. 5, an official banner displays the cliché-formula "Long live Lenin's great work." Displaying the statement declaring Karabagh and Armenia as one nation combined was coming to be the "author" of that expression gaining even more value by being carried by the researchers of the Academy of Sciences of Armenia.

At the same demonstration on 7 November 1988, Lenin's authority was invoked similarly when a teenager climbed atop the vehicle bearing Lenin's image and his famous statement "Есть такая партия!"[20] [There is such a party!], unfurling the tricolour flag and thereby suggesting a new interpretation of the Leninist formula.[21]

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of USSR Vardges Petrosyan in his 18 July 1988 speech at the session of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the USSR. See *Արցախ. Нагорный Карабах. Информационные материалы. Заседание Президиума Верховного Совета СССР от 18.07.88* [Artsakh. Nagorno-Karabagh. Informational Materials. The Session of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of 18.07.88] (Vararakn-Yerevan, 1988), 11 (samizdat). The issue in a wider context is discussed in the following publication: Harutyun Marutyan, "Constitutional Struggle on the Way to Armenia's Independence," 643-680.

20 See for details: https://dic.academic.ru/dic.nsf/ruwiki/915695, accessed 08.11.2022.

21 Levon Abrahamian, Harutyun Marutyan, «Քաղաքական ելույթների պատկերագրական լեզվի շուրջ (Ղարաբաղյան շարժման ցուցապաստառների օրինակով)» *Հայ արվեստին ձվիրված հանրապետա-*

Figure 5

Other examples of "quote thinking" are evident on a banner reading «*Մեր գործը արդար է. Մենք կհաղթե՛նք*» [Our cause is just. We will win] from February 1988,[22] a poster featuring the contour maps of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabagh and the words «*Հավերժ միասին: Մեր գործն արդար է*» [Forever together. Our cause is just] from 18 November 1988 (Fig. 6, 7) and a banner reading «*Առաջ, հանուն արդար գործի*» [Onwards, for the just cause]. Although the writing on the poster bears no attribution, is not difficult to identify its source. The first part of the "quote" is a variation of the infamous front-office stock phrase signed into law, through which Soviet ideologues asserted the inviolability of friendship between different peoples. For instance, between Russians and Ukrainians (which stretches as far back as the 17th century under the military leadership of Bogdan Khmelnytsky) or between Russians and Bulgarians. And, of course, between all the peoples and nations of the USSR; as the lyrics of the USSR anthem suggest, "сплотила навеки Великая Русь" ("are forever united by Great Russia"). The second part of the "quote" (alongside the text of the February banner) is also well-known to many people from the history of the USSR. They are the final words of address to the nation by the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR, Vyacheslav Molotov, on 22 June 1941, at 12 noon, on the occasion of the

կան VIII գիտական կոնֆերանս: Ձեկուցումների թեզիսներ ["On Iconographic Language of Political Speeches (Based on the Examples of the Posters of Karabagh Movement)" in *The 8th Republican Scientific Conference Dedicated to Armenian Art. Executive Summaries of Papers*], eds. G. Gyodakyan et al. (Yerevan: Gitutyun, 1997), 5-6.

22 See «Մեր Մայր Հայաստանն ենք ուզում» [We Want our Mother Armenia]: Rallies in Stepanakert and Yerevan, 25-26.02.1988, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WLT-Q3vT4aQ, 12.36 minutes, accessed 08.11.2022.

Figure 6

invasion of Nazi Germany: "Наше дело правое, враг будет разбит, победа будет за нами!" ["Our cause is just. The enemy shall be defeated. Victory will be ours."]. A slightly modified version was repeated by Joseph Stalin on 3 July 1941. This appeal was repeated frequently, both in the press and verbally, throughout the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945). As the Internet suggests, variations of individual sentences of the three-part appeal have been evident as early as the First World War and the Russian Civil War. The phrase "Наше дело правое" ["Our cause is just"] was even used by Vladimir Lenin in one of his works in 1903. This statement has become a catchphrase used at various levels of propaganda since at least the 1940s, including on the medals of victory in the Great

Figure 7

Figure 8

Figure 9

Figure 10

Patriotic War: “Наше дело правое. Мы победили” [Our cause is just. We won]. The use of this wording in the posters and banners of the Karabagh Movement is thereby aligned with a righteous, patriotic war against fascist invaders.

The final part of the “Stalinist” phrase, “мы победим” [we will win], can also be interpreted beyond the surface, revealing deeper implications. Although the slogan in question – on the poster “Forever together. Our cause is just” is written in Armenian, it is certainly a product of Russian/Soviet thinking. As a result, this strategy to advocate for a righteous solution to the Karabagh issue relies on the “quotation” of cliché statements made by the very individual – Joseph Stalin – who, according to Armenian historiography, has played a fatal role in settling the Karabagh issue. The phrase “Our cause is just” has maintained no less relevance since the 1990s, but the Armenian translation is typically used in another context – the word “just” in Armenian also means “unfaked” or “pure”.[23] In that sense, it is used in the word combination “just clarified butter”. Furthermore, the wording “Our cause is just” has been used for more than a quarter of a century by the

23 Stepan Malkhasiants, *Հայերէն բացատրական բառարան, հատոր 1* [Armenian Explanatory Dictionary, vol. 1] (Yerevan: Haypethrat, 1944), 257.

"Arznikat" dairy processing plant to promote its products,[24] i.e., on the labels of milk products and on vehicles for the transportation thereof.

Another banner, displayed in February 1988, includes the slogan "*Карабах должен быть в составе Арм.ССР*" [Karabagh should be in the Armenian SSR]. This is not merely an abstract meditation on the Karabagh issue, but rather a statement directly reflecting the decision passed on 20 February 1988 by the extraordinary Session of the Council of People's Deputies 20th convocation of NKAO to appeal to the Supreme Councils of the Azerbaijani SSR and Armenian SSR to transfer NKAO from the Azerbaijani SSR to the Armenian SSR. This decision prompted people to take to the streets of Yerevan in defence of their Karabagh compatriots, thereby initiating the launch of the Karabagh Movement. Posters such as «*Արցախը անհապաղ վերամիավորել Հայաստանին*» [Reunite Artsakh with Armenia immediately][25] (Fig. 8, 13), and «*Արցախը – Հայաստանին*» [Artsakh – to Armenia] (Fig. 9) (both displayed on 7 November 1988) clearly originate from the wording of the aforementioned decision, as well as the decision made by Armenia's Parliament on the inclusion of NKAO in the Armenian SSR about four months later, on 15 June 1988. Drawing on the easily recognisable language of flags, the idea was further expressed via the inscription «*Ղարաբաղ*» [Karabagh] on the middle blue strip of the flag of the Armenian SSR (Fig. 10).

"Unification" as a solution

A part of the aforementioned group of posters could be distinguished by a peculiar keyword contained therein – «միացում» [*miatsum*, unification]. For example, «*Միացումը մեր գլխավոր խնդիրն է*» [Unification is our main objective] (18 September 1988), «*Հայաստան – Արցախ – միացում*» [Armenia – Artsakh – unification] (early to mid-1988) (Fig. 11, 12), «*Արցախ միացում*» [Artsakh unification] (7 November 1988) (Fig. 13), «*Հայաստան Միացում Արցախ*» [Armenia Unification Artsakh] (7–8 November 1988) (Fig. 14), to list only a few. "Unification" was one of the most popular and polysemantic words in the rallies right from the start. First, it was a slogan itself, often chanted after the speeches dedicated to the reunification of Karabagh with Armenia. In fact, the word was more frequently used in Karabagh than in Armenia. Thus, while people in Yerevan typically protested by chanting «*Ղա-րա-բաղ*» [Ka-ra-bagh], people in Karabagh tended to use the slogan «*մի-ա-ցում*» [u-ni-fi-cation], although «*Հա-յաս-տան*» [Ar-me-nia] was common as well. Apparently, the "big country – small country" relationship was putting its stamp on the Karabagh-Armenia bond: unification is naturally a more significant notion for the "small" than for the "big". The word «միավորում» [unification] appears even in official documents adopted by NKAO, while in similar

24 See for example https://www.instagram.com/arzni_kat/, accessed 08.11.2022.

25 This same demand with a slightly different wording, «*Անհապաղ Արցախը վերամիավորել Հայաստանին*» [Reunite Artsakh with Armenia immediately] was among the demands of the hunger strike that started in mid-October 1988. See the photo: Harutyun Marutyan, *Iconography of Armenian Identity*, 77, figure 57.

Figure 11

Figure 12

decisions adopted by Armenia, the preferred expression is «կազմի մեջ մտնել» [entry to…]. It is noteworthy that the core, leading, an informal organization of the Movement was called «Ղարաբաղ կոմիտե» [Karabagh Committee], while a key organization representing the Karabagh wing of the Movement assumed the name «Միացում» [Unification]. It is further interesting to observe the alteration of the context against which the concept of "unification" developed during the years of the Movement. It started (as already noted) as a means for restoring historical justice, later metamorphosing into a mechanism for exercising the right of peoples to self-determination. After the Sumgait massacres, the concept of "unification" evolved as a way to safeguard against future genocides. In this way, the very concept of unification was the only means to protect human rights because the notion of human rights was considered logistically unfeasible were NKAO to remain a part of Azerbaijan. Finally, around the summer of 1990, the concepts of unification and unity began to feed the reclamation programs of both different organizations and parties. The following are examples of such slogans: «*Արցախյան պահանջատիրությունը ազգի միասնության հիմքն է*» [Reclaiming Artsakh is the basis for the unity of the nation], «*Արցախի պահանջատիրությունը հայ դատի անբաժանելի մասն է*» [Reclaiming Artsakh is an integral part of the Armenian Cause], «*Ով Արցախի հետ չէ և պահանջատեր չէ՝ հայ չէ*» [Who is not with Artsakh and does not reclaim it, is not an Armenian].

It is noteworthy that the slogan «միացում» [unification] very quickly acquired a relatively broad semantic spectrum. People started to chant it immediately after every speech touching upon this or that perspective of the concept of unification in general. Consequently, this was the slogan crowning speeches about the unanimity of the Armenian people scattered all over the world. A poster from 7 June 1988 stating, «*Հայեր բոլոր երկրների, միացե՛ք*» [Armenians of all countries, unite] (Fig. 15) built on the principle of the famous appeal of the Communist Party Manifesto. The speeches that called for the unity of the nation and its leadership worked similarly (compare, for example, the February 1988 poster with the same theme «*Հայաստանի կառավարություն, միացեք ժողովրդի ձայնին*»[26] [Government of Armenia, join the voice of the people]). In the summer and autumn of 1988, the speeches of guests from the Baltic States were also accompanied by the chanting of «միացում» [unification]. This new aspect of the word "unification" was embodied in a colourful poster where the flags of the three Baltic republics and Armenia were united. The last recorded call for "unification" was made in the February 1992 rally dedicated to the four-year anniversary of the Karabagh Movement. This time the call for "unification" was directed to opposing parties and NGOs.

The word «միացում» [unification] also gave birth to the highly popular «*Հայեր, միացե՛ք*»[27] [Armenians, unite!] slogan, calling for the unification of Armenians as early

26 See «Ժամանակագրության շարունակությունը» [The Continuation of the Chronicle], *Hayastan: Hayastani azgayin ankakhut'yun kusaktsut'yan pashtonat'ert'*, 25 October 1989, N 16, 12.

27 See for instance Levon Ter-Petrosyan, «Ղարաբաղը մերն է և մերը կլինի» [Karabagh is and will be Ours], June 15, 1988, https: //www.youtube.com/watch?v=1puEEEjKDk4, 0.001-0.020, accessed 08.11.2022.

Figure 13

Figure 14

Figure 15

Figure 16

Figure 17

as 1988. This slogan, without fail, has been voiced during all mass rallies and marches and represented a special rallying cry calling people to join the demonstrations. Thus, the word «միացում» [unification] was initially used in a narrow sense (unification of Artsakh with Armenia) and later in a broader sense (unification of all Armenians). Its logical conclusion manifests in a November 1988 poster: «*Հայ ժողովրդի միասնությունը Արցախի հարցի լուծման գրավականն է*» [The unity of the Armenian people is the pledge for addressing the issue of Artsakh] (Fig. 16).

Mother and child

Apart from historical, political, legal and other justifications, the idea of "unification" – now with a gesture towards *re*unification – also operated on the basis of "popular evidence". Here, the idea manifested in a variety of posters where a motif of mother and child were depicted as forcibly separated from each other and evoking a sense of longing to be reunited. The motif was often deployed through schematic solutions, and expressions of "cartographic thinking".[28]

28 The vision of "Armenia", "Greater Armenia", "Lost Homeland", "Free, independent and united Armenia" has always excited the Armenians deprived of statehood for centuries, it has been in their thoughts, in their distant and proximate, real and unreal dreams. The Armenians, especially in Soviet times, appreciated the old, new and

Figure 18

The first expressions of this idea appeared already in the February 1988 rallies (February 20-26) on the platform of Opera Square, where two banners were displayed side-by-side, reading: «*Դու էլ դառած կռվածաղիկ իմ բալիկն ես սի՛ Ղարաբաղ*» [An apple of discord You are my baby Karabagh] (Fig. 17), «*Մայր Հայաստանը կսպասած քեզ է սպասում գրկաբաց*» [Mother-Armenia broken of heart is waiting for you with open arms] (Fig. 18).

The words on the first banner constitute the first line of Hovhannes Shiraz's poem «Ղարաբաղի ողբը» [Lament of Karabagh]. Poetically describing the difficult situation of Karabagh-Artsakh's Armenians, this verse was probably written in the 1950s but went unpublished until far later for obvious reasons, but it was well-liked and often learnt by heart by the people; it was one of the most frequently used poems during the rally on 24 April 1965.[29] The poem repeats the notion of Karabagh as the offspring ("baby") of

contemporary maps in Armenian and foreign languages representing Historical Armenia, or those having, for instance, "Armenia" or "Armenian Highland" written on the territory of the Ottoman Empire and later of Turkey. That is to say the iconographic solution of seeing Armenian lands united, unified as the maps were suggesting had always been appreciated. The issue is thoroughly discussed in the following publications: Harutyun Marutyan, «Քարտէզը որպէս ինքնութեան խորհրդանիշ» [Maps as Symbols of Identity], *Handes Amsorya* 1-12 (2006): 443-478; Arutyun Marutyan, "Карты как символы национального движения в Армении" [Maps as Symbols of National Movement in Armenia] in *Mythical Landscapes Then And Now: The Mystification of Landscapes in Search for National Identity*, eds. Rüth Büttner and Judith Peltz (Yerevan: Antares, 2006), 229-250, 279-285.

29 Samvel Muradyan, *Հովհաննես Շիրազ. Բանաստեղծը, մարդը* [Hovhannes Shiraz: The Poet, Person],

Figure 19

Armenia several times, emphasizing that Karabagh was "an Armenian land since the beginning" which was now "captured". The poem asks: "when will the Armenian hands raise up in fists like your mountains?" and assures that "we are one, body and soul, and not even death could do us part," culminating in a prediction that Karabagh will become Armenian once again.[30] Therefore, it is no accident that a banner appeared in February 1988 with the inscription «*Երազդ կիրականացնենք, Շիրազ*» [We'll make your dream come true, Shiraz] alongside a large picture of the poet, implicitly alluding to the idea expressed in "The Lament of Karabagh". The second poster depicts a young mother with outstretched arms, ready to embrace the little boy running towards her against the backdrop of the double cones of Mount Ararat, which is the national symbol of Armenia. At the very top of the poster is a photo of the leader of the USSR, Mikhail Gorbachev (this will be expanded upon in the paragraphs to come).

The mother and child metaphor is also evident in the following four posters. The first features a fragment of Raphael's "Sistine Madonna" – the Virgin Mary and Child – above a contour map of Armenia and Karabagh. A thick, black line separates the mother from the child, continuing down to separate Armenia from Karabagh. This poster, created by a professional artist, was exhibited at the Artist's House in May 1988. In another poster with a similar approach (likely displayed on 7 November 1988), a person with a sword cuts up

vol. 2 (Yerevan: YSU, 2015), 61; Ashot Ter-Minasyan, «Հովհաննես Շիրազի հայրենասիրական քնարի աշխարհայացքային շերտերը» [Worldview Layers of Hovhannes Shiraz's Patriotic Lyre], *Banber Yerevani hamalsarani* 2 (2000): 42-55; Silva Khachatryan, «Հովհաննես Շիրազի քնարը՝ Արցախի ազատագրական շարժման զանգահար», *Արցախի պետական համալսարան: Գիտական ընթերցումներ: Ղարաբաղյան շարժման 30-րդ տարեդարձին նվիրված գիտաժողովի նյութեր* ["Hovhannes Shiraz's Lyrics as the Call for the Artsakh Liberation Movement" in *Artsakh State University. Scientific Readings (Collection of Articles) Proceedings of the Conference on 30th Anniversary of Karabagh Movement*] (Stepanakert: Artsakh State University Press, 2018), 178-180.

30 Hovhannes Shiraz, «Ղարաբաղի ողբը» [The Lament of Karabagh], *Bagin* 9-12 (1990): 26-27.

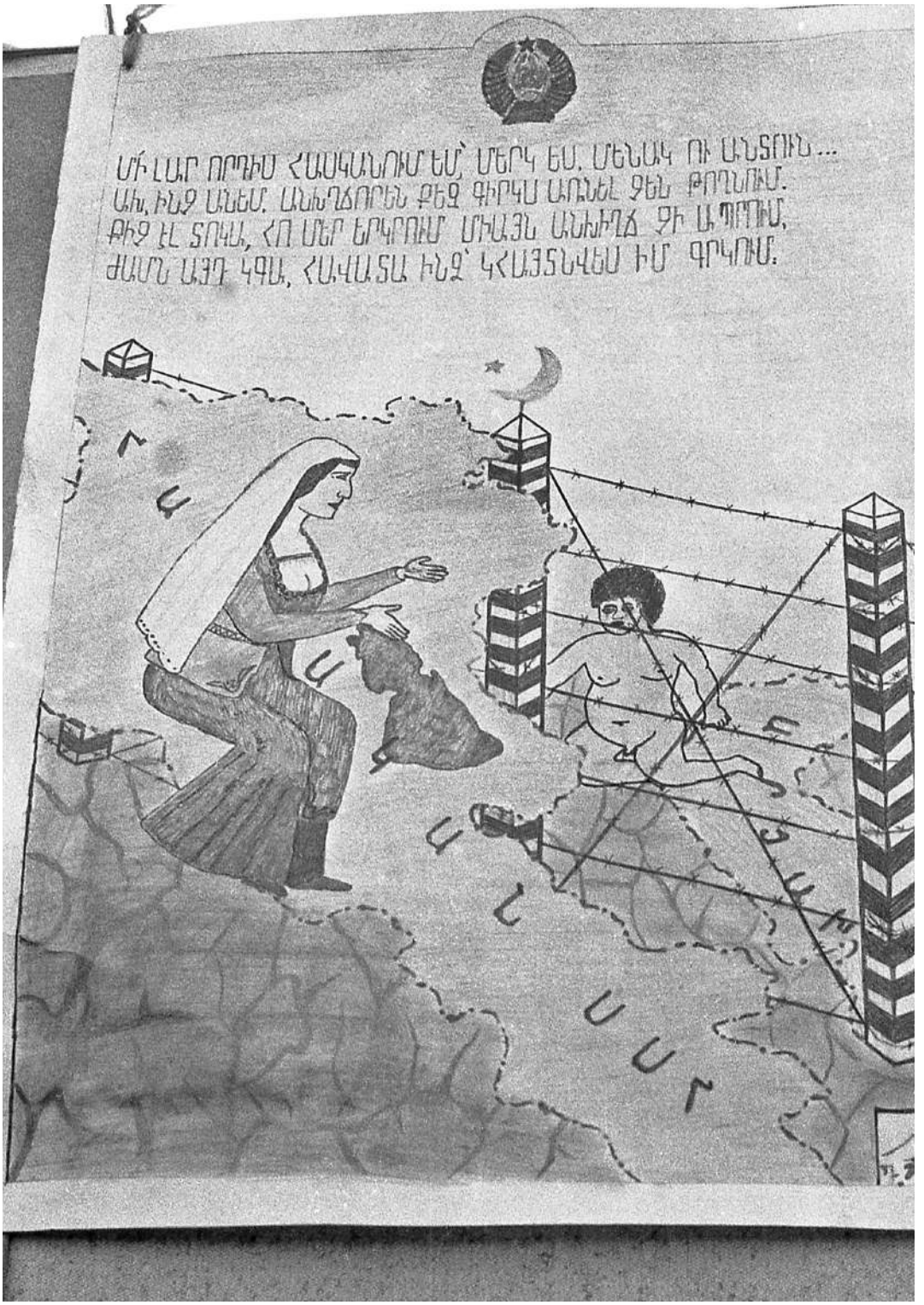
ՄԻ ԼԱՐ ՈՐԴԻՍ ՀԱՍԿԱՆՈՒՄ ԵՄ՝ ՄԵՐԿ ԵՍ. ՄԵՆԱԿ ՈՒ ԱՆՏՈՒՆ...
Ախ, ԻՆՉ ԱՆԵՄ. ԱՆԱՂԱՐՆ ՔԵԶ ԳԻՐԿԱ ԱՌՆԵԼ ՉԵՆ ԹՈՂՆՈՒՄ.
ՔԻՉ ԷԼ ՏՈՒԱ, ՀՈ ՄԵՐ ԵՐԿՐՈՒՄ ՄԻԱՅՆ ԱՆԽՈՂՃ ՉԻ ԼՊՐԻՄ,
ԺԱՄՆ ԱՅԴ ԿԳԱ, ՀԱՎԱՏԱ ԻՆՉ՝ ԿՀԱՅՏՆՎԵՍ ԻՄ ԳՐԿՈՒՄ.
Ս Ս Ր
Ս Ս Ր

Figure 20

the road before a little child rushing from the territory of NKAO towards his mother, who reclines along the contour map of Armenia (Mother Armenia) (Fig. 19).

The third poster (Fig. 20) can, perhaps, be considered the most characteristic appearance of the "mother and child" motif. The poster appeared in Opera Square in the summer of 1988. Embedded in Primitivist principles, the poster features the mother in traditional Armenian costume in the territory of the Armenian SSR, where Yerevan should be. The child is pictured with outstretched arms in Nagorno-Karabagh territory (inscribed with "Artsakh") and is separated from the mother figure and Armenia by a barbed wire fence. The "border" evoked by the fence is topped by a Muslim crescent and star, thus representing Azerbaijan.[31] At the top of the poster is the following quatrain, expressing the heartbreak of the situation: «*Մի՛ լար որդիս հասկանում եմ՝ մերկ ես, մենակ ու անտուն… Ախ, ինչ անեմ, անխղճորեն քեզ գիրկս առնել չեն թողնում, Քիչ էլ կտոկա, հո մեր երկրում միայն անխիղճ չի ապրում, Ժամն այդ կգա, հավատա ինձ՝ կհայրնվես իմ գրկում*» [Don't you cry, sonny boy, unclothed, alone and homeless that you are, What can I do? Deprived, so ruthlessly, of hugging you as I am A little longer you hang on there, 'tis not land for only the cruel Believe that soon will come the time, you will be back into my arms].

The fourth poster, created by an amateur artist, was held on 24 April 1990, the Day of Remembrance of the Genocide victims (Fig. 21). Again, the poster depicts a mother and child drawn to each other but separated. The mother's arms take the shape of the Armenian national tricolour flag, while the child is imaged in padlocked iron chains, again bearing the Muslim crescent and star. Notably, this is one of the rare cases where an image-based poster is accompanied by a separate banner explaining in words what is being depicted – «*Շղթաներից ազատվելու համար հարկավոր է պայքարել*» [One needs to fight to cast off one's chains]. If the earlier mother and child poster only depicted separation, the 1990 poster and accompanying banner show a means to overcome that separation. As in almost all traditional images of motherhood, the child on the poster is male. Even in posters that do not directly relate to the theme of motherhood, Artsakh is characteristically presented as a "wronged" teenage boy.

31 The star and crescent are sometimes presented as symbols of Islam. However, it is known that the star and crescent were used as symbols at least 3,000 years prior to the formation of Islam. According to certain sources, in the fourth century B.C. these signs had become the symbol of Byzantium (later Constantinople, now Istanbul). When the Turks conquered the capital of the Byzantine Empire in 1453, they appropriated the banner and the symbol of the city, too. Moreover, as the Ottoman Empire had for centuries ruled the Islamic world, and had led numerous wars against Christian Europe, many have come to perceive the star and crescent as specifically Islamic symbols. Meanwhile, it is known that Islam has no historically created symbols: there is no mention of them in the Koran and there is no evidence of their link to the Prophet Mohammed, not to mention that according to the Muslim religion to use anything as a symbol of Allah is considered a sin. Thus, the star and crescent were symbols of the Ottoman Empire, and are to the present, at least as perceived by Armenian society, considered symbols of Turkish identity. Since the Azerbaijanis have been perceived by Armenians as Caucasian Turks, it is but natural that people, wishing to point out the ethnic identity of Turks/Azerbaijanis, have made use of none other than the star and crescent, which is also a handy means for the iconographic solution of the problem. See in detail, for example: https://www.straightdope.com/21342797/why-are-the-star-and-crescent-symbols-of-islam, http://islam.about.com/library/weekly/aa060401a.htm, accessed 08.11.2022.

Figure 21

Another poster (7 June 1988), following the theme of mother and child separation, reads "*Мать-Армения ждет свое дитя Арцах*" [Mother-Armenia is waiting for her child Artsakh] (Fig. 22): now a purely symbolic image. Here Armenia is represented by its universally recognized symbol, Mount Ararat, while Artsakh is represented by the sculpture of an elderly married couple, which has become its most recognizable image, especially during the Movement.

Also relating to this theme is the cover image of the October 1988 issue of the magazine "Garun" [spring]. The cover features a magnet on the contour map of Armenia, attracting a smaller magnet in the place where NKAO would be located where the map continues. In addition to the magnet motif, the mother and child theme manifests via a map of Armenia that resembles a silhouette of a woman's head in profile with an elongated neck.

The latter motif is most vividly expressed in a "photo badge" issued in the summer of 1988 (Fig. 23).[32] The multiple photo prints of the 4x6.5 cm "badge" represent the anthropomorphized map of Armenia in miniature, depicted with eyes and hair. In the figure, Lake Sevan is featured as a hairpin and Yerevan is marked by a round earring made of precious stones. The woman gazes longingly at the map of NAKO, painted against the

32 The "photo badge" kindly provided to the authors by our colleague Dr. Hripsime Pikichyan.

Figure 22

background of the flag of the Armenian SSR in an oval frame. The woman's head is also placed against a similar backdrop. In fact, in the upper corner of the badge, on the flag of the Armenian SSR, the artist Tsedrik Aslanyan also placed the symbol of agricultural and industrial workers – the hammer and sickle with a star. The writings at the top and the bottom of the photo badge read, «*Միայն այդպես ենք հաղորդակցվում... մինչև ե՞րբ...*» [This is the only way we communicate ... until when...?] and «*Բանական մարդի՛կ, մի թույլ տվեք կորչի՛... Փրկե՛ք, վերադարձրե՛ք...*» [Intelligent people, don't let it perish… Save it, bring it back!], respectively. This is the only poster known to us where there is a deliberate

Figure 23

cartographical rearrangement – NKAO is not placed to the right (as it is geographically),[33] but to the left so that the "woman-Armenia" is able to see it. Compellingly, the artist has inserted the map of NKAO into a gilded frame, perhaps trying to justify this topographical inaccuracy. The aesthetic strategy accompanies the inscription, which reads: "This is the only way we communicate." In other words, we (Armenians) communicate as we would with a relative who is in a foreign country (the backdrop of the flag evidences this) and, therefore, in a commemorative photograph. The Soviet symbolism of the badge emphasizes the loyalty of the Armenians, that is, the reassurance highlighted many times that the demands of the Armenians are not anti-Soviet.

The heart-wrenching poetics of the inscriptions of the badge are juxtaposed with formulas playing on the theme of the separated mother and child, particularly highlighted during the first days of the February 1988 rallies: almost every speaker taking the floor fervently used the iconography of the mother and child.[34] Other versions read: "*Мы ждем свое дитя Арцах*" [We are waiting for our offspring, Artsakh], «*Մայր Հայաստանը քեզ է կանչում, Ղարաբաղ*» [Mother-Armenia calls you, Karabagh] or

33 The placement of the contour of the NKAO below the occipital part of Mother Armenia contour map-profile found on other posters matches with the well-known verbal formula «*Ղարաբաղը Մայր-Հայաստանի մեջքն է*» [Karabagh is the back of Mother-Armenia] and therefore it – the back, cannot be "broken". This thesis is brought up more than once in support of the fact that Karabagh should remain Armenian.

34 Cf. the statement of one of the participants in Stepanakert rallies poet Gurgen Gabrielyan during an interview on 25 February 1988: "The claim of the people is very just, honest and moral. ... These people want to live with their people, like when a son wants to live with his mother and wants, so to speak, to get rid of his stepmother and come live with his birth mother. There is nothing bad here, there is nothing wicked here. There is no intent to disturb the relations of nations." See «Մեր Մայր Հայաստանն ենք ուզում». հանրահավաքներ Ստեփանակերտում և Երևանում ["We Want our Mother Armenia": rallies in Stepanakert and Yerevan], 25-26 February 1988, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WLT-Q3vT4aQ, 0.22-1.32 min, accessed 08.11.2022. On Gurgen Gabrielyan see: Gayane Lalayan, «Գուրգեն Գաբրիելյանը և Արցախյան շարժումը» [Gurgen Gabrielyan and the Artsakh Movement], *Artsakhi petakan hamalsarani gitakan teghekagir, humanitar gitut'yunner* 1 (2015): 84-88.

Figure 24

Figure 25

«*Մայր Հայաստանն է կանչում*» [Mother-Armenia calls][35] (all from February 1988). The last slogan is interesting in the sense that it is directly copied from the poster "Родина-мать зовет" [The Motherland calls], well-known from the very beginning of the Great Patriotic War. All the formulas are expressions of a mother pleading with her offspring, which is not surprising, as all these banners were created from the perspective of activists in Yerevan. At approximately the same time, in February, May and September 1988, similar posters were displayed in Stepanakert, but depicting the reverse: a homeless child calling for his mom – «*Ղարաբաղին՝ Մայր Հայաստան*» [Mother Armenia to Karabagh] (Fig. 24), «*Որբ Ղարաբաղը մայր է ուզում*» [Orphaned Karabagh wants a mother], "*Мечта карабахцев – воссоединение с матерью-Арменией*" [The dream of the people of Karabagh is reunification with Mother Armenia]. Here too are other slogans indirectly relating to the group under scrutiny – "*Гарантия счастья наших детей – воссоединение НКАО с Арменией*" [The pledge for our children's happiness is the reunification of the NKAO with Armenia] (although the text refers to parents' care for their children instead of mothers alone), "*Наша цель – воссоединение с Матерью Арменией*" [Our goal [is] reunification with Mother Armenia] (Askeran, Fig. 25). Indeed, in February 1988, in Yerevan, too, there appeared a banner showing contour maps of Armenia and NKAO and a heartbreaking image of Mother Armenia begging in the name of her child, Karabagh – «*Մայրիկ, օգնիր, դժբախտության մեջ եմ*» [Mother, help me, I am in trouble] (Fig. 26, 27). However, judging from the content, it could be assumed that the banner was created by Yerevan residents of Karabagh origin.[36] The situation seemed to repeat itself over three decades later when, during the 5 November 2022 rally of the "Hayastan" Alliance, a young boy holds a picture of a little girl with a poster representing child-Artsakh's appeal to Mother Armenia «*Ես քո՛ զավակն եմ, Հայաստան*» [I am your offspring, Armenia] taken a few days earlier on 30 October 2022, during a rally of many thousands in Stepanakert (Fig. 28).[37]

In the summer of 1988, the offered popular solutions to the Karabagh issue included another version, that Armenia should join Karabagh. And, immediately a poster with the corresponding content was created and recorded in July of 1988, «*Արցախ[,] Մայր Հայաստանի սիրտն ու ձեռքը քեզ*» [Artsakh, Mother Armenia's heart and hand to you].[38]

The image of the mother caring for her children's happiness turned out to feed the imagination not only of the creators of posters in Karabagh and Armenia but also of Mikhail Gorbachev himself. In his address "To the workers, nations of Azerbaijan and

35 See "The Continuation of the Chronicle."

36 Export of slogans and poster ideas as a rule from Karabagh to Armenia was seen throughout the entire Movement. There was even an area in the Opera Square standing out with vividly pronounced Karabagh slogans; it was near the statue of Hovhannes Tumanyan, the usual gathering place of Karabagh people of Yerevan during the rallies.

37 «Մե՛նք ալ քո զավակն ենք, Հայաստա՛ն…» [We Also are Your Child, Armenia…], *Hairenik* (Boston), 8 November 2022.

38 The banner was captured in autumn of 2004, during the «Հեղափոխություն» [Revolution] TV program (hosted by Vahram Martirosyan).

Figure 26

Figure 27

Figure 28

Armenia" (26 February 1988) Gorbachev also referred to this image cited almost every day: "Ни одна мать не согласится с тем, чтобы ее детям угрожали национальные распри..." [No mother will acquiesce to her children being threatened with national strife...].[39] Interestingly, this cliché combined with the foregoing posters stirred up illusory hopes among some Armenians that Gorbachev, like the Armenians, also tended to see the

39 *Գրական թերթ* [Grakan t'ert'], 4 March 1988, N 10 (2378).

Figure 29

image of a separated mother and child in the Karabagh problem. Apparently, the theme of parentage was so close to Gorbachev that later, in July 1988, he referred to it once again; this time in the defence of the punitive forces ("Это же наши дети…" [After all they are our children...]), against whom Armenians were trying to show resistance. This catchphrase immediately prompted the creation of a new series of posters.[40]

The touching, sometimes heart-breaking tenor of the posters featuring the mother and orphaned child acquire a tinge of demand in a banner reading «*Ղարաբաղը Մայր-Հայաստանին*» [Karabagh to Mother-Armenia].[41] It should be noted that, chronologically, the latter does not represent the evolution of the aforementioned group; it appeared at the same time as the other posters of the batch, during the February rallies of 1988. Factually, however, it constitutes their logical development, marking the transition from emotional ascertainment to demand. Generally, the analysis of the content of the posters shows that each point of the Movement is characterized by the simultaneous appearance of banners and posters indicative of its most diverse future and past phases. While the main thematic vector is created by the posters consistent with the period and constituting the overwhelming majority, there are exceptions (like, for instance, the aforementioned banner, which is the only one in the mass of February posters). In a similar banner that appeared in June–July 1988, there was also mention of the name of the region, making the claim: «*Ղարաբաղն՝ Մայր Հայաստանին – Քյավառ*» [Karabagh to Mother Armenia – Gavar] (Fig. 29).

40 For details, see Harutyun Marutyan, *Iconography of Armenian Identity*, 175-178 (Fig. 142, 144, 145).

41 "The Continuation of the Chronicle."

Figure 30

Without a reference to the theme of motherhood, the demand "Karabagh to Mother-Armenia" evolved into "Artsakh to Armenia," which has already been examined in the earlier discussion of the concept of "unification" in posters. A similar poster with a cartographic solution emerged in February 1988 (Fig. 30). The poster features the contour maps of the Armenian SSR and NKAO with «*Հայաստան*» [Armenia] written thereon, while the header reads «*Ղարաբաղ-Արցախն՝ Հայաստանից անբաժան*» [Karabagh-Artsakh inseparable from Armenia]. Schematically, this notion is formulated in the demand of the first nationwide strike in early July of 1988 «*Միացնել Արցախը Հայաստանին*» [Unite Artsakh to Armenia] (Fig. 31).

In mid-October of 1988, along with the dramatic events taking place in Karabagh, the following intervention intended to demonstrate the spiritual unity of Armenia and Karabagh: Conservatory students, who had already been on strike for several days, created the contour maps of the Armenian SSR and NKAO and the word «Արցախ» [Artsakh] with candles, lighting them late in the evening (Fig. 32, 33, 34, 35). The images have a sacred quality as if addressed as a prayer for unification.

It should be noted that, in addition to sober and sombre demands, the theme of unification was also conveyed in joyful and festive ways, which is not surprising, if we take into consideration that mass rallies and demonstrations have a lot in common with carnival-type popular holidays.[42] Generally, many "high-level" slogans had their "low-

42 See for instance Levon Abrahamian, «Քաոսը և կոսմոսը ժողովրդական ելույթների կառուցվածքում.

Figure 31

level" analogues – even in the form of jokes. Thus, in February – March 1988, it was also commonplace to see the display of jokes about how people outside the Movement, such as *tsekhaviks* [ցեխավիկները],[43] suggested that the famous Black Sea resort cities like Sochi, Sukhumi should be claimed alongside or instead of Karabagh. And, an old woman requested that people also claim the capital of Medieval Armenia, Ani. Although anecdotal, such suggestions nevertheless indicate the fairly low level of people's legal knowledge at the beginning of the Movement, but which developed rapidly as conflicts ensued.

"Karabagh is ours"

An interesting group in the theme of "Karabagh-Armenia" are posters claiming that: «*Արցախ աշխարհը մերն է*» [The land of Artsakh is ours], «*Ղարաբաղը մերն է*» [Karabagh is ours] (Fig. 18).[44] This slogan enjoyed such popularity that it became

Ղարաբաղյան շարժումը ազգագրագետի հայացքով» [Chaos and Cosmos in the Structure of People's Movement: The Karabagh Movement from Ethnographer's Point of View], *Mshakuyt'* 2-3 (1990): 14-21.

43 Translated from Russian "tsekhavik" literally means head of a workshop. In Soviet times, "tsekhaviks" were called people who being involved in industry sector used part of the profit from state production and also extracted raw materials in their own illegal production.

44 It is indicative that the leitmotif of Baku rallies held in response to those in Stepanakert and Yerevan was the same formula about Karabagh being "ours" as evidenced by for instance "*Карабах был и будет нашим!*"

Figure 32

Figure 33

Figure 34

an everyday formula almost immediately, serving as a base for the most unexpected manifestations of mass folk creativity. Thus, during the summer 1988 marches, one could hear the following, amusing play-on-words: one of the demonstrators would ask loudly

[Karabagh was and will be ours] banner. See *Трагедия длиною в 2 года. Фотохроника событий* [The Tragedy Lasting for Two Years] (Baku: Azerneshr, 1990).

Figure 35

«*Ղարաբաղը ո՛ւմն ա*» [Whose is Karabagh?] and the crowd would answer «*Մե՛ր*» [Ours!]. He would ask again, and the same polyphonic answer would follow. For the third time, the moderator of the "dialogue" would ask: «*Թուրքերի ի՞նչը*» [What y'say to Turks?] and «*Մե՛ր*» [Motherf'ers begone!] would come the cheerful reply. In Armenian, the words "ours" and a dialectic version of "mother" are homonyms. The last part of the dialogue thus ends with a play on words involving the mothers of the Turks. Another example of popular creativity along the same theme is an inscription on a handmade tin disk (thanks to which three people could drink water at the same time) attached to a drinking fountain: «*Հայեր, դիմացե՛ք, Ղարաբաղը մերն է*» [Armenians, hold on, Karabagh is ours] (26 September 1989) (Fig. 36, 37).

Another sample of folklore, in the form of a nursery rhyme, displays the many contradictory aspects of this seemingly simple formula: «*Ղարաբաղը մերն ա, Բայց թուրքերի ձեռն ա, Պապան գնաց ցույցի, Որ ապացույցի*» [Karabagh is ours, Turks say "No, ours", Papa went to rally, To prove the contrary]. According to the logic of this rhyme, "Karabagh is ours", that is, she belongs to Armenians (de facto, historically, and ethnically), but, at the same time, she is not ours (*de jure*, according to the Soviet Constitution) and that is why the Armenians have rallied to address this contradiction. This nursery rhyme also shows that in their quest for "proof", the Armenians are using peaceful demonstrations seeking a wise and just resolution from the Centre (Moscow/ Kremlin).

Figure 36

Figure 37

Figure 38

The means of proving that Karabagh "is ours" once had varied nuances, from calls for forbearance («*Հայեր, դիմացեք...*» [Armenians, hold on…]) to outright (probably written by Hovhannes Shiraz) «*Մի հող, որ թեկուզ երկինք համբառնա, Հայոց եղել է, Հայոց կմնա*» [A land, even if it ascends to Heavens, have been and will remain Armenian forever] (Fig. 38), «*Ղարաբաղը մերն է եղել, կա և կլինի*» [Karabagh has been, is and

Figure 39

will be ours][45] and «*Ղարաբաղը միայն Հայաստանին*» [Karabagh only to Armenia] (Fig. 39). Iconographically, reunification was "fulfilled" in yet another February poster (Fig. 40). However, whereas in the aforementioned case, they simply painted the maps with the same colour, here, the necessity to literally fight for unification was indirectly highlighted the identity of the bearers of the poster. The poster, with a modest contour map of united Armenia and Karabagh as well as an inscription reading: «*Արցախ դու մերն ես*» [Artsakh, you are ours], was accompanied by a banner boasting combat medals, and those who were awarded those medals; young Armenian men who had fought in Afghanistan and had combat experience. Their active involvement was intended to show

45 "The Continuation of the Chronicle."

Figure 40

that Armenians are ready to take up arms and enter into combat for the liberation of Artsakh. This was directly articulated in another "explanatory" banner: «*Աֆղանստանում ինտերնացիոնալ պարտքը կատարած հայ զինվորներդ քեզ հետ են Ղարաբաղ*» [Armenian soldiers who fulfilled their international duty in Afghanistan are with you, Karabagh] (Fig. 41). This readiness was further emphasised in a poster bearing General Andranik's picture carried by the "Afghans". Andranik was a fearless *hajduk*, a popular hero and a famous warlord under whose command Armenian warriors/combatants had successfully fought battles against the Turkish oppressors on several occasions.

There is an additional peculiarity of language arising from consideration of these posters and banners – the same poster/banner or a slogan used at various phases of the Movement can acquire different semantic nuances. Thus, the last (as well as the previous one) slogan appeared in February 1988 and, in the context of those days, meant a categorical statement within the general "Karabagh – Armenia" theme. However, the same slogan recorded in November of the same year expresses the widely discussed disagreement with placing NKAO under the territorial-administrative control of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR). In November, this slogan also expressed the rejection of a policy based on compromise in the resolution of the Karabagh problem, which was called for by the country's leadership more than once without specific, constructive prescriptions. An immediate answer to those calls arose in

Figure 41

the posters appearing in the autumn of 1989: «*Ոչ մի «կոմպրոմիս» Արցախի հարցում*» [No "compromises" in the issue of Artsakh] (Fig. 42), «*Կոմպրոմիսը» Արցախի նոր գերութիւնն է*» ["Compromise" will be the new captivity of Artsakh] (Fig. 42). A specific example of disagreement with compromises could be the banner "*Шуши армянам или никому*" [Shushi to the Armenians or to no one] (Fig. 43). It appeared in November 1988 in response to rumours that top-level officials were considering the issue of transferring only the parts of NKAO where the Armenian population prevailed, and therefore, according to that option, Shushi would remain as part of Azerbaijan.

"Solidarity" posters

The posters have another unique quality. Without resorting to laborious sociological research, one can use the posters to assess with sufficient confidence, not only the desires and demands of the participants of multi-thousand-person rallies but also about their social composition. For example, from February 1988 through the rest of the year, a host of "solidarity" banners emerged, pledging their support to the people of Artsakh at various levels: «*Արցախ, Արտաշատը միշտ քեզ հետ է*» [Artsakh, Artashat is always with you] (Fig. 44), «*Մեսրոպ Մաշտոցը և Օշականը ձեզ հետ են*» [Mesrop Mashtots and Oshakan are with you], «*Բաղրամյանի անվան սովխոզը միանում*

Figure 42

Figure 43

է ձեզ Ղարաբաղի հայեր» [Sovkhoz after Baghramian is joining you[,] Armenians of Karabagh], «*Արարատը քեզ հետ է, Ղարաբաղ*» [Ararat is with you, Karabagh], «*Աբովյանցիները քեզ հետ են, Ղարաբաղ*» [Residents of Abovyan are with you, Karabagh] (Fig. 45), «*Արցախ՝ Էջմիածինը քեզ հետ է*» [Artsakh, Etchmiadzin is with you] (Fig. 46), «*Կաբելագործները Արցախի հետ են*» [Cable makers are with Artsakh], «*Ռելեի աշխատողները ձեզ հետ են, ղարաբաղցիներ*» [Relay workers are with you, Armenians of Karabagh], «*Արցախ, Հայաստանը քեզ հետ է. ԵրՊԻ*» [Artsakh, Armenia is with you: YPI], «*Ղարաբաղ, համալսարանը քեզ հետ է*» [Karabagh, University is with you] (Fig. 47), «*Արցախ, Կոնսերվատորիան քեզ հետ է*» [Artsakh, Conservatory is with you], and similar assurances from individual faculties, colleges, schools, various facilities, various regions, cities and villages of Armenia, as well as individual centres of the Armenian Soviet Diaspora, such as «*Ախալքալաքի 70 հազար հայերը քեզ հետ են, Ղարաբաղ*» [70 thousand Armenians of Akhalkalak are with you, Karabagh].[46] At the time, there were over a thousand students of the Armenian diaspora studying at various universities in Yerevan. On 23 February, around four dozen of these students studying at the Yerevan Medical Institute joined in a rally, bearing a banner

46 Artashat, Ararat, Abovyan, Etchmiadzin – names of regions and cities in Armenia; Mesrop Mashtots and Oshakan – Mesrop Mashtots is the creator of the Armenian alphabet (405 AD) and is buried in Oshakan village; Sovkhoz after Baghramian – a village in the Etchmiadzin region of Armenia; Cable makers, Relay workers – the workers of the Cable and Relay factories in Yerevan; YPI – Yerevan Polytechnic Institute (now the National Polytechnic University of Armenia); University – Yerevan State University; Conservatory – Yerevan State Conservatory after Komitas; Akhalkalak – a region in the south-west of the Republic of Georgia, populated exclusively by Armenians.

Figure 44

Figure 45

Figure 46

Figure 47

Figure 48

reading «*Սփյուռքը ձեզ հետ է*» [Diaspora [is] with you] (Fig. 48).[47] In short, there was complete geographical, social and age representation: here, there were workers and farmers, employees and students, including the pre-schooler Hakobik carrying his «*Ղարաբաղ, չվախենաս, Հակոբիկը քեզ հետ է*» [Karabagh, do not be afraid, Hakobik is with you] banner.[48]

"Карабах – Армения: Один народ – одна республика" [Karabagh – Armenia: One Nation – One Republic]

Analysis of these posters also provides insight into the legislative principles that were being proposed as a solution to the Karabagh problem. For instance, in November 1988, when the addenda and amendments to the Constitution of the USSR were being discussed

47 This information was kindly provided by Gevorg Yazichyan, who then was a student of the Faculty of History of Yerevan State University, currently – a PhD in history. As reported by him the Diaspora demonstrators were mostly from Lebanon and Syria, their organizer, in the front of the photo, was Matheos Cholakyan, a junior student from Kesap by origin, a member of Armenian Popular Movement (Հայ ժողովրդային շարժում).

48 Zaven Kharatyan, «Արցախ, չվախենաս, Հակոբիկը քեզ հետ է» [Artsakh, don't be Afraid, Hakobik is with You], *Pioneer Kanch*, 25 October 1989, N 84.

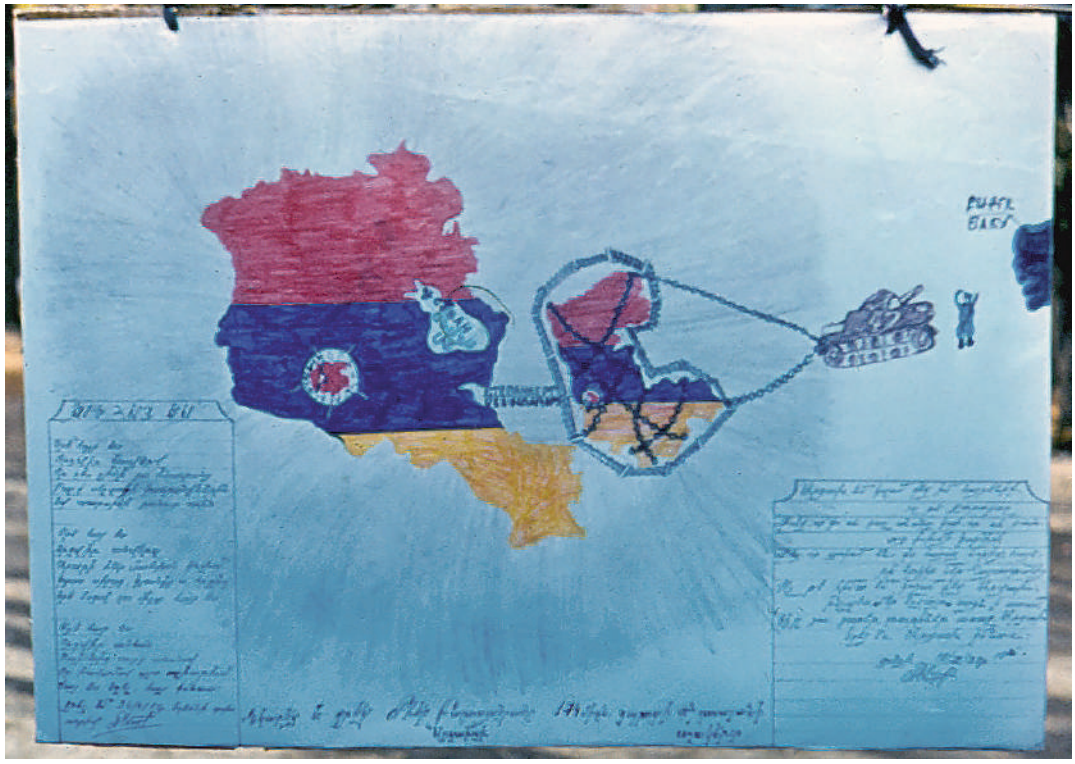

Figure 49

widely, the previously mentioned banner "Карабах – Армения: Один народ – одна республика" [Karabagh – Armenia: One nation – One Republic] appeared (Fig. 5). Here, in the very language of "law-making," the main idea of the broader group of "Karabagh – Armenia" posters is being asserted.

Since the logic of this group of posters and banners suggests that Karabagh and Armenia are a natural entity, any attempt to "forcefully separate" NKAO is perceived as an act of violence. For instance, a poster (Fig. 49) displayed in mid-November 1988 features the maps of Armenia and NKAO painted in the three colours of the Armenian national flag. Karabagh is chained and being dragged away from Armenia into the depths of Azerbaijan by a Soviet tank. The author of the poster and accompanying patriotic poem was a 7th-grade student originally from Artsakh.

Another poster (June 1988) depicts the contour maps of the Armenian SSR and NKAO with "Armenia" and "Artsakh" inscribed thereon (Fig. 50). An arrow points from Artsakh to Armenia, perhaps hinting at the yearning of the Armenians of Artsakh for their Motherland. This yearning is being fought against by the *yataghan* (an image signifying the bearers of the *yataghan* culture), which in this case are the Azerbaijanians and Turks. They are fighting against that yearning through bloody massacres similar to those in Sumgait. However, countering *yataghan* is the Armenian sword. Along

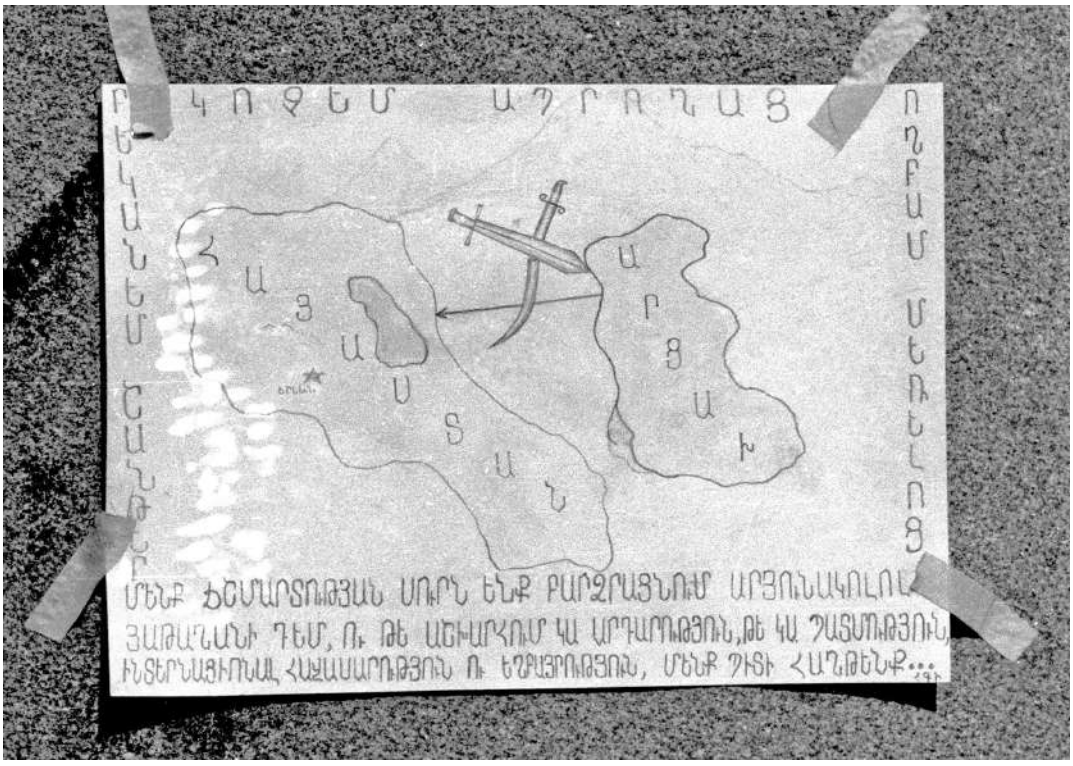

Figure 50

the edges of the poster runs the highly popular refrain from Paruyr Sevak's poem, «Եռաձայն պատարագ» [Three-Voiced Liturgy], expanded by the poster's creator to an entire programme statement: «*Ողբամ մեռելոց, բեկանեմ շանթեր, կոչեմ ապրողաց: Ճշմարտության սուրն ենք բարձրացնում արյունակոլոլ յաթաղանի դեմ, ու թե աշխարհում կա արդարություն, թե կա պատմություն, ինտերնացիոնալ հավասարություն ու եղբայրություն, մենք պիտի հաղթենք…*» [I'll lament the dead, reverse lightning and call to the living. We are raising the sword of truth against the bloodstained *yataghan* and, if there is justice in the world, if there is history, international equality and brotherhood, then we will win…]. As the text of the poster expresses, the "sword of the truth" is the symbol of a bloodless struggle. The poetics of this text is noteworthy: it uses both emotionally charged and poetic words, like "bloodstained", as well as revolutionary language. In fact, the text embodies sincere, patriotic pathos, including the line by Sevak at the beginning. The "weapons" used in the text of the poster, viz. "sword of truth", "justice", and "history", once again indicate that notwithstanding abundant challenges the universal concepts of truth and justice, seasoned by the factors of history – historical truth, historical justice and historical memory – have been and remain the most important components of Armenian national identity.[49]

49 See Harutyun Marutyan, *Iconography of Armenian Identity*, 143-144.

Figure 51

A poster made in the summer of 1988 also depicts the conventions of this group of posters. The image depicts the removal of the piece Karabagh stuck on the point of a big knife from the watermelon-Armenia, reflecting the forcible separation of Karabagh from Armenia. Interestingly, there are further instances of culinary metaphors. One example features a bloody *yataghan* and a trident-a "fork" stuck on the map of Armenia. The accompanying inscription explains: «*Եթե Ղարաբաղը պարտվի, այս վերջին պատառը ևս կուլ կգնա*» [If Karabagh defeated, this last morsel will also be devoured] (Fig. 51).

Again, the gesture towards the integrity of the whole and the part is widely spread, and it is no coincidence that the same theme, this time expressing the viewpoint of the Azerbaijani party verbally rather than iconographically, presents Azerbaijan in the form of a pie, wherefrom Armenians want to cut and remove the "delicious" piece-Karabagh. This was the comparison used by Azerbaijani scientists in their telegram to the President of the Academy of Sciences of Armenia Viktor Hambartsumyan on 29 February 1988.

In Place of an Epilogue

As we have seen, the theme "Karabagh-Armenia" has undergone a transformation from a historically, morally, and legally justified request-demand to an affirmative statement that «*Ղարաբաղը մերն է եղել, կա և կլինի*» [Karabagh has been, is and will be ours]. And, if the last slogan refers to the famous mythological-poetic formula of eternity (comp. "Ленин жил, Ленин жив, Ленин будет жить" [Lenin lived, Lenin lives, Lenin will live forever]) to confirm the fact of Karabagh "being ours", then in another slogan, «*Ղարաբաղը մերն ա ու всe*» [վերջ]» [Karabagh is ours and that's it],[50] the same idea is expressed in a more categorical and "final" way. In our research, we saw another two

50 Comp. with the well-known formulas by the participant in Artsakh Liberation War, the Hero of Artsakh Leonid Azgaldyan's «Սա Հայաստան է և վերջ» [This is Armenia and that's all] and Armenia's Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's «Արցախը Հայաստան է, և՝ վերջ» [Artsakh is Armenia and that's all].

Figure 52

Figure 53

formulas based on the concept of an affirmative statement: «*Ղարաբաղ Հայաստան Մի էություն է*» [Karabagh Armenia is one entity] (February 1988) (Fig. 52) and "*Арцах – неотъемлемая часть Армении*" [Artsakh [is] an integral part of Armenia] (June 1988 and 7 November 1988) (Fig. 53, 54, 55).

Figure 54

Figure 55

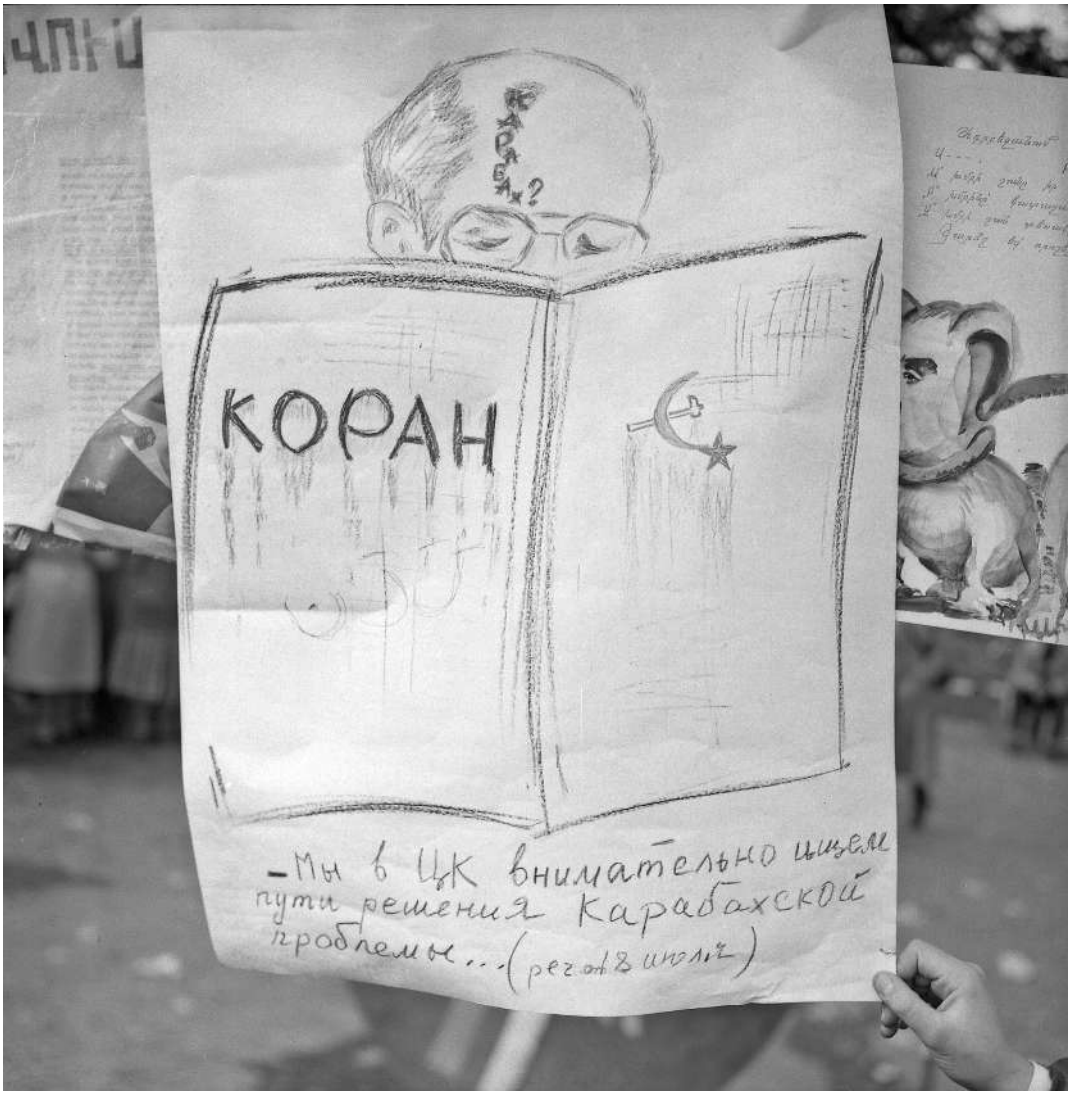

Figure 56

And yet, many posters, both in the past and in the present, have linked the solution of the Karabagh problem with the Centre, that is Moscow. Suffice it to recall multiple displays of Gorbachev's image or words, such as in a poster from 24 November 1988,[51] where he is depicted intensely reading the Koran to find a solution to the Karabagh issue: "*Мы в ЦК внимательно ищем пути решения карабахской проблемы...*" [We in the Central Committee are carefully looking for ways to address the Karabagh problem]. In fact, the mark on his forehead is substituted with an inscription saying

51 The same night saw a curfew introduced in Yerevan and a ban on all rallies.

Figure 57

"*Карабах?*" [Karabagh?] (Fig. 56). As indicated in the poster, these quotes are from his 18 July 1988 speech.[52] In a poster created in 1991 in France, the figure personifying Lenin and Gorbachev is pictured demolishing the border between Armenia and Karabagh with a hoe (Fig. 57), aiming to expand it further and separate the territories of the two fragments of the Armenian nation from one another.[53] This has also served as a base for oral folklore, accounting for the abundant use of words like "give" or "take, seize". Thus, when in March of 1988 the Theatrical Square (where the first rallies were held only a month before) was surrounded by Soviet troops to disallow the rally planned for those days, a joke emerged reading «*Ղարաբաղը ուզեցինք, հրապարակն*

52 On that day, the session of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the USSR discussing the Karabagh issue was held, part of which, along with Mikhail Gorbachev's speech, was broadcast on TV.

53 See *Azad* magazine edité par le club des Arméniens de Grenoble, 2e trimestre, 1991, 54, 11.

Figure 58

էլ խլեցին» [We craved Karabagh, they seized the square on top of that]. Another, prophetic joke surfaced about a man travelling to a Geography lesson at a school in the XXI century. The man sees the map of the USSR painted in one colour and asks, "What does this mean?" They answer that it is the map of Armenia. "And what is this?" the man points to a small dot in another colour. "That's Karabagh" they answer, "we never got it back."

At an exhibition in November 1989, the theme reached its logical development with one of the posters directly pointing at the forces keeping Armenia in the USSR. This was during the days of the Congress of the Pan-Armenian National Movement, which led the Karabagh Movement, and, as if in response to the speeches of the orators, one poster features Armenia and Karabagh in the colours of the tricolour Armenian national flag (not yet state insignia). Red and orange wings are juxtaposed with a blue background, wanting to fly away from the USSR, but are forcibly held back by the Russian *muzhik* (Fig. 58).

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