

THE GEOPOLITICS AND QUEST FOR AUTONOMY OF THE ARMENIANS OF JAVAKHETI (GEORGIA) AND KRASNODAR (RUSSIA) IN THE CAUCASUS

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The Armenian population in the Caucasus outside Armenia proper, lives mainly in the Samtshe-Javakheti¹ province in Southwest Georgia and in the Krasnodar region of the Russian Federation situated in the Northwest Caucasus – not counting Nagorno-Karabakh. In our day, Javakheti and Adler, situated in the aforementioned two regions, have a predominantly Armenian population that is seeking cultural and political autonomy. Considering the Armenians' way of gradually driving away the other peoples from the places they settle in, aiming to have a mono-ethnic structure, and Armenia's aspiration to gain access to the coast of the Black Sea, a study of the past and present of the Samtshe-Javakheti and the Krasnodar Armenians – the latter also known as Amshen or Hemshin Armenians – will give clues as to the future of their quest for autonomy-independence.

There are a number of factors which make the developments taking place along Turkey's Northwestern borders all the more important for Ankara strategically. Some of these factors involve the Samtshe-Javakheti region:

1. The Samtshe-Javakheti province is adjacent to the Turkish province of Ardahan.²
2. The Turkgozu (Posof) border gate – as well as the planned Aktas (Cildir) border gate – is on that province's border with Turkey.
3. The Eurasian Transportation Corridor, the Baku-Ceyhan Crude Oil Pipe Line and the Kars-Tbilisi Railway projects will all pass through that province.

4. That province is the homeland of the Ahiska Turks and the possibility of their return there from the places where they have been resettled, is on the agenda.

Other factors involve the Russian Federation's Krasnodar region:

1. Krasnodar accounts for the Russian Federation's entire Black Sea coastal strip.
2. Krasnodar is the Russian equivalent of Turkey's agriculturally, industrially and commercially developed Marmara region.
3. Two major Black Sea ports such as Novorossysk and Sochi are in that region.
4. The Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) is active in that region where the Kurds seek autonomy.
5. The Adigey Federated Republic, with which Turkey has a close relationship, is an enclave situated in that region.
6. The Blue Stream Natural Gas Pipe Line's itinerary is through that region.
7. Both the Samtshe-Javakheti and Krasnodar (Amshen) Armenians are of Anatolian (mainly of Erzurum and Hemshin) origin.

Armenians of Georgia

Georgia, one of the three independent countries in Southern Caucasus, constitutes a gate or bridge between the East and the West, having a common border with Turkey, Russia and Azerbaijan as well as a Black Sea coastline. It is also in the convergence point of the Christian and Muslim worlds. After Georgia gained independence, Abkhazia and Southern Ossetia came to be sensitive issues for Georgian security and independence. And, as of 1999, Georgia's border area with Chechnya became another sensitive spot for the country's security along with the Southwestern Georgia which has a predominantly Armenian population.

In today's Georgia, Armenians are the second biggest ethnic group after Georgians. They live mostly in Southwestern Georgia and in Tbilisi. Prior to the 1877-78 war between the Ottoman state and Tzarist Russia – known as the War of 93 in Turkey – Armenians lived mostly in cities, especially in Tbilisi, working as traders and craftsmen. However, in the aftermath of the 1877-78 war, that is, during the reign of Tzar Nicholas I, Russia seized Southwest Caucasia (Abkhazia, Adzharia, Ahiska-Meskheti³ and Javakheti). And, as a result of Russia's ethnic cleansing policy the Muslim peoples of the Russian-occupied Southwest Caucasus (Turks, Abkhazians, Adzhars etc.) migrated to the Ottoman lands. Meanwhile, some of the Armenians living inside the borders of the Ottoman state migrated to Southwest Caucasus to benefit from the fact that that region was being evacuated. Thus, through these population movements, voluntary or forced, that occurred in the first half of the XIX th Century, the foundations of the current ethnic fabric of Southwest Caucasia were laid and an Armenian population came to flourish in Georgia's rural parts as well.

During the time of the Tzarist Russia, Georgia consisted of two administrative regions (guberniyas): Tbilisi and Kutaisi. According to Guretski, the results of the 1897 census indicated that the Armenians accounted for 18.7 percent of the population in the overall Tbilisi administrative region, 25 percent in the Tbilisi province and 75 percent in the Tbilisi city. In the late XIX th Century, that is, before Baku's oil-driven development began, Tbilisi was the leading commercial, industrial and cultural center in Southwestern Caucasus. And Tbilisi's entrepreneurs, the traders who engaged in wholesale and retail trade, were the Armenians who were also making a contribution to the capital city's cultural life. The 1897 census indicated that Armenians accounted for 9.2 percent of the total population in the entire

Georgia and for 2.3 percent of the people living in the Kutaisi administrative region. In the framework of the Armenian migration into Southwest Caucasus in the wake of the 1877-78 war, 2,536 families migrated to Meskheti from Erzurum, Anatolia. By the year

1903, Armenians already came to account for the majority of the total population – 54,816 – residing in the 150 villages of the Ahalkalek county. In 1913, 41,873 Armenians were living in the Akhalsikhe county, 16,499 of them in the county seat and the remaining 25,374 in 16 Armenian villages. When the Bolsheviks gained control in Georgia 82 percent of the population in Akhalsikhe was Armenian. But during the Soviet era the “Armenian population/overall population in Georgia” ratio was reduced to around 10 percent as a result of a systematic effort to this effect. In 1926 Armenians accounted for 11.5 percent of the population in the Soviet Socialist Republic of Georgia. That ratio declined to 11 percent by 1959 and to 9 percent by 1979. In 1926 Armenians accounted for 34.1 percent of the population in Tbilisi. That declined to 21.5 percent by 1959 and to 12 percent by 1989. The 1989 census indicated that Armenians (437,211 people) accounted for 8.1 percent of the population in Georgia. More than half of these lived in Tbilisi (150,000 Armenians, 12 percent of the population) and in Abkhazia (76,541 Armenians, 14.6 percent of the population). But the biggest Armenian group in Armenia lives in Javakheti (nearly 200,000) and in Meskheta (1/3 of the population).⁴



Georgia's administrative structure
(On a province, autonomous region basis/2000)

Towards the end of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Georgia (1989), the Javakheti province consisted of two counties, namely, Ahalkelek⁵ and Ninotsminda (formerly known as Bogdanovka), and the Meskhети province consisted of four counties, namely, Akhalsikhe, Adigeni, Aspindza and Borzhomi. In the 1990s the region's ethnic composition changed in favor of the Armenians when a great part of the Duhobor and Molokan Russians who had migrated to Southern Caucasus in the XIX th Century and who lived in the especially in those parts of the Ninotsminda county that are situated near the Armenian border, migrated to Russia and Canada.⁶ Thus Javakheti has become a province where 91.3 percent of the population is Armenian. And, in the Meskhети province, 1/3 percent of the population is Armenian. After Georgia became independent a great majority of the Russians and, in the wake of the Georgian-Ossetian fighting, 700 Ossetians, left Meskhети. In Borzhomi there is a smaller Armenian population than in Akhalsikhe. If we take up the Javakheti and Meskhети provinces together, the Armenian community accounts for 40 percent of the total population in these two provinces.⁷

The Question of Ahiska Turks' Return to Their Homeland

One of the main factors speeding up the "Armenianization" of the Southwest Georgia was the banishment to Central Asia – mostly to Uzbekistan – of the 115,000 Ahiska Turks⁸ who had been living in 220 villages in Javakheti and most intensively in the Meskhети provinces of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Georgia.⁹ Later the Soviet officials did not permit the Ahiska Turks – according to the 1989 census a total 207,000 Ahiska Turks lived in the entire Union of Soviet Socialist Republics – to return to their homeland.¹⁰ During the USSR era, the Ahiska Turks – whose consciousness of a national identity began to raise in the 1950s – were not able to return to the Soviet Socialist Republic of Georgia except on an "individual" basis or to visit the country as a tourist. During the Zviad Gamsakhurdia

period the Georgian government gave the Ahiska Turks two options: They could reside in Georgia under Georgian identity or settle in some other part of the country rather than in the Meskheta province. The Gamsakhurdia government's offer was, in fact, part of the policy of "Georgianization of Georgia".¹¹ However, the current officials of Georgia believe that this is a good time to solve the problem of the Ahiska Turks – that make up a 368,000 -strong group.¹² In line with a decree issued by President E. Shevardnadze in July 1996, a commission was formed to look into the Ahiska Turks issue. Georgia's National Security Minister Shota Kviraya said that the Turks' return to the region bordering on Turkey and Armenia, was giving Georgia the opportunity to use the "Meskheta" (Ahiskan) card in Caucasia – a region of strategic importance.¹³ Georgia – preparing to use in the 2000s the "Ahiskan" card, that is, the "Muslim Georgians" against the Armenians in Georgia - has not, despite the Turkish expectations, abandoned its plan to "Georgianize" the Ahiska Turks along with the other ethnic groups. A meeting held in Georgia-Gudauri on Sept. 9-11, 2000 under the auspices of the European Commission, discussed the "Return of Ahiska Turks to Georgia Gradually in 12 Years" plan which had been presented to Georgia by the Council of Europe in the framework of Georgia's becoming a Council of Europe member on Jan. 25, 1999. During the meeting Guram Mamulya, head of the Georgian Rehabilitation of the Refugees Agency, insisted that those returning to Georgia should adopt "Georgian names and surnames and Georgian identity." This gives a clue as to how Georgia will interpret and implement the return plan in question which is expected to be approved by the Georgian government.¹⁴

After the dissolution of the USSR, Turkey became increasingly more sensitive to the plight of the Ahiska Turks in the 1990s. With the "Law for the Acceptance into Turkey and Resettlement of the Ahiska Turks" passed in 1992, Turkey agreed not only to the resettlement in Turkey of the Ahiska Turks but also granted dual citizenship to those Ahiska Turks who would remain in the newly-independent former Soviet republics.¹⁵ This law gave a

new impetus to the migration to Turkey of the Ahiska Turks, whose main aim was migrating to Turkey rather than returning to their homeland in Georgia. And the former Soviet Republics where they were living, supported that migration wave. A string of Turkish governments have failed over the past ten years to conduct a substantial policy which could change the direction of the Ahiska Turks' migration – towards Georgia. This de facto situation is giving relief to the Javakheti Armenians.¹⁶

The organizations of the Georgian Armenians: 'Javak Movement', 'Parvents', 'Virk'

As of the late 1950s the USSR administration created a 78 - kilometer "security belt" extending from the Turkey- Soviet Socialist Republic of Georgia border into Javakheti. The security belt, which would normally be 7-27 kilometers wide, was designed to be so much wider in the case of Javakheti to prevent the Ahiska Turks from returning to their homeland. As part of the strict security measures adopted in the security belt, a special visa system was introduced. A visa was needed to be able to enter the region. And, to be able to get such a visa, outsiders needed an invitation issued by the inhabitants of the region.¹⁷ However, the Armenians living in the security belt believed that the strict security measures were aimed mainly at restricting their relations with Armenia. After the tension created in the region by the Nagorno-Karabakh issue escalated during the second half of the 1980s, the Georgian government launched a social and economic development program in the region. However, the Nagorno- Karabakh question stimulated Armenian nationalism in Javakheti and, as of March 1988, many volunteers from Ahalkelek went to the aid of the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh. Thus, the Javak Movement – which has an overt rhetoric of preserving the Armenian cultural heritage, ensuring that the Armenian history and science are taught in the schools in Javakheti, preserving national institutions and ensuring the region's develop-

ment – quickly flourished among the Armenians of Javakheti.¹⁸ Though, in the beginning, there were Russians, Georgians and Greeks too among the Javak leaders, in the post-Gamsakhurdia era this movement turned into a structure protecting the rights of the Javakheti Armenians who are upset by the threats issued by some of the Georgian nationalists. At the beginning, the Javak movement's aim was for the Javakheti region to gain a limited autonomy. Annexation with Armenia was not a goal. And, not wanting to “fight on two fronts at the same time” the Yerevan government was not inclined to adopt the kind of policy which would draw adverse reactions from Georgia. For that reason Yerevan has tried to suppress the Javakheti Armenians' separatist aspirations which Moscow supports in an effort to keep Georgia under control. The clashes between Tbilisi and Ahalkalek, the capital of the Samtshe-Javakheti province, have been mostly over the appointment of governors to the province. The Armenians rejected three would-be governors in a row appointed by Tbilisi. In each instance armed forces organized by Javaksurrounded the governor's office in Ahalkalek and managed to keep the would-be governor from entering the building.¹⁹



**The Samtshe-Javakheti province
(Southwest Georgia/2000)**

During the time of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Georgia, the Ahalkalek and Ninotsminda counties made up the Javakheti

province and the Akhalsikhe, Adigeni, Aspindza and Borzhomi counties made up the Meskheta province. In 1994 these two provinces – which were the Ahiska Turks' homeland – were merged into a single province called Samtshe-Javakheti province. Before Tbilisi reached a deal by making certain concessions, the Samtshe-Javakheti province was being governed by the Provisional House of Representatives. Under the agreement reached between the Ahalkalek Town Assembly Secretary Karahanyan and the Javak movement, the House of Representatives was to “fill the political void” created by the Javakheti Armenians' rejection of the governors appointed by the Tbilisi administration. Thus, in February 1991, the 24-member House of Representatives was formed by the representatives elected by the 64 villages apart from the eight representatives elected by the Ahalkalek county seat. The House of Representatives had a seven-member chairmanship council. After President Gamsakhurdia – who conducted erroneous policies involving the minorities, categorizing the people as the “hosts” and the “guests” – announced during a visit to Akhalsikhe that the Armenians were “guests” in Georgia, The Javak-controlled House of Representatives voted on a motion declaring Javakheti's independence but the motion was killed with the votes of more than half of the House of Representatives members.²⁰

On March 10, 1992 Georgia's Military Council was transformed into the Council of State led by E. Shevardnadze. Under Shevardnadze's rule the Javakheti Armenians continued to distance themselves from the Tbilisi administration. In 1994 especially incidents broke out when a new governor was appointed to Ahalkalek. Thus, during the period in question, the region lived independent of the Tbilisi on a de facto basis.²¹ In 1994 in line with the presidential decree No. 237, the institution of State Representatives Board was introduced in the provinces to ensure order in the post-Soviet system. On the basis of that decree the Meskheta and Javakheti provinces, where the Armenians live, were merged to create the Samtshe-Javakheti province, and Gigla Baramidze was appointed provincial governor.²² The decision to

merge the two provinces may have stemmed from a desire to reduce the concentration of the Armenian population in Javakheti. On the other hand, it is a fact that the merger has expanded the scope of the Armenians' autonomy and/or independence demands – which had been limited to Javakheti in the past. Since Georgia became independent a quarrel has been underway in re the state model between those advocating reinforcement of the central authority (centralists) and those demanding a federative structure (federalists). The great majority of the centralists agree to a federative structure provided that this will be limited to Adzharia and Abkhazia and, for some of them, to South Ossetia. On the other hand, the centralists are concerned over the possibility that if Georgia is given a federative structure this will encourage the quest for autonomy of the minorities – Migrels, Svans, and mostly, the Javakheti Armenians and the Marneuli Azeris – and thus lead to the disintegration of the country. The federalists, on the other hand, argue that 70 percent of the country's population is Georgian, and that the proposed new system would not pose a big threat since the minorities live together in specific areas. While the debate between the centralists and the federalists continue, in September 1997 E. Shevardnadze charged M. Areshidze, who supports federalism, with the task of drafting a bill on the minorities.²³

The Dashnaksutun Party (known in Turkey as Tashnak) was founded in Tbilisi in 1890. After the Bolshevik revolution it focused on activities outside the USSR, intensifying its influence over the Armenian diaspora. The Dashnaksutun Party's program on a possible annexation of Javakheti to Armenia, says: "The Sevres Treaty of Dec. 10, 1920, determined the Armenian lands. According to that agreement Nakhichevan, Ahalkalek and Karabakh regions are parts of the unified Armenia." The pro-Dashnak circles had won a victory at the Javak congress held in 1996. In 1997, partly because of the influence exerted by the Javak's radical wing, which gained strength after that congress, the Javak movement began collecting signatures for a communique despite the pressure put on it by the Georgian police. The communique, which began with the words,

“Esteemed people of Javak”, argued that the creation of the Samtshe-Javakheti was unconstitutional and called for insertion of an “appropriate status for Javakheti” clause into that part of the Constitution which sets the guidelines for the country’s administrative structure. A total 30,000 people signed the communique in Ahalkelek county and 12,000 in Ninotsminda county by the beginning of September 1997. Though the Javak movement is making “mild” demands such as cultural autonomy, there is ample evidence indicating that the Parvents,²⁴ which is a paramilitary organization, has other plans for Javakheti’s future.²⁵

The Javakheti Armenians, who at present have all the elements of cultural autonomy on a de facto basis, do not know the Georgian language. The Georgians living in that province, on the other hand, can speak the Armenian language fluently. The great majority of the children in the region attend Armenian schools. The Georgian Education Ministry officially approves the teaching of Armenian history at schools in Javakheti. Furthermore, under an agreement reached with Armenia, school books come from Yerevan. The students in that province later attend the universities in Yerevan or the Armenian Language and Literature Faculty of the Tbilisi Pedagogical Institute or the Yerevan University’s Ninotsminda-based faculty. The inhabitants of Ahalkelek watch the Armenian TV and read the Javakheti newspaper which appears irregularly. Schevardnadze and Ter-Petrosyan met in Javakheti in 1997. The official communique issued at the end of the meeting said that the Armenians’ cultural autonomy rights would be taken into consideration and that the Armenian national schools would be treated with tolerance. Also, Levon Ter-Petrosyan announced that Yerevan would not support any attempt to destabilize Javakheti and he had the Dashnaks’ Lragir newspaper –which had published a series of articles on a potential annexation of Samtshe-Javakheti by Armenia–closed. In 1998 political analysts wrote that the government change in Armenia would further complicate the situation in Javakheti.²⁶ Yet the new Armenian government’s policy involving Georgia does not seem to be any different than that of its predecessor. Surrounded by

Azerbaijan and Turkey, Armenia considers it more important strategically to maintain good relations with Georgia than compromising these relations by acquiring a mountainous region.

Though Armenia is refraining from debating the Javakheti issue the Javakheti Armenians' quest for autonomy is continuing. And the pro-Dashnak Virk Organization is now leading the social movement in that direction. In fact, on April 3, 2000, that is, prior to the April 9, 2000 presidential election, some 200 Javakheti Armenians organized by Virk gathered in front of the Ahalkelek governor's office, protested Schevardnadze, and staged an "egg-throwing attack." Following the incident Virk leader David Vekilyan announced that they will seek support from the "countries of the world" to ensure that Javakheti will be given an autonomous status.²⁷

After creating the Samtshe-Javakheti province the Georgian authorities failed to formulate a clear cut policy as to what could be done in the region. On the other hand, it is obvious that the Tbilisi administration, which wants to create a Muslim Georgian population from the Ahiska Turks, would like to make the inhabitants of Southwest Georgia too to adopt Georgian language and identity. As if to confirm this conviction, Governor of the Samtshe-Javakheti province G. Baramidze announced during a meeting he held with the local leaders on June 15, 2000 that all civil servants in the province must learn the Georgian language adequately in three years.²⁸

The Importance of the Ahalkelek Russian Base for the Javakheti Armenians

There are, at the Ahalkelek 62nd (Russian) Military Base, 1,964 military personnel, 41 main combat tanks, 114 "BMP and BTR" armored communications vehicles/armored personnel carriers, 46 military vehicles of various sizes, 61 artillery systems and two vehicles for construction of pontoon bridges. Also stationed within the base are the 409th and 412th Mechanized Regiments, the 817th

Artillery Battalion, the 889th Communications Battalion and the 65th Artillery Detachment.²⁹

The Ahalkelek base is the biggest source of employment in Javakheti. More than half of the base personnel are of Javakheti Armenian origin – of whom 70-90 percent are, at the same time, nationals of the Russian Federation. Furthermore, a significant part of the population in the province earns a living by doing business with the Russian army.³⁰ For the Javakheti Armenians the base in question has great significance not only from the economic standpoint but also from the security angle. The base is being seen as a bulwark against Turkey and Georgia. The Javakheti Armenians are convinced that the base could, when required, arm the Armenians – as in the Nagorno-Karabakh war – and provide protection against potential internal or external attacks. The Georgian army, on the other hand, has not even been deployed in the province.³¹ Irakli Batiashvili, former head of the Georgian National Security Organization, has claimed that during the 1994-1996 period the mechanized units at the Ahalkelek Russian Base helped transport arms from Georgia to Armenia.³²

While the Javakheti Armenians are happy about it, Georgia is not happy at all about the Russian military presence which it perceives as a threat to its independence. Georgia has demanded that Russia withdraw its military presence, starting with Vaziani and Gudauta. In fact, the joint communique issued by the Russian Federation and Georgia during the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe summit meeting held in Istanbul on Nov. 17, 1999, announced the decision for Russia to reduce its military presence in Georgia to a maximum 153 tanks, 241 armored military vehicles and 140 artillery guns by Dec. 31, 2000; to evacuate the Vaziani and Gudauta Russian military bases and the Tbilisi 142nd Tank Repair Base by Dec. 31, 2000, to close down the Vaziani and Gudauta military bases by July 1, 2001 and for the two sides to reach a decision about the Batumi and Ahalkelek Russian military bases by the end of 2000.³³

Samtshe-Javakheti's economy

Samtshe-Javakheti province has, among the provinces of Georgia, the worst economy, infrastructure, communication lines and roads, the lowest living standard and the highest unemployment rate. This is a province where privatization has not begun. The collective farms called Kolkhoz have gone bankrupt and agricultural production has faltered. The few industrial plants are in an unusable state. Due to these reasons Samtshe-Javakheti's economy has become dependent on Russia and Turkey over the past ten years. At present a large part of the people living in the province are small farmers who conduct "suitcase trade" with Turkey. In addition to the suitcase trade there are some other job opportunities. There is the Ahalkelek Russian Base. Of the total number of people with jobs in the province, 20 percent works for the local cannery. The sale of oil to Armenia and the quarrying and sale of marble, basalt and construction stones – which are allegedly being exported to Turkey – too provide job opportunities. Also, there are those work for small-scale industrial plants, stores and bakeries.

Due to the high unemployment rate a large-scale migration is taking place from the region mostly to the Krasnodar, Stavropol and Rostov regions of the Russian Federation and to the United States.³⁴ In Javakheti, Armenistan's Dram and the Russian Federation's Rouble – since the personnel of the Ahalkelek Russian Base use the Rouble – are in circulation along with Georgia's Lari. In the province, the private businesses, stores especially, prefer the Rouble. For this reason, to ensure that people, especially the personnel at the Russian bases – will use the Lari, the Georgian president's office issued the Decree No. 348 in the summer of 1997 specifying that "within the national borders Lari is the legal unit of payment." Later, special commissions were founded to ensure the use of Lari in the Samtshe-Javakheti and (predominantly Azeri) Kverno-Kartli provinces.³⁵

The Krasnodar (Amshen) Armenians

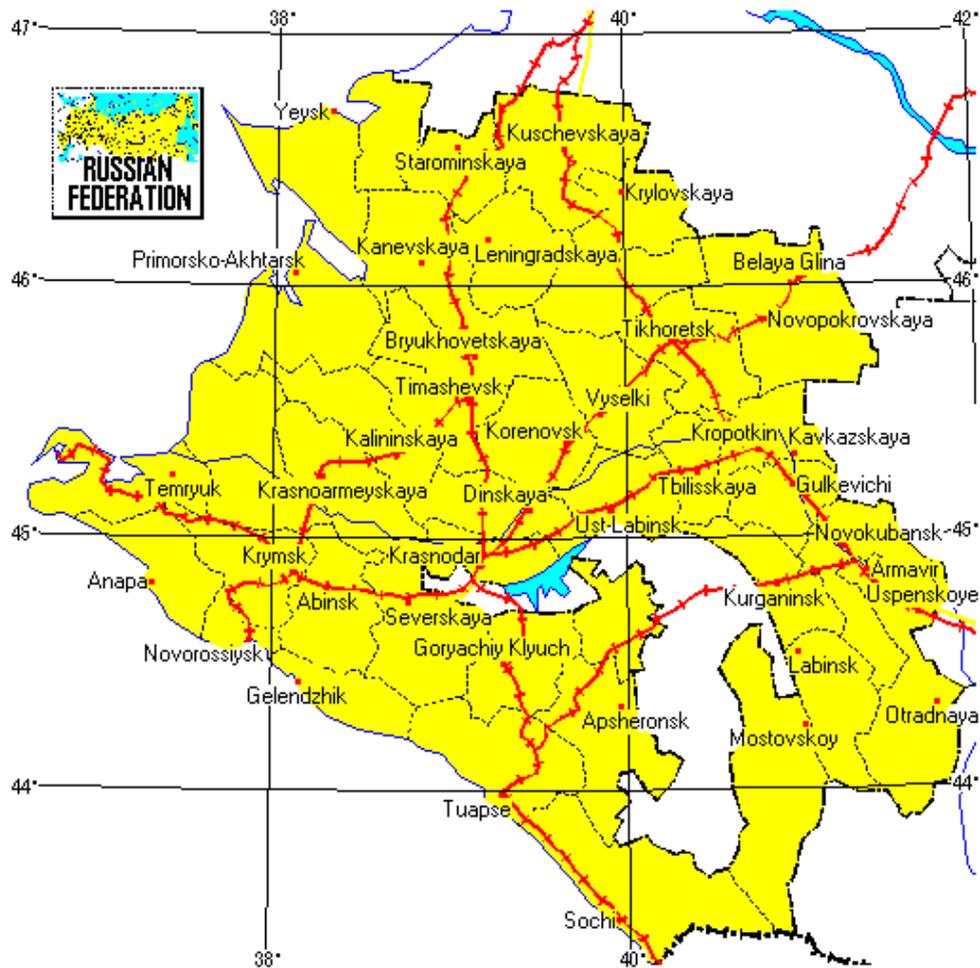
Outside Armenia proper, Armenians live in large concentrations in the Caucasus, not only in Nagorno-Karabakh and Samtshe-Javakheti but also in Krasnodar.

The Krasnodar state, which comprises the Russian Federation's entire Black Sea coastal strip, boasting two major Black Sea port cities, Novorosysk and Sochi, is the Russian equivalent of Turkey's agriculturally, industrially and commercially developed Marmara region. A region with moderate climate and fertile lands, Krasnodar is one of the regions in Russia that attract the highest number of migrants.³⁶ Since the dissolution of the USSR half a million people have migrated into Krasnodar. Currently 78 ethnic groups live in the region. Armenians top the list of the people migrating into the Krasnodar. Since the Armenians living in the Black Sea regions of Russia and Abkhazia are mostly of Hemshin origin (Hemshin is an area in Turkey's Eastern Black Sea region), they have come to be called "Amshen Armenians" in Northern Caucasus.³⁷ Since the time of the USSR, there has been an intense movement of Armenian migrant workers into the Krasnodar state from both Armenia and Southwestern Georgia. Furthermore, due to the Georgian-Abkhazian war, Abkhazian Georgians and Armenians – reportedly amounting to some 40 percent of the total population of Abkhazia – migrated to Krasnodar in 1992.³⁸ Thus, by now, the Armenians have become the second-biggest ethnic group in Krasnodar after the Russians. In order to regulate the Armenian migration into Krasnodar the Russian Federation signed a "Resettlement of Voluntary Migrants" agreement with Armenia in 1997. However, this agreement failed to regulate the Armenian migration. In fact it led to a further increase in the number of Armenians migrating into Krasnodar. For this reason the Russian Federation's Federal Assembly has postponed the ratification of the agreement.³⁹

The Amshen Armenians have become organized in those cities and villages in Krasnodar with a predominantly Amshen

Armenian population and developed their relations with the Armenian diaspora. The most important Armenian establishment in Krasnodar is the “Armenian Science and Culture Center” called “Amshen.” The center in question was founded by the Amshen Armenians living in Krasnodar’s Tuapse and Apsheron counties. This center was founded to provide information to the Amshen Armenians about the activities of the Armenian establishments of Armenia, Nagorno-Karabakh and the Armenian diaspora and, at the same time, relaying news about the Amshen Armenians to the Russian, Armenian, and Armenian diaspora press. The center publishes a newspaper named “Yerkramas.”⁴⁰ Tigran Tavadyan, the editor-in-chief of that newspaper, is, at the same time, the elected chairman of the center and serves as spokesman for the Amshen Armenians.⁴¹

The Amshen (Hemshin) Armenians, who consider the Kuban region which includes Krasnodar “historical Armenian lands” and who have become fully organized within that state, launched a quest for political-cultural autonomy in Krasnodar after 1995.⁴² For this purpose, the Amshen Armenians, which make up the majority of the population in a region extending from the south of Sochi to the north of the Gagra city in Abkhazia, have gone on a quest for autonomy in Adler which is situated on Russia’s Black Sea coast. And, to lay down the legal grounds for that they began to strive in the summer of 2000 to have a referendum staged in order to create an “Armenian National Zone” in Adler.⁴³ The Krasnodar state has entered into a sensitive period from the standpoint of both Moscow and Ankara since, along with the Armenians’ quest for autonomy in Krasnodar, Kurds as well made demands in 1990s to create an “Autonomous Kurdish Zone” in Krasnodar and asked Putin in April 2000 to “give Kurds cultural rights” in Moscow, Saratov and Krasnodar.⁴⁴ The Blue Stream Natural Gas Pipe Line Project being implemented between Russia and Turkey, increases the Krasnodar state’s importance for Turkey.⁴⁵



The Krasnodar State (Russian Federation-Northwestern Caucasus/2000)

While Ankara seems to be still in the dark, Moscow has been well aware of the developments taking place in Krasnodar. The administrators of Krasnodar – a region which, with its economy and local administrative structure, is more nationalistic and conservative than the other administrative units in Russia – and the Slavic Kazakhs (Cossacks) are being increasingly upset by the Armenian claims on Krasnodar and the way the Armenian population in the Krasnodar state keeps growing.⁴⁶ Since communist-nationalist

Nikolay Kondratenko was elected governor of Krasnodar in 1996 the nationalistic line of the Krasnodar administration has become more pronounced. Kondratenko is hostile towards all peoples, especially towards Jews, with the exception of the Cossacks and the local Russians, and is considered a “xenocrat”.⁴⁷ AKCA, the Cossacks’ paramilitary organization which has 3,500 active members, has adopted the same policy with Kondratenko. In fact, the tension which has continually increased since 1996 has caused skirmishes between Armenian and Cossack youths from time to time.⁴⁸

Speaking at a meeting on “Krasnodar state’s international relations and the conditions for being accepted as immigrants” in June 2000, Deputy Governor Krasnodar Nikolay Karchenko focused on the Krasnodar Armenians, saying that “the Armenians see Kuban as their historical homeland, that for that reason there has been a systematic Armenian migration into that state, that the Armenians have become the second-biggest ethnic group in the state accounting for 38 percent of Krasnodar’s population⁴⁹, that the immigrants are forming colonies along the Black Sea coast, that in Sochi where the ethnic-demographic structure has been rapidly altered in the Armenians’ favor the Armenian population has doubled in recent years, that some of the executives of the Sochi-based Armenian nongovernmental organizations have relations with the Armenian terrorist organizations, that the aims of these nongovernmental organizations is to create an ‘Armenian National Zone’ in Adler, and that this has created an ‘Armenian problem’ in Sochi.”⁵⁰

The “Amshen” members who gathered at Novomihaylovski, avillage in Krasnodar’s Tuapse county, on July 15, 2000, claimed that Krasnodar Governor N. Kondratenko and his aides were inciting the Cossacks to trigger clashes between the Cossacks and the Armenians, and, on July 21, 2000, expressing the hope that Krasnodar will not be a region of clashes such as Chechnya, Crimea and Abkhazia, they filed a complaint with Putin against the local administrators of Krasnodar.⁵¹ Deputy Chairman of the Russian Federation’s Ethnic Organizations Congress Antuan Arakelianda, whom the Congress has chosen as Russia’s Human Rights Envoy,

held a press conference in Yerevan on July 19, 2000 and accused Krasnodar's local administrators – starting with Governor Kondratenko – of encouraging negative actions against the Caucasian peoples and of creating ethnic tension in Krasnodar. He said that the Armenians living in that province no longer knew who was to preserve and implement the laws.⁵²

The Amshen Armenians' efforts to bring about a referendum towards creation of an "Armenian National Zone" in Adler, promptly triggered a "counter-referendum proposal." At a meeting in Krasnodar on July 22, 2000 attended by the Taman representatives, Kuban Cossacks' unions and members of the Otechestvo movement – which is under Krasnodar Governor N. Kondratenko's control – the Krimski Cossacks said that a referendum should be staged in order to learn what the inhabitants of the "Krimsk and Abinsk regions"⁵³ were thinking about the Ahiska Turks, Crimean Tartars and the other Caucasian-Asian peoples [Armenians included.] The meeting accepted that proposal. And in order to collect signatures with the aim of bringing about such a referendum, the Western Kuban Russians' Union was established.⁵⁴

Conclusion

The Samtshe-Javakheti and Krasnodar, which Turkey perceives as "distant lands situated near Turkey" are pregnant with new incidents due to the multidimensional Armenian problem which has become increasingly prominent over the past ten years.

Since it gained independence Georgia has become a potential "corridor" for both the energy and transportation routes extending from the East to the West. The Nagorno-Karabakh War has made Georgia all the more important in this respect. Armenia has gained access to Russia and to the West via Georgia. Turkey has gained access to Azerbaijan via Georgia. And Turkey and Azerbaijan have begun conducting their unregistered commerce and tourism activities with Armenia via Georgia. Georgia is aware of the fact that if, in the

wake of the clashes in its Northern and Northwestern regions, that is, in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, a fresh ethnic clash breaks out, this time in the Southwestern part of the country, that is, in Samtshe-Javakheti, this may lead to a permanent fragmentation of Georgia.

Schevardnadze is trying to carry out his foreign policy by establishing a balance between two groups of states: with Turkey, Azerbaijan, Ukraine, and the western countries on one hand and Russia, Armenia and some other countries on the other hand. The EU and France have reached an agreement with Georgia and Armenia for reconstruction of the Poti-Hashuri-Borzhomi-Akhalsikhe-Gyumri-Yerevan-Megri highway between Georgia and Armenia. In 1996 Georgia, Azerbaijan and Ukraine signed an agreement to design and implement – in close cooperation with Uzbekistan – a project for creation of a “transportation corridor” linking Tashkent-Baku-Kiev, a project which later came to be known as the “Eurasia transportation corridor.” The agreement in question formed the nucleus of GUUAM.⁵⁵ Construction of the Eurasian transportation corridor, the Baku-Ceyhan Crude Oil Pipe Line Project which Turkey keeps on the agenda, and the Kars-Tbilisi Railway Project⁵⁶, are initiatives which could reduce the Russian influence in Southern Caucasus.⁵⁷ For this reason, there is the possibility of Russia triggering and/or supporting a clash in the Samtshe-Javakheti province which is on the itinerary of the energy and transportation corridors in question, a clash which would cause these projects to be shelved indefinitely. Such a clash would, at the same time, indicate the need in the region for the presence of the Ahalkalek Russian Base, and thus bolster the base’s current status.

Yerevan, which does not have diplomatic relations with Azerbaijan and Turkey, has two neighbors with whom it has established diplomatic relations: Iran and Georgia. Yerevan is not supporting the separatist movements in Georgia so as not to disrupt its relations with Georgia – the gateway through which it gains access to Russia, to the West and to the Black Sea. With long-term thinking, Yerevan feels happier about the newly-created Samtshe-Javakheti province – which was created by merging the Meskheta

and Javakheti provinces after Georgia became independent – than it had about the Javakheti province which existed during the time of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Georgia. This is because this new province is adjacent to Adzharia – which is situated on the Black Sea coast and has good relations with both Yerevan and Moscow. Thus, Yerevan has come one step closer to its ideal of reaching the Black Sea.

Furthermore, Armenia and the Javakheti Armenians use the Sarp (Artvin-Hopa) border gate – which provides access to Adzharia – and the Turkgozu (Ardahan-Posof) border gate – which provides access to the Samtshe-Javakheti province – in their trade with Turkey (especially with Turkey's Eastern Black Sea region). Armenia and the Javakheti Armenians will get greater relief with the opening of the planned Aktas (Ardahan-Cildir) border gate towards the Georgian province in question, Aktas being situated nearer to Armenia than the Sarp and Turgozu border gates. Thus, Turkey, while trying to cultivate better relations with Georgia, will indirectly be helping Armenia and the Javakheti Armenians.⁵⁸

And the fact that the Ahiska Turks, a natural part of the Anatolian Turkish entity, may be able to return to Samtshe-Javakheti, is a factor which can affect the province's future. If the Schevardnadze administration, which has been trying to have the Russian bases in Georgia closed down, uses the Ahiska Turks card to balance the Armenians, new incidents will be likely to break out in Southwestern Georgia. And if Turkey continues to resettle in Anatolia the Ahiska Turks, this will give relief to the Samtshe-Javakheti Armenians and Krasnodar's local administrators. In fact, Krasnodar's local administrators have adopted a policy of "discreetly implementing in stages a plan aimed at upsetting the Ahiska Turks living in that province – which has strategic importance for Russia – and making them migrate to Turkey."⁵⁹

The Russian Federation, which has become the protector of the Samtshe-Javakheti Armenians, has only one "exit gate" left since the dissolution of the USSR: Krasnodar. And the Russian Federation can hardly be expected to support the Amshen

Armenians' – and other ethnic groups' – quest for autonomy in Krasnodar. For this reason, Moscow will inevitably pursue two different policies in those two regions.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. In some articles written in Turkish “Javakheti” is referred to as “Cevaheti” or, due to the influence of translations made from Russian, as “Javahetia”.
2. Situated on the Georgian side of the Turkish-Georgian border are the Adzharia Autonomous Republic and the Samtshe-Javakheti province and, on the Turkish side of the border, the Artvin and Ardahan provinces. The Adigeni, Akhalsikhe, Aspindza and Ahalkelek counties of the Samtshe-Javakheti province are adjacent to Turkey, that is, to the Ardahan province.
3. “Meskhet” is generally spelt as “Mesket” in Turkish texts. In this article the correct spelling, “Meskhet”, has been preferred.
4. The ratio of the Armenian population according to the 1989 census: Ahalkelek 91.3 percent / Aspindza 19.1 percent / Ninotsminda 89.6 percent. Armenian sources claim that Armenians account for 97 percent of the population in Javakheti. The Eri newspaper which appears in Georgian (April 10, 1991) and the Panorama Nedeli magazine which appears in Russian (No:32, 1997), said that the Georgians accounted for 2.5 percent of the population in the Javakheti province. (B. Baranowski, K. Baranowski, *Historia Gruzii*, Wroclaw, 1897, pp. 170-173; Y.D. Anchabadze, N.P. Volkova, *The Old Tbilisi, the City and its Dwellers in the 19th Century*, Moscow, 1990, p. 33; Anorzej Maryanski, *Przemiany Ludnosciowe w GSSR*, Warszawa-Krako, 1995, pp 185-191, quoted by Voitsek Guretski, *The Question of Javakheti*, *Caucasian Regional Studies*, Volume III (1), 1998, pp. 1-2, <http://poli.vub.ac.be>; Ugur Akinci, “Javakhetia: The Next Nagorno-Karabakh?”, *A Journal of West Asian Studies*, Volume I (2), December 1997, p. 1; Stephen F. Jones, *Georgia: the trauma of statehood*, *New States New Politics: Building the Post-Soviet Nations* (com. by) Ian Bremmer and Ray Taras, Cambridge Uni. Press, Cambridge, 1997, p. 543.
5. “Ahalkelek” is “Ahalkalaki” in Georgian language.
6. The web site of the Georgian Parliament:
http://www.parliament.ge/GENERAL/C_D/ethnic.htm
7. Javakheti province: 1) Ahalkelek county: area: 1,235 square kilometers, county population: 69,103, population of the county seat: 15,192, distance from Tbilisi: 278 kilometers, 2) Ninotsminda county: area: 1,353 square kilometers, county population: 37,895, population of the county seat: 6,944,

distance from Tbilisi: 167 kilometers. The Javakheti province accounted for 2 percent of the country's population and for 3.7 percent of the country's total area. Meskheti province: 1) Akhalsikhe county: area: 1,010 square kilometers, county population: 54,822, population of the county seat: 24,650, distance from Tbilisi: 207 kilometers. 2) Adigeni county: area: 799.5 square kilometers, population: 21,282, population of the county seat: 1,239, distance from Tbilisi: 236 kilometers. 3) Aspindza county: area: 825.3 kilometers, population: 13,432, population of the county seat: 3,783, distance from Tbilisi: 239 kilometers. 4) Borzhomi county: area: 1,189 square kilometers, population: 38,973, population of the county seat: 17,764, distance from Tbilisi: 160 kilometers. The Meskheti province accounted for 2.4 of the country's population and for 5.5 percent of the country's total area. Geographical conditions set Southwest Georgia – which consists of Javakheti and Meskheti – apart from the rest of the country. Southwest Georgia has a harsh climate, getting snowfall for six months a year with the temperatures going down to minus 20 degrees. In fact it came to be known as the “Siberia of Georgia.” Javakheti is situated on a high plateau at an altitude of 1,750 meters surrounded by old volcanos. Many villages of Ninotsminda too are at a high altitude: 2,000 meters. Javakheti and Meskheti, where criminals were kept in the XIX th Century, has always been a place for temporary settlements. In Meskheti, a great part of which lies in the Akhalsikhe depression, there are apple orchards, vineyards and forests. (V. Guretski, The Question of Javakheti, pp. 2-3; the web site of the Georgian Parliament: <http://www.parliament.ge/GENERAL/stat/emain.htm>)

8. Georgian official line is one of referring to the Ahiska Turks as “Meskhetians.
9. The Kipchak Turks who arrived in the region in the XI st Century and the Turks from Konya, Yozgat and Tokat who were settled in the region during the reign (1573-1578) of the Ottoman Sultan MuradIII who seized the region in the XVI th Century, made up the Ahiska Turks. (<http://www.soros.org/fmp2/html/meskone.html>). M.Necati Ozfatura, Ahiska Turkleri, 15, 07, 2000, Turkey, Istanbul).
10. The Ahiska and Karapapak Turks in Georgia are Sunni-Hanefi Muslims.
11. In the framework of the policy of turning the Ahiska Turks into a “Muslim force” 100 young members of the Khsna (Liberation) Society, all of them Ahiska Turks, were admitted into the Tbilisi Adaptation Center in 1990. At the center in question these youths were taught the Georgian language; their names and surnames were “Georgianized”, and, after they were thus turned into “Muslim Georgians”, they were settled in those areas of Georgia outside Ahiska. However, the Ahiska Turks’ Vatan (Homeland) Society is opposing this policy. Members of that society want to return to their homeland without changing their identity.

- (<http://raccoon.riga.lv/minelres/archive//12221997-11:12:04-13789.html>)
12. As of the year 2000 there are 135,000 Ahiska Turks in Azerbaijan plus 105,000 in Kazakhstan, 35,000 in Kyrgyzstan, 10,000 in Uzbekistan, 65,000 in Russia, 15,000 in Ukraine, 2,500 in Georgia and 20,525 in Turkey – of which 15,312 live in the Bursa province. Ahiska Turks have settled in Turkey as of 1993 and they have founded 12 nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in this country. (M. Necati Ozfatura, Ahiskali Turkler (Turks of Ahiska), Turkey, April 28, 2000, Istanbul).
 13. Quoted by V. Guretski in *The Question of Javakheti*, pp. 2-3, from Ed. V. Tishkov, *The Peoples of Russia*, Encyclopedia, Moscow, 1994, Y. Broiso, I. Prokhorov, *Turk-Meskhetians*, pp. 342-344, and Vadim Tuttunik, *Turks from Meskhetia: Yesterday and Today. This is How it Was*, National Repressions in the USSR, 1919-1952. *Repressed Nations Today*. Edited by Svetlana Aliyeva. Volume III, Moscow, 1993, pp. 145-163, and Nodar Broladze, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, No: 135, July 25, 1996; Svetlana Chervonnaya, adapted to English by FUEN-Secretariat, *The Problem of the Repatriation of the Meskhet-Turks*, MINELRES: FUEN report on Meskhet Turks, 1998, pp. 1, 3, 4. (http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/MINELRES/min/meskh/FUEN_Meskh.htm)
 14. Those attending the meeting in question were Georgia's Minister for Refugees Valeri Vasakidze, head of Georgia's Rehabilitation of the Refugees Agency Guram Mamuluya, Chairman of the Georgian Parliament's Human Rights Committee Yelena Tevdoradze and European Commission representative Elliot Jarmando (Anatolia News Agency, Sept. 13, 2000, Ankara).
 15. "The Law for the Acceptance into Turkey and Resettlement of Ahiska Turks", Law No: 3835, the legislation date: July 2, 1992, the date on which it appeared in the Official Gazette: July 11, 1992, Issue: 21281, Ankara.
 16. For more detailed information on Ahiska Turks see: Kiyas Aslan, *Ahiska Turkleri*, *Ahiska Turkleri Kultur ve Dayanisma Dernegi Yay.*, Ankara, 1995 (Ahiska Turks, a publication of the Ahiska Turks Culture and Solidarity Association), Zakir B. Avsar and Zafer S. Tuncalp, *Surgunde 50. Yil: Ahiska Turkleri*, TBMM Kultur, Sanat ve Yayin Kurulu Yayinlari (The 50th Year in Exile: Ahiska Turks, a publication of the Turkish Grand National Assembly Culture, Arts and Publication Board), Ankara, 1995, ISBN-975-7479-45-4.; Ali Pasa Veyseloglu, *Ahiska Turklerinin Drami* (The Drama of the Ahiska Turks), Ocak Yay., Ankara, 1999.
 17. Vadim Tuttunik, "Turks from Meskhetia: Yesterday and Today. This is How It Was", quoted by V. Guretski in "The Question of Javakheti", p. 3.
 18. There have been claims to the effect that Samuel Petrosyan and David Rostakyan were among the founders of the Javak Movement and that it was led by Ervan Sirinyan. Javak created its own police force and began collecting money from the people. Similar methods had reportedly been used

- in Nagorno-Karabakh two decades ago. (Ugur Akinci, "Javakhetia: The Next Nagorno-Karabakh?", p. 3.; Vicken Cheterian, *Ethnic Conflict in Georgia*, Le Monde Diplomatique, December 1998, Paris).
19. The Javakheti region sent to Nagorno-Karabakh not only large numbers of volunteers but also weapons during the war. Since Javakheti Armenians are now keeping in their houses the weapons which were used in the Nagorno-Karabakh war, Javakheti is Georgia's best armed region not counting Abkhazia. Filaret Berikyan who had taken part in the Nagorno-Karabakh war stated that the Javakheti Armenians' awareness of their "national identity" was at a higher level than other Armenians, and that they formed their own units in Nagorno- Karabakh. (V. Guretski, *The Question of Javakheti*, p. 4). In 1990 leader of Georgia's Freedom Party Rezo Shavishvili said, "If the Nagorno-Karabakh war had not happened, annexation of the Armenian region of Georgia into Armenia, was going to be demanded." (Igor Rotar, "Tbilisi Has Only Partial Control Over Georgia's Armenian Regions", *Prism: A Bi-weekly on the Post-Soviet States*, Jamestown Foundation, Washington D.C., No:10, Pt:3, May 15, 1998, p. 1. http://www.jamestown.org/pubs/view/pri_004_010_004.htm).
 20. The security belt problem arose once again during Gamsakhurdia's presidency. According to that new law enacted after Georgia became independent, the security belt was to extend up to 21 kilometers into the region from the border. That meant that the best part of the Ahalkelek county would be inside the security belt. According to Filaret Berikyan, "With the new security belt Gamsakhurdia aimed to settle the Georgians of Meskhети and Javakheti in the lands of the Russians living in Ninotsminda. He thus aimed to create a buffer zone inhabited by Georgians between Armenia and the Armenians of Javakheti. That was why the Merab Kostava Foundation had persuaded the Russians in the region to migrate and bought their houses." V. Guretski, *The Question of Javakheti*, pp. 5-6; I. Rotar, "Tbilisi Has Only Partial Control Over Georgia's Armenian Regions". p. 1.
 21. In the Nov. 5, 1995 election the Javakheti province voted for E. Shevardnadze's Citizens' Union, for Aslan Abashidze's Resurrection Union and for communist candidate Jumber Patiashvili who was E. Shevardnadze's biggest rival in the presidential election. David Rostakyan argues that "In Javakheti, Patiashvili won that election in both the towns and the villages. But through election fraud Shevardnadze was declared to be the winner." In the 1995 general election four ethnic Armenians were elected to the parliament on a Georgian Citizens' Union Party ticket, two from Tbilisi and one each from Ahalkelek and Ninotsminda. (V. Guretski, *The Question of Javakheti*, pp. 6, 9.) In the latest general election held on Oct. 31, 1999, Melik Rayisiyan, a man of Armenian origin who was elected to Parliament from Ahalkelek under a majority first-past-the-post system, has become the

spokesman for the Georgian Armenians with the policy he has pursued over the past year. M. Rayisiyan, born on April 11, 1961, is an economist. He is a member of the Georgian Citizens' Unity Party and serves as a member of the parliament's Taxes and Revenues Committee.

(<http://www.parliament.ge/GENERAL/stat/emain.htm>).

22. The Samtshe-Javakheti province was created by bringing together the Ahalkelek and Ninotsminda counties of the former Samtshe province and the Akhalsikhe, Adigeni, Aspindza and Borzhomi counties of the former Javakheti province. There are five cities, seven towns and 250 villages in the new province which has an area of 6,412.9 square kilometers. Georgians account for a mere 9.3 percent of the people living in the province. (<http://www.parliament.ge/GENERAL/stat/emain.htm>)
23. According to the Georgian Constitution which was adopted on March 24, 1994, the way part of the central government's powers would be "distributed" was to be determined later by reorganizing the country's administrative structure. And that would come after the reorganization of the judicial system. But the proposed system could not be put into practice. (Gurcistan Anayasasi [Georgian Constitution], Article 2/Paragraph 3, TICA, Ankara, 1999, p. 68). The Javak movement believes that the two provinces have been merged because of a desire to ease the concentration of the Armenian population in Javakheti. Furthermore, a meeting of the Ahalkelek town council chaired by T. Karahanyan, decided that the Decree No. 237 was targeted directly against the Armenians. Also, according to R. Rostakyan: "Creation of the Samtshe-Javakheti province was unconstitutional because the Decree No. 237 was aimed at creating a State Representatives Board. It was not aimed at creating a new province. Furthermore, a referendum would be needed to alter Georgia's administrative structure." V. Guretski, *The Question of Javakheti*, pp 7.9.
24. "Parvent" is the name given to the "Paravani" lake in Javakheti by the Armenians.
25. Prior to the 1996 congress leaders of the Javak movement –which had 10,000 active members, 5,000 of them officially registered – had announced that their aim was not to gain independence for Javakheti. D. Rostakyan said that their aim was not to create another Nagorno-Karabakh, that they wanted to secure the rights of Georgia's Armenians, that they needed schools providing education in the Armenian language, and that the Georgian Constitution's envisaging the granting of cultural autonomy to Javakheti in the framework of a future federative structure, was the best guarantee. A significant part of the members of the Javak's radical wing are under the influence of Armenia's Dashnaksutyun Party which wants Javakheti to join Armenia. The pro-Georgian wing of the Javak movement is led by the Javakheti deputy and his brother as well as the prosecutor of the province and some other local

- dignitaries. V. Guretski, *The Question of Javakheti*, pp. 8-9, 14.; Charles van der Leeuw, *Georgia's Troubled Corners-Javakheti: Karabakh Revisited*, *The Azeri Times*, March 1999, p. 1. *Asbarez Daily News Papers Archives*. (<http://www.asbarez.com/archives/1999/990319at.htm>.)
26. I. Rotar, "Tbilisi Has Only Partial Control Over Georgia's Armenian Regions", p. 2.
 27. *MEDIAMAX*, April 5, 2000, Yerevan; *Ozgur Politika*, April 6, 2000, Istanbul.
 28. The first reaction to Baramidze's words came from M. Rayisiyan, a member of the Georgian Parliament who is of Armenian origin. Rayisiyan met with Schevardnadze and denounced Baradnidze's stance. *Armenpress*, June 20, 2000, Yerevan.
 29. Irakli Aladashvili, *Russian Military Bases in South Caucasus, The Army And Society in Georgia*, October 1999, Volume 7, No 10 (40), Tbilisi, p. 5.
 30. M. Rayisiyan opposes closure of the base for economic reasons, stressing that part of the people of Ahalkelek work for the base and sell goods to the base. *The Georgian Times*, June 28, 2000, Tbilisi.
 31. In 1998 armed Armenian groups stopped at the Javakheti border the incoming Georgian units which were holding a joint military exercise with the Russian troops, and made them turn back by threatening to open fire. Though that incident made a bombshell effect in Tbilisi, nothing was done to apprehend the persons responsible for that incident. C. Leeuw, *Georgia's Troubled Corners - Javakheti: Karabakh Revisited*, p. 1.
 32. Though Javak leaders deny that they have a close relationship with the Ahalkelek Base where Javakheti Armenians are employed, M. Areshidze has claimed that the arms the Parvents have in their possession had been obtained from the Ahalkelek Russian Base with the aim of using these in the Karabakh war. Meanwhile, Georgian Deputy Defense Minister Gen. Guram Nikolaishvili, who has announced that they have reached an agreement on the Russian base – with the following stipulations: 1) Russia must guarantee Georgia's territorial integrity, 2) Russia must help Georgia found its own national army, 3) And the armed groups on Georgian soil not affiliated with either the Georgian army or the Russian army, must be disbanded – is also admitting the presence of paramilitary organizations in Georgia. And, on the security of the Javakheti Armenians, Rostakyan, one of the founders of Javak, said, "The Javakheti Armenians oppose the Georgian government's demand that the Russian military presence be removed from the country, saying that they must have security (against Turkey.) Georgia, a small country, cannot be a guarantee against Turkey which massacred 1.5 million Armenians in 1915." (V. Guretski, *The Question of Javakheti*, pp. 6, 8-9, 12-13). Also, there have been claims to the effect that, led by Dorik Deboyan, one of the Javak leaders, people have been "conscripted" from among the

- Armenian population in Ahalkelek and Akhalsikhe, that there has been an intention to create battalions consisting of Armenians equipped with the weapons of the Ahalkelek Russian Base, and that the Javakheti Armenians have been refusing to serve in the Georgian army. Javak's pro-Dashnak radical wing has been putting pressure on the local people not to have the Ahalkelek Russian Base removed. In fact, Sergey Dorbinyan, one of the local administrators, have been beaten up due to the claims that he had demanded the dismantling of the base. (U. Akinci, "Javakhetia: The Next Nagorno-Karabakh?", p. 2; I. Rotar, "Tbilisi Has Only Partial Control Over Georgia's Armenian Regions", p. 2.)
33. Hasan Kanbolat, Rusya Federasyonu'nun Guney Kafkasya'daki Askeri Varligi ve Gurcistan Boyutu (The Russian Federation's Military Presence in Southern Caucasus and the Georgian Dimension), Stratejik Analiz, Volume I (3), July 2000, ASAM, Ankara, pp. 42-47.
 34. http://www.parliament.ge/GENERAL/C_D/ethnic.html
 35. There have been claims to the effect that after the independence Javakheti came to be neglected even more, that the Tbilisi government did not extend loans, that western investors preferred to make investments in Tbilisi and Rustavi, and that the province does not have a lobby protecting its rights in Tbilisi since its deputies are pro-government. Javak leaders think that if Georgia is given a federative structure in a way that Javakheti's status would be determined as well, the living standard in the province will improve and the region will be able to attract foreign investments. The following quote is relayed by D. Karahanyan: "Industrial plants could be set up in Javakheti jointly by Georgia-Armenia and Georgia-Russia and operated by using the equipment to be provided by the Ahalkelek Russian Base. But the Georgian authorities do not view in a warm light such joint investments. Those who go abroad to work generally find only provisional jobs. However, the fact that the monthly unemployment pay is 8 Lari (roughly \$4) in Georgia while one kilogram of pork costs 4.5 Lari (roughly \$2.25) in Ahalkelek, gives a good idea about the necessity to migrate." V. Guretski, *The Question of Javakheti*, pp. 10-11.; C. Leeuw, *Georgia's Troubled Corners - Javakheti: Karabakh Revisited*, p. 2.
 36. An estimated 2,500 Turkish nationals are believed to be in Northwestern Caucasus, some 2,000 in Sochi and the rest in the Adigey Federated Republic, for trade, for work or with the aim of settling in those places.
 37. Armenian sources refer to Hemshin as "Amshen" and describe Turkey's Eastern Black Sea and East Anatolia regions as "Western Armenia".
 38. The Abkhazian refugees in question still do not have residence permits for staying in Krasnodar. And since they had left Abkhazia prior to the "Georgian Citizenship" law dated March 23, 1993, they are not being considered Georgian nationals by the Georgian authorities.

39. Relayed from the Yerkramas newspaper (Krasnodar) by MEDIAMAX, June 23, 2000, Yerevan. (<http://racon.riga.lv/minelres/archive/02181999-22:36::51-9764.html>).
40. Yerkramas” means “part of homeland” in Armenian language. And the name of that newspaper is the clear proof of the fact that the Amshen Armenians see Krasnodar as a “historical” part of Armenia. The Yerkramas newspaper, which appears in Armenian and in Russian, was founded in 1996. A3 size, it appears twice a month and has 12 pages. The web site of the newspaper: <http://yerkramas.al.ru/>. The web page of the Armenians of the Russian Federation: <http://www.armenia.ru>
41. Relayed from the Yerkramas newspaper (Krasnodar) by MEDIAMAX, June 21, 2000, Yerevan.
42. Armenians’ “historical rights” claims on Krasnodar-Kuban are groundless. Krasnodar’s Southwestern (Sochi) region is the historical land of the Wubih people and the remaining parts the historical lands of the Adige people. In the XIX th Century the Tzarist Russia which had emerged victorious from the Caucasian-Russian war, committed genocide and ethnic cleansing in the region in 1864 and resettled in the thus vacated lands the Slavic Kazakhs (Cossacks) brought in from Ukraine. (For the Armenian viewpoint see: Nazmi Gul, Yirmibirinci Yuzyilin Baslangicina “Haydat” (Ermenilerin Davasi) [“Haydat” (The Armenian cause) at the Start of the Twenty-First Century], Stratejik Analiz, Volume: 1(2), June 2000, ASAM, Ankara, pp. 25-28.)
43. Relayed from Yerkramas newspaper by MEDIAMAX, July 21,2000, Yerevan.
44. There are approximately 300,000 Kurds in the Russian Federation and some 153,000 in Central Asia and Southern Caucasus. In the 1990s, the Kurds living in the former Soviet republics have been observed to be shifting towards Krasnodar and engaging in a quest for autonomy in that region. Indeed, in July 1990 the Kurds’ Yakbun (meaning Unity in Kurdish) organization asked Gorbachev to allot a piece of land for Kurdish migrants in Southern Russia (Northern Caucasus) and issued a call for creation of an “Autonomous Kurdish Region.” Following Yakbun’s call, 18,000 Kurds from Armenia and 2,000 Kurds from Uzbekistan migrated to Krasnodar. Also, Kurds in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan too began to move into Krasnodar. At a meeting held in Moscow on April 28-30, 2000 by the PKK-controlled Russian Kurds’ Cultural Federation on the “Granting of the cultural rights of the Kurds in the Russian Federation” theme, the government of the Russian Federation was asked to give the Kurds in Moscow, Saratov and Krasnodar cultural rights. The Russian Kurds’ Cultural Federation was created by bringing together the Moscow, Saratov and Krasnodar Kurdish Cultural Autonomy Associations. (Andrew Wilson, Nina Bachkatov, Russia Revised,

- Andre Deutch Limited, 1992, London, ISBN, O 233 987673, p. 123; Kurdish Observer web site: <http://www.kurdishobserver.com/2000/04/30/hab02.html> 30.04/ 03.05/ 16.06/ 17.08.2000).
45. Krasnodar is on the path of both the Baku-Novorossysk Crude Oil Pipe Line and the Blue Stream Natural Gas Pipe Line. The Blue Stream Pipe Line descends into the Black Sea at Beregovaya near Djubga which is situated between Tuapse and Gelincik, and, after covering an 376-kilometer stretch underwater across the Black Sea, arrives at the Turkish coast near Samsun.
 46. From Feudalism to Capitalism , Izvestiya, July 22, 2000, Moscow.
 47. While Kondratenko adopted a policy of anti-semitism the Jewish population in Krasnodar has declined to 1,500 because of the Jewish immigration to Israel in the 1990s. Celestine Bohlen, Where Russians Are Hurting, Racism Takes Root, The New York Times, Nov. 16, 1998.
 48. In the villages of Anapa there have been skirmishes continually between the Cossack and Armenian youths. Relayed from Yerkramas (Krasnodar) newspaper by MEDIAMAX, June 6, 2000, Yerevan.
 49. In 1997 Krasnodar had a population of 5.7 million. According to Karchenko's statement the Armenian population in the region should be around 2 million (38 percent). However, the Russian Institute of Statistics gives the Russian population in Krasnodar as 4,360,200, the Armenian population as 241,000 (5 percent) while the Armenian diaspora says there are 800,000 Armenians (16 percent) in Krasnodar. (MPA News Agency, July 6, 2000, Baku.
 50. Karchenko's statement appeared in the June 6,2000 issue of the Kuban News (Krasnodar) newspaper . MEDIAMAX, June 23,2000 Yerevan.
 51. Relayed from Yerkramas newspaper by MEDIAMAX, July 26, 2000, Yerevan.
 52. Noyan Tapan, July 20, 2000, Yerevan.
 53. Krimsk and Abinsk are two towns situated to the north of Novorssysk in the Krasnodar state.
 54. (Relayed from Yerkramas newspaper by MEDIAMAX, July 26, 2000, Yerevan), The Ahiska Turks are one of the targets in Krasnodar for the growing Russian chauvinism. Yusuf Sarvarov, chairman of the Ahiska Turks' Vatan Association in Moscow, told a press conference in Moscow on March 6, 1998, thatthe Cossacks' racist approach constituted a dangerous factor in Krasnodar. Until 1989 there were 2,135 Ahiska Turks in Krasnodar. Following the Uzbekistan-Fergana incidents this number rose to 17,000 at settlements without residence permit (propiskas). This increase over the past decade has upset the Russian nationalists. And the Ahiska Turks have been faced with the "soft ethnic cleansing" efforts of the paramilitary Cossack groups who accuse them of desiring to set up an Islamic state in Krasnodar.

- <http://www.soros.org/fmp2/html/meskone.html>;
www.soros.org/fmalert/0245.html)
55. On Sept. 1996 Armenian Minister of Communications and Transport Genrik Kochinyan briefed the Armenian Parliament on the highway agreement the EU and France had concluded with Georgia and Armenia. Relayed from the Sept. 14, 1996 issue of the Lagir newspaper by V. Guretski, The Question of Javakheti, p. 12; for GUUAM and the other quests for cooperation in the Caucasus, see: Hasan Kanbolat and Gokcen Ekici, 21. yy'da Kafkasya'da Isbirligi Arayislari ve Ekonomik Boyutlari (Quests for Cooperation in the Caucasus in the 21th Century and its Economic Dimensions), Jeo-Ekonomi, Volume II (2-3), Summer-Autumn 2000, ISSN: 1302-261X, ASAM, Ankara.
 56. The potential itinerary of the Kars-Tbilisi Railway: In Turkey: Cildir; in Georgia: Ahalkelek (Armenian) - Tsalka (Armenian) - Merneuli (Azeri) - Tbilisi (Georgian), (* The words in parenthesis indicate the ethnic character of these settlements.) In Georgia the existing railway system provides railway access all the way to Ahalkelek and, in Turkey, the Turkish railway system reaches Kars. So it would be better to call the project the "Kars-Ahalkelek Railway Project".
 57. Initially it was planned to have the Baku-Ceyhan Pipe Line to cross through Akhalsikhe which is situated to the northwest of Ahalkelek. Later the Javakheti valley, which is highly suitable for the construction of pipe lines and railways, was preferred since the unsuitable geological characteristics of the Akhalsikhe region would push up the project's cost. The Kars-Tbilisi (Turkey-Georgia) Railway Project, which is being planned on an East-West transit axis, will extend for a total 124 kilometers. Of the railway line, a 92-kilometer stretch building a new railway across Javakheti. Javak leader Sirinyan, who opposes the Kars-Tbilisi Railway Project, has claimed that this project is aimed at reducing the Armenian population in the region. (U. Akinci, "Javakhetia: The Next Nagorno-Karabakh?", pp. 2,3; Tekin Cinar, Ulastirma Bakanligi E. Mustesar Yrd.'nin raporu (report prepared by deputy undersecretary of the Ministry of Communications and Transport), <http://www.dusunenadam.com.tr/demiryol6.htm>)
 58. Georgia and the Turkish businessmen in Georgia support the opening of the Aktas border gate. Cecenistan Ile Ilgili Rapor, Gurcistan'daki Turk Isadamlari Ile Gorusme Tutanagi, TBMM İnsan Haklari Komisyonu Yay. (Report on Chechnya, The Minutes of the Meeting with Turkish Businessmen in Georgia, a publication of the Turkish Grand National Assembly Human Rights Committee), February 2000, Ankara, p. 157.
 59. Alexander Ossipov, The Memorial Human Rights Centre, Moscow, <http://raccoon.riga.lv/minelres/archives//12021998-22:52:06-8560.html>

Х ц л а с я

ЭЕОСИЙАСЯТ ВЯ ГАФГАЗДА ЪАВАХЕТИ (ЭЦРЬЦСТАН) ВЯ КРАСНОДАР (РУСИЯ) ЕРМЯНИЛЯРИНИН МУХТАРИЙЯТ АРАЙЫШЫ

Щасан КАНБОЛАТ (АСАМ, Анкара, Туркийя)

Назми ЭЦЛ (АСАМ, Анкара, Туркийя)

Бу эцн Ермянистан вя Даьлыг Гарабаь хариьиндя, Гафгазда ермяниляр компакт щалда ики йердя – Эцрьцстанын Самтсе-Ъавахети вилайятиндя вя Русийа Федерасийасынын Краснодар вилайятиндя йашайырлар. Ермянилярин мяскунлашдыглары щяр бир йердян диэяр миллиятляри тядриьян сыхышдырыб чыхармагла етник монотонлуг йаратмаг хцсусиййятини вя онларын Гара Дянизя гядяр узанан бир Ермянистан дювляти гурмаг истайини концептуал вя практики сывиййядя тядгиг едян мцяллифляр йухарыда гейд олунан бюлэялярдя ермянилярин милли мухтариййятя ъан атмасыны Гафгазын етно- вя эео-сийаси чярчивясиндя дяйярляндирилляр.

Мягалядя Краснодар вя Ъавахетидя йашайан ермяни милли азлыьынын игтисади, сийаси вя сосиал щяйат щяртляри бцтцн инъяликлярийля арашдырылмыш, онларын милли мухтариййятя ъан атмасынын объектив вя субйектив ясаclarы изащ едилмишдир. Елми арашдырмалар нятигясиндя мцяллифлярин эялдийи сон гянаят будур ки, гейд олунан бюлэялярдя йашайан ермянилярин мухтариййят арайышынын мядяни, сосиал вя игтисади сябябляринин ня олдуьундан асылы олмайараг, цмумиййятля, баш вермякдя олан ермяни сепаратчы щярякятляри Гафгазда вя Гафгаз цзяриндя эемян эео-сийаси ойунлар силсисясинин бир щиссясидир вя буна эюря дя, мяцз бу чярчивядя яля алыныб тядгиг олунмалыдыр.