

about hundred villages and towns which lay on the territory stretching from Kars to Karin and Bayazed. The Ottomans were not able to continue the fight against their mighty enemy, so they were obliged to conclude a peace with Nadir in Erzurum in 1736. According to the peace document the Turks were to cede Eastern Armenia (Yerevan, Nakhijevan, Karabakh), Gandzak, Shamakhi, Atrpatakan and part of Georgia.

With this military success Tahmaz-kuli preconditioned his becoming the shah of Iran and soon shah Tahmaz and baby Abas (the son of Tahmaz) were killed by his order.

The throne was vacant and in winter of 1736 Tahmazkuli (Nadir) summoned the leaders of Iran and subject countries to Mughan. These persons were to elect a new shah and they, unanimously recognized Tahmazkuli as such. Now he became Nadir-shah. After his enthronement Nadir rewarded the emirs, khans and Armenian meliks with high posts (ranks) and new lands for their loyalty and trust.

Nadir knew about the pro-Russian policy of the Armenians and wanted to put an end to it. He tried to placate the Armenian people and meliks and use their military force. Nadir confirmed the status of the meliks and also gave a new influential status to the principalities. They started to be called the "principalities of Khamsa" or the land of Khamsa ("khamsa" is an Arab word and it means "five"). Thus Nadir certified that what the freedom-loving Armenians had acquired due to their heroic struggle. But Nadir recognized only the rights of five principalities refusing to confirm the rights of Tsar, which was once a mighty principality. Tsar now obeyed the principalities of Khamsa

In fact in late Middle Ages in one of the extreme north-eastern parts of Metz Haik a new monolithic Armenian state unit with a federative structure was born anew. The principalities of Khamsa were not dependant upon Gandzak beklarbekutiun and they made up a province. The burgh of Togh led by melik Yegan of Dizak became the center of Artsakh province, the borders of

which stretched from the outskirts of Gandzak to Araks river.

The principality of Giulistan lay in the northern part of Artsakh, between the rivers Kurak and Tartar. This principality was ruled by melik Beglaryans whose residence was Talish burgh and the military center was the impregnable castle of Gandzak. To the south of Giulistan was the principality of Jraberd, which included the territory that stretched from Tartar to Khachenaget. This principality was ruled by Melik Israyelyans, whose residence was Jraberd castle. The principality of Khachen stretched from Khachenaget to the lands nearby Karkar. The famous Hasan-Jalalyans ruled this part of the province, and their residence was first Khokhanaberd (castle) and then Khndzristan. There were also other castles in Khachen, such as Kachaghakaberd, Karaglukh, Ulupapa. Varanda-another principality of Khamsa stretched from Karkar river to the southern slopes of Metz Kirs. Varanda was ruled by melik Shahnazaryans, whose residence was Avetaranots village. In case of danger the citizens of this principality found shelter in Shoushi castle and the stronghold Kochiz that is between Herher and Tsovategh, in castles Aghjkaberd, Gishi, Ghlen-khut. Melik Yeganyan-Avanyans of Dizak had large estates which stretched from the mountain ridge of Dizapayt-Kirs to the river-valleys of Araks. The central residence of meliks was Togh province. The most prominent castles were in Tsor village and Vnesa Sar.

Melik-Yegan received a title of khan from Nadir-shah and up to 1744 ruled the principalities of Khamsa. Like the beklarbek (bek of beks) of Shirvan, Gandzak, Yerevan, he obeyed khan Ibrahim, the brother of Nadir, whose residence was in Tavriz, the centre of Atrpatakan.

During this decisive political period Melik-Yegan who was a gifted political leader, used his close relationships with Nadir and cared for the whole of Eastern Armenia. One of the proves of this historical fact is the lithograph of Melik-Yegan left on the facade of the princely palace of Togh. It run, "I have always helped Armenia

Some of the foreign and Armenian chroniclers wrote that Nadir shah treated Melik-Yegan as if the latter were his father and he also followed his advice³³⁴. The epitaph of the chapel-tomb of Togh shortly tells about Melik-Yegan, "The brave prince Melik-Yegan who was the son of Ghukas, was loved and respected by the Persian as well as the Armenian peoples. Melik-Yegan, the ruler of Albania was also respected and loved by Nadir shah(1741)"³³⁵.

Aram and melik Yesayi (1744-1745) were the respectable heirs of Melik Yegan. Melik-Yesayi was especially successful in his activities. He was a gifted warrior and a strong-willed person, who managed to create a well-trained regular army. Nadir shah also sympathized with melik Alah-Ghuli, who was given the title of "sultan" for his brilliant victories in fights against the Turks.

Being a unit of the Armenian statehood the principalities of Khamsa encouraged the freedom-loving and fighting Armenian nation and made their belief in the unity and victory firmer.

THE FORMATION OF THE KHANATE OF KARABAKH. THE TRAGIC STAGE OF THE HISTORY OF ARTSAKH

THE FORMATION OF KARABAKH KHANATE. The status of the principalities of Khamsa depended to a great extent on the political events of Iran.

The policy of heavy taxation led by Nadir shah and the unsuccessful wars which he waged against Daghestan and the Ottomans raised a wave of national fury against him. Under such conditions a plot was weaved which put an end to the restless life of Nadir Shah in 1747. The progress and prosperity of Iran under the rule of Nadir was rapid. Such was also the fall of Iran after the death of Nadir.

In the absence of central authority and in the result of the struggle for the throne many rulers of different regions of Persia acquired self-dependency. The nomadic Turks which had been repressed by Nadir and exiled to Khorasan made use of the created complicated situation. After the death of Nadir, those tribes resettled in Transcaucasus, mainly on the territory lying between rivers Kur and Araks, disturbing the people living near the borders of Khamsa. The brigand Turkish tribes, which roamed between the rivers Kur and Araks united under Panah, the leader of Sarujalu dynasty of Jivanshir tribe.

In Nadir's lifetime Panah was a public crier who announced the decisions and orders of the court in streets. Later he left the court and led a nomadic life in field parts of Karabakh. The Persian authorities more than once tried to arrest Panah, but he managed to escape it due to the protection of Melik Allah-Ghuli of Jraberd. After the murder of Nadir, the development of events was in favour of Panah. He subjugated all the nomadic tribes of the field and invaded the neighbouring settlements. Panah divided the trophy among his supporters and demanded new military forces in return³³⁶. Moreover by roguish means he succeeded in receiving the title of khan from Adil shah. Then he started his unbridled

invasions of the neighbouring territories. Panah had ambitions which went too far. He even tried to pass to a settled way of life and built the castle of Bayat at the bank of Kur. Later Haji Chelebi khan of Shirvan tried to occupy this castle but failed. This inspired Panah and now he wanted to become the master of Mountainous Artsakh and conquer very good pastures for thousands of his sheep flock.

For this purpose he fortified the strongholds of Tigranakert which were then called "Shaghbulagh" and attacked the principalities of Khachen and Jraberd from there. However the meliks of Khamsa, did not tolerate the audacious deeds of this new khan. Melik Alahverdi of Khachen together with his men occupied Tigranakert and drove Panah away from the mountainous parts of Artsakh.

Under the conditions of this confrontation there occurred such events that were in keeping with the intentions of Panah.

In the absence of a sovereign ruler the principalities of Khamsa precipitated and in late medieval era a mere occasion (ground) was sufficient for putting an end to the existence of that piece of the Armenian statehood.

And such an occasion was the inner dissidence of the Armenian meliks. In 1751 a family slaughter took place in Avetaranots- the residence of meliks and it had a fatal influence on the further events of Karabakh.

After the death of Melik Husein of Varanda, Hovsep, his elder son came to power according to the old tradition. But being a vainglorious person Husein the younger son of Shahnazar organized several conspirations and then himself murdered his brother and the members of his family. The Turkish blood which flew in Shahnazar's veins made him violate the unity of the meliks of khamsa. It is known that Hovsep was the son of Husein and his first wife Anna who was the sister of Avan, the melik of Dizak. Shahnazar's mother was Zohra khanum, the daughter of Nakhijevan khan. However, after murdering his brother,

Shahnazar became the melik of Varanda. But many meliks of khamsa united and stood against Shahnazar; they wanted to take revenge of the slaughter he had organized. In this connection it is worthy to note that melik-Shahnazaryans had by-marriage connections with the meliks of Khachen and Jraberd. Melik Hovsep Beglaryan of Giulistan, melik Israyelyan Alah-Ghuli of Jraberd, melik Allahverdi, Hasan Jalalyan of Khachen and melik Yesayi, Melik-Avanyan of Dizak besieged Avetaranots, but failed to occupy it.

The time and situation were in favour of the fratricidal melik, who being pursued by many of the Armenian meliks asked Panah for help. The ill-intentioned nomand had already been annoyed by the glory, fame and the authoritative position of the Armenian meliks. Besides he had already fixed his eyes upon the heavenly earth and waters of Artsakh.

Melik Shahnazar knew about the avid desires of Panah, so he used his force and in return gave him the old impregnable castle of Shah. This new perfidious deed of the ruler of Varanda made the inner-political situation of Artsakh more dangerous and explosive. The collisions became more frequent, persistent and cruel. Melik Shahnazar and Panah started to rebel and fortify the castle of Shah in order to withstand the Armenian meliks. Melik Shahnazar himself put the first stone of the castle, which "brought to the fall of all the principalities of Karabakh"³³⁷. The geographical location of Shoushi was very convenient for Panah and the perfidious melik. "It lay in the heart of Artsakh and was surrounded with forbidding cliffs from three parts. So it was accessible only from one part, which later was also made impregnable by Panah, who raised castles, towers and artificial strongholds in that place"³³⁸.

In this way Panah settled in the heart of Shoushi and reconstructed it from 1752-54. At first the town was called "Panahabad", but the Armenians did not accept this name and continued to call it Shoushi and sometimes Shoushi castle.

So this perfidy of Melik Shahnazar let the Turks settle in Karabakh for the first time in the history.

The Armenian, Georgian, Persian and Russian historic sources state that there were no Tatars or other Muslims in Mountainous Karabakh up to the middle of the eighteenth century³³⁹.

For fortifying his position and creating an ethnic support Panah ordered the nomadic tribes karacharli, jinli, damirchi - hasanli, ghzi - hajili, safi - kurd, koyahmedli, sahatli, kengerli from Georgian and Mil-Mughan desert to move to Karabakh. These nomadic tribes settled in the environs of Shoushi and along the roads which led from field Karabakh to Shoushi and thus formed Turkish villages. At the same time a Turkish town-district appeared in Shoushi. Panah tried to acquire a town mode of life. That is why he tried to settle the village population of Karabakh in Shoushi. However the conservative Armenians of Karabakh that followed the village mode of life refused to move to Shoushi.

After it Panah invaded Shahakert, Agulis, Hin Jugha, Meghri and made them move to Shoushi by force. With this Panah created a political sub-surroundings and solved two important problems:

a) As compared with the representatives of the nomadic Turkish tribes the Armenians that were settled in Shoushi were more obedient and if needed Panah could set off the Armenians against his kinsfolk.

b) The Armenians of Shoushi, Agulis, Hin Jugha, Meghri had a town mode of life and were skilled in trade and different crafts.

The new comers had different customs and dialects, that is why they lived in different wards for a long time. In this way the local population's wards appeared in Shoushi. They were called Ghazanchetsots (the ward of people from Shahakert), Aguletsots and Meghretsots. Each of this ward (district) was governed by kyandukhan (a local governor). They had their churches and educational-cultural institutions.

Thus, Shoushi had one Turkish and four Armenian wards

(districts). In the course of time the new-comers adapted the new environment and the regularities peculiar to it. They also accepted the customs and traditions of the locals and started to speak their dialect.

Soon Panah proclaimed himself the khan of Karabakh and wire Persian shah made the Armenian meliks recognize his supremacy.

The newly-created khanate had a strategic position and it was one of the main connecting circles between Iran and Transcaucasus. No wonder, the Persian royal court led a carrot and stick policy.

KHAMSA UNDER THE KHANATE OF KARABAKH. Panah khan settled in Shoushi and made melik Shahnazar of Varanda serve him. In fact Karabakh was split in two parts, because its southern part - Dizak was cut off from Khachen, Jraberd and Giulistan. Naturally Khamsa weakened and was at the edge of collapse.

Panah skillfully took advantage of the created favourable conditions. He attacked the principality of Khachen. Melik of Khachen was Allahverdi, the father-in-law of melik Hovsep of Varanda, who had been killed by his brother. Melik Allahverdi guarded his grandson, the only person who had managed to survive from the slaughter that melik Shahnazar had organized. This grandson was the legal heir of the throne of Varanda principality, that is why the destruction and the fall of the principality of Khachen was a number - one problem for Panah. At first melik Allahverdi succeeded in fight against Panah. But he lost the battle which took place on the territory which later started to be called Khojalli. This defeat of melik Allahverdi turned out to be baneful for Hasan-Jalalyans and all the Armenians of Karabakh, because Panah took by force the principalities and ordered the village governor of Khndzristan Mirzakhan to rule them. Thus Panah acquired one more ally from among the Armenians.

The next victim was the principality of Jraberd. Panah khan attacked it but melik Allah - Ghuli (who also had the title of "sultan") held off the enemy. Panah realized that he could not defeat the Armenian melik in a battle so he took to insidiousness. He stopped the war and lent a hand of "help and friendship" to melik Allah-Ghuli. In this way he blunted the vigilance of the Armenian melik and arrested him during one of the meetings, to which Allah-Ghuli had gone on the advice of melik Shahnazar. Melik Allah Ghuli was killed later in the prison of Shoushi³⁴⁰.

Allah-Ghuli was followed by his brother Hatam (Adam). The military operations took a new turn. The forces were unequal in the battle and melik Adam decided to retreat to Giulistan and join his ally melik Hovsep in order to spare the remaining force and continue the battle later. Thus the bloody battles took place on the borders of Giulistan principality. The fight proceeded with variable success also during the rule of Ibrahim, who came after Panah.

After inflicting heavy strikes upon the principalities of Jraberd and Giulistan Panah attacked the principality of Dizak with all his might. Together with his ally melik-Shahnazar repeatedly besieged Togh burgh of melik Yesayi. But he bore a shameful defeat and retreated. Panah was wounded during one of the battles. But it did not discourage him and he continued to grow in his force and influence. So melik Yesayi suggested that he and Panah should sign a Peace, which would stop the military operations. Melik Yesayi ruled the principality of Dizak up to 1781.

However, Ibrahim khan, the successor of Panah also led an anti-Armenian policy. He had to struggle with Mihrali, his brother, for the khanate of Karabakh. In this struggle the ally of Ibrahim was Omar khan of Avaria . Phatali khan of Ghuba was the ally of Mihrali. Ibrahim emerged from this struggle as victor, because Mihrali was killed under mysterious conditions. Then in 1763 Ibrahim became the absolute ruler of Karabakh.

Ibrahim extended the borders of his khanate taking advantage of the conflict between the neighbouring khanates and the

unsteady inner state of Persia. He occupied Resht and Tavriz and also ruled Shaki, Shirvan khanates for a short time³⁴¹.

Then Ibrahim was more free in his actions.

The unrestrained violence committed upon the Armenian meliks made their state so dreadful, that the rulers of Giulistan and Jraberd left their principalities and together with their people found shelter in Georgia and the khanate of Gandzak. In those times about eight thousand Armenian families made up new settlements in Shulaver, where the Karabakhian dialects, many customs and traditions have been preserved up to our days. It is important to note, that those events had a negative effect on the ethnographic picture of the Armenians of Artsakh. To be more exact, in the result of the new migrations almost no Armenian lived in the northern part of Armenia and the empty houses and the abandoned arable lands were used by Muslims.

However even after those baneful migrations Karabakh was populated mostly by Armenians. In one of his reports addressed to the Russian court Tsitsianov, the commander of the Russian troops in Caucasus noted that about 40-60 thousand Armenian families lived in Karabakh at the end of the eighteenth century. If we consider that about 10-15 persons lived in every family we can say that the number of the Armenians living in Artsakh was equal to half a million.

Meanwhile the banished meliks were not inactive in the khanate of Gandzak. They entered into alliance with Phatali khan of Urmia, Shahverdi khan of Gandzak and attacked the lands of Ibrahim-the khan of Karabakh. Those attacks caused the anxiety of Ibrahim, but at the same time he also realized that the migration of the Armenians deprived him of one of the opportunities of filling his treasury.

So Ibrahim took into consideration all the conditions and persuaded the Armenian meliks to return to their lands. The return of melik Hatam and melik Hovsep to Jraberd and Giulistan stabilized to some extent the political state of the principalities of

Khamsa. But again Ibrahim khan tried to interfere with the unanimity of the Armenian meliks in matters concerning the choice of new catholicos of Gandzasar. At one moment Ibrahim protected Hovhannes, the legal catholicos and at another the anti-cathedralist Israel thus making the relations between the meliks of Khamsa more confused and complex.

It was during that difficult period that Hovsep Emin came to Karabakh. He hoped that together with the meliks of Artsakh, he would lay the foundation stones of the future Armenian statehood. In his autobiography he wrote, "I think like a European soldier I shall go to the Armenians of mountainous Armenia. I have learnt that the Armenians of this small land are brave and invincible and if I manage to teach them the art of war, then it will be of great use"³⁴².

In Artsakh Hovsep Emin witnessed the heroic deeds of the locals. In 1767 Shahverdi khan of Gandzak tried to punish melik Hovsep who had the intention of returning to Giulistan. He attacked Getashen quite unexpectedly. But forty men (from the village) led by Beglar, the son of melik Hovsep defeated khan's detachment of 4,500 men in mountain battles. The Armenians managed not only to protect borders of Getashen but also to drive the enemy out of their land. They even belaguered Gandzak. However the conflict was smoothed out by the mediation of Heracle, the king of Georgia and by the request of khan Shahverdi himself.

When Hovsep Emin was on a visit to melik Hovsep of Giulistan, he endeavoured to unite the forces of meliks and create a united army. For this purpose he met with meliks and the catholicos of Gandzasar. But soon catholicos Simeon Yerevantsi instigated meliks to make Emin leave Karabakh. Later Emin wrote the following about Karabakh, "Karabakh has everything that can exist in the world. It does not only have the most important thing - a wise and sensible governing body, which, as it seems, will be ever absent from Karabakh"³⁴³.

The pro-Russian policy of the Armenian meliks and the catholicos of Gandzasar caused the anxiety of Ibrahim khan. In 1787 he ordered to arrest and then kill catholicos Hovhannes in Shoushi prison. Before that (1781-1783) melik Yesayi of Dizak, melik Hatam of Jraberd and melik Hovsep of Giulistan died.

After the death of Yesayi, Dizak was ruled by his son melik Bakhtam. Melik Hatam was succeeded by melik Mezhlum, and melik Hovsep - by Abov. The struggle between them and Ibrahim got more fierce. In 1780-s Ibrahim managed to convert many of the members of melik-Avanyan dynasty of Dizak into Islam. In spite of all the rigours and hardships melik Mezhlum of Jraberd and melik Abov of Giulistan put the independence movement into a new orbit. The diplomatic connections with Russia were refreshed and rendered active.

SEVERAL ISSUES CONCERNING THE HISTORY OF THE ACQUISITION OF PRO-RUSSIAN ORIENTATION BY THE ARMENIANS OF ARTSAKH

ARTSAKH-RUSSIA RELATIONS. Throughout centuries the Armenian people writhed with pain in the clutches of the Turkish-Persian tyranny. Nevertheless it always strove for freedom and hopefully waited for help from Russia. In his works the seventh century historiographer Moses Kaghankatvatsi wrote about the Russians using the words "ruziks" or "ruz". He also wrote that they rose from the environs of the Caspian Sea like a hurricane and approached Partav, the capital of Albania, where nobody could show them a due resistance³⁴⁴.

In 943-944 the Russian military detachment crossed river Kur and appeared in the environs of Partav. At first they managed to occupy the city. However the local princes consolidated their forces and liberated Partav³⁴⁵.

Excavations carried on the banks of Kur, resulted in finding the remnants of ships dating back to the tenth century. The Russian merchants brought furs to Baghdad and other cities of the Near East by the Black sea (Rumi), the Slavic river (Don) and the Caspian sea (Jurjan)³⁴⁶.

In 1466 Shirvanshah Farukh Yasar sent the ambassador Hasan Bek to Moscow to establish friendly relations with Ivan III. In 1467 the Russian embassy in its turn sent a group of delegates with Vasily Panin at its head to Shamakhi. Several members of the delegation were merchants and among them was Aphanasy Nikitin³⁴⁷, the famous merchant and traveller from Tver.

So with the coming of Russians to Transcaucasus there appeared an opportunity for both the Armenians and Russians to get to know each other better.

Much information about the Russians and their country was recorded by the seventh century chronicler Kiracos Gandzaketzi³⁴⁸.

THE PRE-HISTORY OF ARTSAKH-RUSSIA DIPLOMATIC CONNECTIONS. In the second half of the fifteenth century and at the beginning of the sixteenth century in parallel with the strengthening of the Russian Empire, the Czarist government started to show interest for Transcaucasus. Being a Christian country, Russia was concerned with the liberation of the Christian peoples of Transcaucasus. Surely in fact Czarism pursued its own military-political goals. And under the created circumstances the political strivings of the Armenian people corresponded with the interests of Russia. However Armenia located a plenipotentiary administrative body for establishing political connections with the Russian royal court, and for driving the friendly relations and collaboration of the two peoples into a normal diplomatic course.

There was no political factor or inner social force in the centre of Armenia that had a striving or opportunity to unite the endeavours of the Armenian people and give course and motive to the independence movement. So the meliks of Artsakh were obliged to take on the responsibility of supporting relations with the royal court of Russia. They together "with the catholicos of Gandzasar who were not dependent upon the Persian rule"³⁴⁹ hoped and believed in possibility of founding an Armenian state. In one of the Russian literary monuments we can read, "The feudals of Artsakh are the pride of our people and all the other Christians"³⁵⁰.

As far back as in the beginning of the fourteenth century the Armenian state of Cilicia was suffering a crisis and the Armenian political leaders expected to receive help for the liberation of the Armenian people. At first the Armenians saw the realization of their liberatory strivings and plans with the assistance of the Christian states of West. However in the second half of the 17th century, after three-centuries-long futile negotiations with the Pope and the monarchs of Europe, the Armenian political thought acquired a pro-Russian orientation. It was reasoned by the following facts and events:

1. First and foremost, the Armenian leaders realized that the European states supported Persia and Turkey.

2. In the second half of the seventeenth century Russia appeared on the international arena.

3. In the above-mentioned period Russia expanded its state borders and got near to Transcaucasus. The Empire tried to spread its influence over the territory and force its way to India. Naturally, under those conditions the interests of Russia collided with those of Turkey, Persia and European states that protected them.

4. Russia needed a political force in Transcaucasus to rely on and realize its eastern policy. Georgia, Syunik and the principalities of Artsakh served Russia as such a force.

5. We should not underestimate the fact that the Czarist government, especially Peter I had anti-Turkish moods. At the end of the 90's before starting his journey to the west, Peter I announced that apart from pursuing central goals he wanted "to weaken the enemies of the Lord's cross, the sultan of Turkey, the khan of Crimea and all the Muslim hordes"³⁵¹.

It is worthy to note that unlike the political figures of the Armenian provinces, the temporal and ecclesiastic rulers of Karabakh from the very beginning saw the liberation of their motherland not with the help of Europe but with that of Russia.

In 1670-1671 catholicos Petros of Gandzasar applied to the Russian Czar with a special message, and asked him to take the Armenians under his protection³⁵². In 1677 catholicos Hakob Jughayetsi summoned a secret meeting in Ejmiatsin. The representatives of meliks of Syunik and Artsakh also took part in it. At that time the catholicos of Ejmiatsin started his collaboration with the catholicos of Gandzasar³⁵³.

The catholicos of Gandzasar persuaded Hakob Jughayetsi to hold negotiations with Georgia. Soon both countries came to the mutual agreement, that the Armenians should appeal to the Western European states and the Georgians - to Russia.

Russia-Artsakh political relations were promoted by the benevolent attitudes of Peter I and under his rule the Russian government held relations mainly with Gandzasar³⁵⁴.

At the end of the seventeenth century and at the beginning of the eighteenth century the independence movement of the Armenian people entered a new stage. Many ideologists appeared then with definite political plans. One of them was Israel Ori, who was brought up with the patriotic spirit of the princely families of Syunik. This Armenian son was convinced that the political course of Armenia adopted formerly needed a sharp turn. His first step towards the realization of his plans was the secret conference of Angeghakot which he summoned on April 29, 1699.

The opinion of Bagrat Ulubabyan, that meliks of Karabakh also could have participated in the conference of Angeghakot is quite admissible³⁵⁵.

No wonder, that in the first document of 1699, as a place of conference, Angeghakot is mentioned, and in the last ones province of Aghvank, that is Artsakh is mentioned as such. It is known that after the conference of Angeghakot Ori went back to Dusseldorf and handed Kyurfurst a report in which he informed that the Armenian forces of 2-3 hundred thousands were ready to fight against Iran. At the same time he promised the participation of 5,000 warriors in the seizure of Yerevan. Apparently in giving the number of men ready to fight against Iran Ori kept in view also the military forces of the 5 principalities of Khamsa.

During the conference of Angeghakot it was decided to send a special letter to Peter I asking him to help the Armenians to throw off the oppression of the enemy³⁵⁶. Then the letter ran, "We and all our people want to be under the rule and government of Your Majesty...and we promise that our lives and possessions will serve Your Majesty and this noble cause"³⁵⁷. It was also written in the letter that the Armenian people believed that "a prince, braver than Alexander the Great will come and set free the Armenian kingdom and all the Christians"³⁵⁸.

Israel Ori had great expectations from the meliks of Artsakh.

In 1701 during a conversation with lord Golovin in Moscow, Ori said that there were five princes in Metz Haik that could "drive away the enemy in 24 hours and take the rule of the entire country in 15 days"³⁵⁹ if the Russian troops could help by being near the country. The conference of Angeghakot gave Israel Ori special papers that were signed by meliks. He was authorized to write appeals in the name of meliks and other high-ranking officials. Later, Ori used those competent papers (documents) in Moscow. A. Hovhannesian noted in this connection that, "The appeals written in 1703 directly corresponded not to the attitudes of the meliks of Kapan, but to those of Karabakhian meliks and Yesayi Hasan Jalalyan, the catholicos of Gandzasar"³⁶⁰.

The events that further took place in the centre of Armenia justified the attitudes of Israel Ori. Meliks as well as Yesayi Hasan Jalalyan, who from 1703 (the time of his election) was one of the tireless fighters for independence, sent many appeals of liberation to the Russian state.

Many letters written in the name of meliks were introduced to the ministry of Moscow embassy and asserted the verification made to the Armenian meliks by Ori. According to Israel Ori, after the Swedish war the Russian Czar expressed his readiness to undertake the liberation and independence movement of Armenia³⁶¹. Besides sending letters and documents, the Armenian authorities sent a delegation with Israel Ori and Minas Vardapet at its head to the Russian royal court. The results of the talks held by the delegation were introduced to the Armenian meliks, the catholicoses of Gandzasar and Ejmiatsin by a Moscow living Armenian captain Miron Vasilyev in 1702.

For being fully prepared for the invasions of Persia, Peter I found it necessary to reconnoitre the arena of future military actions, find about the attitudes of the Transcaucasian peoples towards Russia. Israel Ori was willing to take part in the reconnoitring operations because he tried not to lose his chance

to strengthen his connections with Armenian meliks. During his mission Ori met the catholicos of Gandzasar and maliks of Artsakh. One of the enlightened personalities of that time was Yesayi Hasan-Jalalyan, who being descended from the old ministerial dynasty of Aranshahiks, expressed the strivings and attitudes of not only the temporal and ecclesiastic men but also of all the Artsakhians. Yesayi had an outlined political disposition towards Russia. He was among the first representatives of the Armenian ruling class, who gave his consent to the plans of Israel Ori and later became one of the enthusiastic propagandists and organizers of the realization of the patriotic plans. The meeting of the rulers of Artsakh and Israel Ori are testified by their letter addressed to Peter I in 1721. The writers of the letter confirmed that Ori had informed them about the country's profits, roads, silk industry and the Persian army. That letter was signed by catholicos Yesayi, four priors of Karabakh and Melik-Yesayi of Jraber³⁶².

In 1710 Catholicos Yesayi joined the delegation led by Israel Ori on its way back from Persia and they together started for Russia. The catholicos of Gandzasar wanted to tell about the strivings and plans of the Armenian people personally to Peter I. In 1711 Ori died in Astrakhan under vague circumstances. His patriotic plans were later realized by Yesayi Hasan-Jalalyan, meliks of Artsakh, Minas Vardapet Tigranyan. In 1716 Minas Tigranyan met Yesayi Hasan-Jalalyan in Gandzasar for defining the plan of further actions. In the same year Yesayi Hasan-Jalalyan again appealed to the Russian Czar in the name of meliks and asked for the Russian protection. His letter ran, "...Before Minas Vardapet, Israel Ori had been on mission in the Armenian land. They both gave us new will and strength to fight...we are ready to serve You by the will of God and hope to liberate together our homeland..."³⁶³.

Thus after long quests, in the second half of the seventeenth century and at the beginning of the eighteenth century due to the

efforts of the catholicoses of Gandzasar and meliks of Artsakh the independence strivings of the Armenian reality took on a pro-Russian orientation.

THE POLICY OF THE RUSSIAN ROYAL COURT IN TRANSCAUCASUS AND THE FURTHER EXPANSION OF ARTSAKH-RUSSIA DIPLOMATIC CONNECTIONS. In the second half of the eighteenth century the liberation of Armenia with the help of Russia became the axis of the Armenian diplomacy. It is known that this resulted in the liberation movement of 1722-30 which took place in Artsakh and Syounik and was led by David Bek, Mkhitar Sparapet, Avan Haryurapet, and Yesayi Hasan-Jalalyan.

The issue of annexation of Transcaucasus to Russia acquired a special significance for the Russian diplomacy. The projects of the realization of the subcaspien invasion plans which were set up still under the rule of Peter I were again suggested in governmental circles and according to them the primary role was again retained for meliks of Artsakh. The meliks which were harassed by Ibrahim Khan still believed that their homeland would be saved with the help of their powerful northern neighbour. They strained their every effort, consolidated the economy and military capacities and settled down to renewing the ideas of the Armenian statehood. In June 1769 Heracle II wrote, "The report about the neighbour countries of Georgia" in which he mentioned, "Khamsa is a country, where there are seven principalities. All of them are Christian, Armenian. Once they payed taxes to the Persian king. When the Persian kingdom fell, one of the leaders of the nomadic tribes, who came from a Jevanshir Muslim dynasty grew powerful and conspirately occupied the old, impregnable stronghold which was in the centre of Khamsa. Several times there were disagreements between us and those Jevanshirs and with the help of God neither our troops nor the troops of the Christian Armenians were defeated. Instead Jevanshirs suffered heavy

losses. By now many reasons have appeared to preserve peace between the Armenians and us. Khamsa has great fortifications, many mountains covered with woods, cliffs, fertile fields. In their country Jevanshirs can gather 2,500 soldiers, and the Armenians - 4,500. This land occupied by Jevanshirs is in the south-eastern part of the country and stretches to the borders of Karabakh and Gandzak, among Shirvan, Nachijevan, Gandzak and Gharadagh. The people of Khamsa are brave and courageous. It is the hostility between these meliks that enabled the Jevanshirs to take rule over the Armenians"³⁶⁴.

The invasion of Transcaucasus was to be commanded by A.Suvorov who hoped to win a victory with the help of the meliks of Artsakh and due to their fervent activities. H.Arghutyan and Hovh. Lazaryan were mediators in the relationship between meliks and Suvorov. In 1780 Suvorov received a report about the political state of Armenia from Hovh. Lazaryan, in which it was mentioned that, "Armenia is devastated. Most of the population has to settle in different places but the Armenian meliks of Karabakh still preserve a wide degree of independence and if needed they can gather their troops in order to restore the Armenian statehood, they only lack the economic and military support of Russia..."³⁶⁵. Suvorov wanted to visit Karabakh and get acquainted with the state of affairs on the spot, he even made up the map of Armenia and included the principalities of Karabakh into it. In one of the letters to Suvorov, meliks Beglar and Hatam addressed to the Commander as "the successor of the military men that were loyal to the Armenian kingdom"³⁶⁶.

Suvorov, whose mother came from Artsakh, had a good fame among the Armenians of Karabakh. Meliks did their best and wanted Suvorov, the great Russian commander, lead the future invasion. "We ask you, wrote meliks, - to help us with 10,000 infantry men and we shall be satisfied if the infantry is led by Suvorov"³⁶⁷.

However Suvorov soon moved to Kazan and no longer managed to handle the affairs of Transcaucasus. By the order of the Russian government one of G.A.Potyomkin's reliable relatives general P.S.Potyomkin was to supervise the current events. Like his predecessors he contacted actively with such outstanding Armenian political figures as H. Arghutyan and Hovh. Lazaryan. He collected detailed information about the political and economic state of Transcaucasus.

In the 80's of the eighteenth century the Russian royal court started the fervent discussion of the issues concerning the Armenian liberation movement. On April 25, 1783 Grigory (Gregory) Potyomkin received a letter from catholicos Ghukas of Ejmiatsin in which the catholicos noted that "meliks, especially those from Artsakh, are enthusiastic. They are independent, autocratic and have a large number of troops and sufficient amount of provisions"³⁶⁸.

The Russian royal court tried to make the principalities of Artsakh the political basis of future Armenia and appoint one of the meliks to the king of Armenia. On this occasion on April 6, 1783 G.A. Potyomkin gave a command to P.S. Potyomkin. It ran, "Ibrahim khan of Shoushi must be driven away, and after it Karabakh will make an Armenian province dependent only upon Russia. Strain every effort to establish this province with best conditions for the Armenian people. After it other large Armenian provinces will follow this example or many of them will come to settle in Karabakh"³⁶⁹.

G.A. Potyomkin worked out his plans and considered them very important. On May 19, 1783, in a report addressed to Katherine II he wrote, "Not having the order of Your Imperial Majesty I commanded general Potyomkin to subdue Ibrahim khan of Shoushi. In this connection I should mention that the province of the khan is mostly populated by the Armenians and should be placed under a national rule. Thus a Christian state will be restored in Asia as was promised to the Armenian meliks by Your Majesty"³⁷⁰.

The further march of events proved that in fact the Russian royal court did not intend to restore the Armenian statehood on the basis of the principalities of Khamsa.

Russia simply led a two-face policy and tried to attain the loyalty and sympathy of the Armenians and subdue Ibrahim khan without bloodshed.

The high ranking Russian officials realized quite well that they could subdue Ibrahim khan by touching the issues of Karabakh's independence. As concerning the Armenians, they were sure that they could enjoy their sympathy for long by placating them. Once Katherine II said, "Not only by force of arms can the peoples be defeated... their confidence, hearts should be won, and for this we must, by all means, placate the people and gain the favour of its outstanding personalities"³⁷¹.

At the most fatal moment of the Armenian independence movement Ibrahim khan showed again the flexibility of his diplomatic thought by recognizing the supremacy of Russia. On this occasion Grigory Potyomkin asked Katherine II if it would be right to caress Ibrahim in order to have him on the palm if needed³⁷².

On May 19, 1783 Grigory Potyomkin commanded to Pavel Potyomkin, "...The agreement of Ibrahim khan of Shoushi to be subject to Russia has made the fulfilling of the order of driving him away needless. And the only thing that is demanded from him is his loyalty and steadfastness. If he serves to the royal court well and is always ready to carry out its supreme orders, then he can hope to be recognized by Russia as its subject. And for gaining the favour of the Armenians of Artsakh he gave the following order "... try to caress the Armenians and fill them with good-willingness towards Russia so that we can use their assiduity and fervour for the benefits of our further affairs"³⁷³.

G. Potyomkin began to favour Ibrahim and made such steps that drew back the issues concerning the Armenian independence movement. It should be mentioned that the envoys of Ibrahim

applied with their false and slimy credentials to the Russian, Turkish and Persian courts at a time. In a plea addressed to the Turkish sultan Ibrahim says, "I am the delegate to Your Grand Court, where angels live and from where infinite abundance-vaster than sea-flows. All my life, might, lands and peoples are subject to the successor of our great Prophet. Merciful master... I expect help from You. If You support us, we shall crush the enemies of our law"³⁷⁴. At the same time Ibrahim wrote to Pavel Potyomkin and informed him that for a long time he had wanted to become "the obediant and loyal servant of the Illustrious Russian throne and the Gracious Russian Empress"³⁷⁵.

In parallel with those diplomatic steps Ibrahim khan prepared for the aversion of the possible offensive of Russia. For this purpose he founded the fortress of Askeran. He also demanded manpower from meliks for making the walls of Shoushi town impregnable.

And so the political maneuvers and the contradictory attitudes of Russia turned out to be tragic for the Armenians of Artsakh.

Being encouraged by Russians, the Armenians rebelled against the khan, who having in a false way recognized supremacy of Russia, cruelly oppressed, robbed the Armenians and exhausted the force of meliks.

The Armenians of Artsakh lived under hard conditions when the invasions of Agha Muhammad began.

THE POLITICAL STATE OF ARTSAKH AT THE END OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY. At the end of the eighteenth century a struggle for the throne began in Iran. In 1794 Agha Muhammed khan who came from a Turkish tribe of Kajars, proclaimed himself shah and after it took up to the reacquisition of Iran's rule over the entire Transcaucasus. Soon he demanded from Heracle II- the Georgian prince, to cut off his connections with Russia and implicitly obey Iran. The shah demanded also the obediance of other khanates existing in the territory of

Transcaucasus. However Heracle II, who had placed reliance on Russian protection denied to fulfil the demand. Ibrahim khan of Karabakh also refused to recognize the shah.

Under such conditions Agha Muhammed was troubled most of all by the fact that Artsakhian meliks had pro-Russian course of policy. That is why he promised meliks to recognize them in their principalities and overthrow Ibrahim khan, if they promised to obey him. But meliks of Artsakh decisively denied to accept the suggestion and ignored the threats that accompanied it. Moreover they even concluded an alliance with Ibrahim khan in order to confront the new enemy. Only melik Mezhlum of Jrabert acted with circumspection. He joined Agha Muhammed against Ibrahim khan. In summer 1794, the troops of Suleyman Shahzade intruded into Artsakh to punish the relacitrant meliks but they suffered a heavy and shameful defeat³⁷⁶.

This infuriated Agha Muhammed khan and he cruelly punished those military leaders who came back.

And in 1795 the 80,000 Persian army, which was more like a rabble and was led by Agha Muhammed himself, crossed river Araks, entered Artsakh and belaguered the castle of Shoushi. However Agha Muhammed failed to break the resistance of the defenders of Shoushi. Vardan Odznetsi heard many stories about that defense from an old man. Basing on them he later told about the bravery of the 60 Armenian warriors who secretly came out of the castle and attacked the enemy. The attack was unexpected that is why the besiegers became panic-stricken and suffered heavy losses³⁷⁷.

The troops of shah were also in a bad state. The twelve thousand Armenian families that had hidden in the cliffs surrounding Shoushi repeatedly inflicted blows upon the besiegers ³⁷⁸ But for their defeat at the walls of Shoushi the invaders of Agha Muhammed took revenge on defenceless people. The Persian shah was especially cruel towards the Armenian defenders of the castle, who were taken as captives. He

ordered to shoe the horses in a way that the shoes were on the hoofs, not under them and the nails stick out from under the hoofs. And then he ordered the captives to lie on the ground and made the horses trample them down.³⁷⁹

From Shoushi, Agha Muhammed moved in direction of Tiflis. He put to the sword part of the city's population and took many people as captives.

The troops of Muhammed devastated and plundered the city for about seven days and then with rich trophy and thousands of captives moved to the field of Mughan to spend the winter there. Before that the shah had made an attempt of subduing the khans of Shamakhi and Nukhi. But all was in vain, he was again defeated. And the infuriated khan sprinkled out his rage and poison on the captives he had taken from Tiflis. But shah prepared a horrifying punishment for the 52 village governors that were taken as captives during the siege of Shoushi. By his order a stone wall was built with fifty narrow gaps. The heads of the village governors were put into those gaps and with thick ropes their heads were tied to mules. Then the animals were beaten and made pull the ropes as long as the heads of the captives broke.³⁸⁰

It should be mentioned that the success of Agha Muhammed in Transcaucasus weakened the authority of Russia in Transcaucasus, and the czarist government took up to decisive, urgent steps. In December 1795 a Russian detachment of 2,000 arrived in Tiflis to protect Georgia from the new invasions of Agha Muhammed shah. Taking advantage of the fact that Agha Muhammed had left for Persia to press the rebellion which had broken out in Khorasan, in spring 1796 the Russian royal court practically prepared for an invasion. The Russian expeditionary corps were led by count Valerian Zubov who was accompanied by archbishop Hovsep Arghutyan at the request of Empress Katherine. The Archbishop knew quite well the niceties of the

political situation in Transcaucasus and Persia.

On May 10, 1796 the Russians occupied Derbend. They were having success from the very beginning.

Soon Ghuba, Shamakhi and Baku also surrendered to the Russians³⁸¹. The success of the Russian troops was conditioned also by the support of the Armenians living in those places. Hovsep Arghutyan called the Armenians to form voluntary detachments everywhere. For encouraging the Christians of Transcaucasus the Russian authorities announced that the military actions mainly aimed at "restoration of the rule of Heracle in his land and the liberation of the Armenian meliks and the population of Karabakh from foreign yoke"³⁸².

In autumn 1796 count V.Zubov recruited his forces and sent a detachment led by S.M.Rimsky-Korsakov to occupy Gandzak. The detachment was to join the main Russian forces and reach the place where rivers Kur and Araks mixed. Hovsep Arghutyan advised them, "cross river Kur, stand in the field of Mughan and order Ibrahim khan of Shoushi to come himself to Your Brightness or at least send his elder son together with Armenian meliks. The fulfilment of this order of Your Brightness will be the evidence of loyalty and fervency of Ibrahim in relations with Russia. And after you are through with all the important affairs you can occupy Tavriz and Ardebil without difficulties You should demand from Ibrahim khan that his son and one thousand soldiers should join the attack. The five Armenian meliks with their troops can be the vanguard of your forces as the spirit of war is not alien to them. And if the khan of Shoushi refuses to follow your order, it will evidently testify to his unfaithfulness and cunning fraud. In this case you can apply to Armenian meliks which can help you to relieve him of his post and high rank, and then keep the entire Atrpatakan in obedience without arms. The number of the Armenian troops will be multiplied and all the undertakings will eventually come to a successful end. The khan of Shoushi considers his castles impregnable, but the strength and

impregnability of the castles is conditioned by the numerous Armenian soldiers. They are courageous and brave. Being loyal to the Russian throne they will condemn Ibrahim to failure with the protection and mercy of your Greatness"³⁸³. Ibrahim khan falsely maintained close relations with Zubov and at the same time made up evil plans against the Russians. Ibrahim khan summoned melik Jumshud, the son of melik Shahnazar of Varanda and threatened to kill him if he noticed pro-Russian strivings among the Armenians. At that time he concluded anti-Russian alliance with khans of Nukhi and Shamakhi. After it Ibrahim khan hatched a plot against Zubov, but he failed.

The ardour of the Christian population of Transcaucasus was again obscured by the bad news received from Russia. On November 6, 1796 Katherine II died and the new Emperor Pavel I ordered the Russian troops to withdraw from Transcaucasus. Being against his mother's political plans, he did not want to continue the invasion. Instead he wanted to focus his attention and forces on the European affairs. The withdrawal of the Russian troops was a heavy blow for the Armenians and the people lived hard and menaceful days. The repeated military actions resulted in famine and epidemic, which broke out in Artsakh, Syunik, Gandzak and other places. Some of the Armenians had to abandon their homeland and migrate to Russia and Georgia.

Meanwhile Agha Muhammed shah had pressed the rebellion of Khorasan and was preparing for the invasion of Transcaucasus. After the Russian troops had withdrawn, Agha Muhammed shah started new invasions towards Transcaucasian countries in spring of 1797. He crossed bridge Khudaperin over river Araks and moved in direction of Shoushi. Ibrahim khan together with his relatives abandoned the guards of the castle and fled to Daghestan. This time Agha Muhammed shah occupied Shoushi, devastated it, and killed almost all of its population. However the shah was cruel not only to the Armenians but also to his own people and servicemen. So, one of the latter named Safar

Ali being unable to stand it, entered at night the bedroom of Agha Muhammed and stabbed him with his sword, thus putting an end to the life of the tyrant³⁸⁴. After this murder the Persian troops went away to Iran, where the struggle for throne still went on.

THE JOINING OF ARTSAKH WITH RUSSIA. At the end of the eighteenth and at the beginning of the nineteenth centuries the final stage of the independence movement led by the Artsakh Armenians began.

Artsakh probably lived the uneasiest days of its history. The attacks of Agha Muhammed shah and the tribes of Northern Caucasus as well as the anti-Armenian policy of Ibrahim khan had completely exhausted Artsakh. And the situation in Artsakh was made still worse by drought and other natural disasters³⁸⁵. The situation was so horrible that many refugees moved to Georgia and sold their children for a piece of bread³⁸⁶.

Although the forces of Armenian meliks had been expired in the unequal fight with Ibrahim khan, the struggle for independence didn't terminate. In 1797 Melik Jumshud of Varanda and his nephew melik Freidun of Giulistan left for Astrakhan. They wanted to meet Emperor Pavel with the solicitation of Hovsep Arghutyan. At the same time catholicos Ghucas Karnetsi applied to the Russian Emperor with a plea of taking the Armenians under his protection. On February 26, 1798, an imperial edict was proclaimed according to which the Emperor like his predecessors Peter I, Katherine I and Katherine II took the Armenian people, and especially those living within the borders of the Russian Empire under his protection³⁸⁷. In spite of those verifications Pavel I had already denied the idea of creating a subsidiary Armenian state in Transcaucasus and aimed at the annexation of the country to Russia.

The Armenian meliks Jumshud and Freidun waited for a long time in Astrakhan, then in 1799 left for St. Petersburg where they introduced their plea to the Russian Emperor with the solicitation

of H. Arghutyan.

Emperor Pavel took those two meliks under his protection. One part of Borchalu was given to Melik Freidun and Lori-to Melik Jumshud. Melik Abov of Giulistan settled in Bolnis and ruled it. In this way the last opportunity of creating the state of the Artsakhian Armenians could be lost if not for the most of the population of Artsakh, who refused to leave their homeland and settle in other territories. The people still clung to its own earth and continued its fight for freedom.

After Agha Muhammed had been murdered his nephew Fatali shah came to power and tried to re-establish the Persian supremacy over Transcaucasus. In spring of 1800 the troops of prince Abas-Mirza intruded into Ararat valley, besieged Yerevan, but failed to occupy it.

On September 12, 1801, a year after the death of George XII-the son of king Heracle, the Georgian kingdom was abolished as an administrative unit and was annexed to Russia by the manifesto of Alexander I. According to the same document the Armenian Lori, Pambak, Shamshadin and some northern districts of Armenia were also annexed to Russia.

In January, 1804 Gyandja was occupied and the Armenians living there were also taken under the rule and protection of Russia. Then the Russian headquarters started preparing for the occupation of the khanates of Yerevan, Nakhijevan and Shirak, which had strategic significance.

Soon the intensified Russian-Persian contradictions grew into a war which lasted from 1804-1813.

The first serious battle between the opponents took place on June 10, 1804 near the village Smaller (Pokr) Gharakilisa. The vanguard forces of the Russian corpse led by general Tuchkov won the battle. In his turn on June 30 general Tsitsianov crashed the troops of Abas-Mirza in Kanaker and besieged Yerevan. The oppressive heat, the extreme shortage of ammunition and provisions as well as the rebellions in Georgia made Tsitsianov stop the siege of Yerevan and come back to Tiflis on September

3.

Being troubled by the success of Russians Ibrahim khan of Karabakh decided to establish good relations with them. Persia, in its turn, did not want to lose Karabakh so it sent a regiment there in January 1805. The regiment was defeated by the Armenian volunteers in Dizak on their way to Shoushi.

Then a Russian detachment led by major Lisanevich was sent to Shoushi to strengthen the pressure over Ibrahim khan.

Soon Ibrahim khan was obliged to make a compromise. On May 14 1805 general Tsitsianov and Ibrahim khan signed a treaty near Kjurakchai river, which is thirty miles far from Gandzak. Archbishop Hovhannes Geghardakir of Gandzak and Tiflis and Jumshud melik-Shahnazaryan of Varanda were the representatives of Armenia as a concerned party. According to the treaty Karabakh accepted the Russian protection. Russian troops were to be located in Shoushi. Karabakh was to be ruled by the khan under the inspection of the Russian officials. The first article of the treaty ran, "I, Ibrahim khan of Shoushi and Karabakh, solemnly refuse to recognize the supremacy of any other king or any other country in my own name and the name of all my heirs. I promise loyalty and obedience only to the Russian throne and can swear upon the Koran". The Russian party in its turn promised that, "Ibrahim khan of Shoushi and Karabakh and his heirs as well as his trustful people will not be deprived of grant, mercy and rights... and the integrity of his present lands will be preserved"³⁸⁸.

In fact with that treaty the Czarist Russia revealed the essence of its obviously self-interested policy. It ignored the freedom plea of a nation which was loyal and true to it up to the end, it flagrantly scorned the patriotic rights of Armenian meliks. In the same way Russia and Turkey signed a new treaty on March 16, 1921 and on July 5, 1921 The Caucasian Bureau adopted the well-known decision. In spring 1805 troops led by Abas Mirza crossed Araks, intruded into Karabakh and besieged Shoushi. The Russian

garrison led by major Lysanevich and the local Armenian volunteers persistently resisted the attacks of the enemy. Ibrahim khan decided to join the troops of Abas Mirza forgetting about his oath. At night he left the castle together with his family. Learning about this Lysanevich and melik Jumshud chased Ibrahim up to the place called Khanen-bagh and killed him and the male members of his family there.

The detachment of 500 led by colonel Karyagin was sent from Gandzak to the defenders of Shoushi. But this Russian detachment was encircled near Askeran by the 10,000 Persian army of Pir Ghuli. Then the 30,000 army of Abas Mirza joined the Persian vanguard. Vani Atabekyan (from Kusapat) let the garrison of Shoushi know about the grave situation of the detachment. With his help the Russian soldiers secretly moved away from Askeran and hid in the stronghold of Shah-Bulagh. By starving them to death Abas Mirza tried to make the defenders surrender. But Vani Atabekyan saved the soldiers. With the help of Hakob, his brother he sent a letter to Yelizavetpo, I to general Tsitsianov in which he told about the created conditions. Meanwhile he himself supplied the soldiers with food.

The detachment had already lost all hopes of receiving help, so on July 7 the battalion of Karyagin accompanied by Vani Atabekyan left the stronghold and secretly reached village Mokhratagh. Then in Kusapat Vani Atabekyan gave the stocks of flour to the Russian soldiers and helped them to join the main forces. Later general Tsitsianov presented Vani Atabekyan with his own silver watch as a sign of gratitude for all his braveries³⁸⁹.

Then Vani Atabekyan fought with 60 Armenian volunteers in the hottest places of the Russian-Persian front. The Armenians of Artsakh, the forces of meliks fought not only within the borders of their homeland but also wherever the Russian headquarters ordered. They did all that for their freedom and independence.

During the siege of Yerevan in 1804 the rider detachment led by Rostom- the son of melik Abov from Giulistan, helped the

Russian troops greatly.

Rostom bek fought with self-devotion in the battles of Bolnis, Pambak and Aparan. Many warriors of Rostom died in unequal fights and he was wounded and was taken as captive and imprisoned in Tavis, where he was tortured and then killed³⁹⁰.

After the heroic death of his son, Melik Abov, who was already an old man continued commanding an Armenian detachment.

In 1806 the rider detachment of Melik Jumshud Shahnazaryan was also very active, especially in the fights against the Persian troops (1806). Field-Marshal Gudovich appreciated highly the service and skills of that Armenian son and asked the main headquarters for a rank of lieutenant-colonel for Melik Jumshud Shahnazaryan. It was calm on the Russian-Persian front in 1806-1809. However encouraged by England and France, Persia started anew military actions. Russia avoided fighting in two fronts against Turkey and Persia, so it started to negotiate with Persia in Tavis in February 1810 and in Askeran in April of the same year. However Persia expected help from the great states so it stopped negotiations and restarted military actions.

In summer 1810 the regiment of colonel P.Kotlyarevsky occupied Meghry and then attacked the camp of Abas Mirza. His troops were defeated and then made move away from Karabakh.

Abas Mirza organized another invasion of Karabakh in summer 1811 but did not succeed.

In 1812 the Persian troops attacked several districts. Then the heavy losses which Fat-Ali Shah suffered in the battles of Aslanduz and Lenkoran obliged him to offer peace.

With the active participation of Artsakh Armenians Russia finalized the victory of its arms in the peace treaty of Giulistan, on October 12, 1813. The treaty was signed by the attorney Rtishchev and Mirza Abdul Hasan khan³⁹¹. Persia recognized the annexation of Dagestan and Eastern Georgia as well as the khanates of Giulistan, Karabakh, Shaki, Shirvan, Derbend, Ghuba Baku, Talish to Russia³⁹². As specified by the second article of the

treaty Persia also refused itself from the Eastern Armenia - provinces of Karabakh, Lori, Pambak, Shamshadin, Zangezur and Shoragyal. Persia was deprived of the right of having a fleet in the Caspian sea³⁹³.

Irregardless of the ambitions pursued by the czarist authorities in Transcaucasus the articles of Giulistan treaty corresponded to the independence strivings of the Karabakhian Armenians.

The treaty of Giulistan was an unprecedented reality for our people. Once again it proved that Karabakh went under the possession of Russia with the status of an independent national state entity. Consequently the territories which make up present day Azerbaijan as well as Daghestan, Georgia, Karabakh became part of Russia at an equal status of legal subjects. So after the collapse of the Soviet Union the above-mentioned preserved the right of creating their own national statehood, then Karabakh also had the same right. The treaty of Giulistan can be a political landmark for working out the principles of foreign policy and diplomacy of the NKR. In addition to political motivations it also has an integral legal field in the sense of present day standpoint. The first move in the juridical aspect of the recognition of NKR should be connected with the treaty of Giulistan.

Here Azerbaijan is a secondary suspect. The main stress is on Karabakh-Russia relations because Russia is itself on the way of formation of its statehood and it tries to follow civilized norms and can not avoid the legal and treaty basis of its history. Thus taking into consideration the treaty of Giulistan which is one of such basis, Russia must make decisions concerning its heritage. It should be mentioned that the state juridical heritage is not a simple phenomenon, instead it is an entity of state interests. Thus according to the treaty of Giulistan Karabakh is to some extent an independent entity for Armenia, then it is absolutely independent of Azerbaijan. One of the expression of the political and juridical power of Giulistan treaty is the fact that needs no protection. The avoidance from it by any of the states which have relation to it will

be directed against the avoider itself.

With the help of Armenians the Czarist Russia took under its domain Karabakh and began to lead its colonial policy. By the order of the Czarist government the official rank of meliks was abolished. This can be explained by the freedom strivings of Artsakhi meliks, exactly by Russia's wish to avoid those strivings.

However the Russian authorities decided to preserve the rights of Tatar khans and beks. In that period the nobility of Caucasus included 41,53% Georgians, 16,4% Russians, 27,5% Tatars and only 5,46% Armenians³⁹⁴.

After Ibrahim khan had been murdered, the Russian Emperor proclaimed his elder son Mehti-Ghuli khan to be the successor of his father. Though Mehti-Ghuli khan swore allegiance to the Russian Empire, he did not turn out to be loyal towards the Russian government. In 1822 Mehti-Ghuli khan and his kinsmen ran to Persia. After it the khanate of Karabakh was liquidated at general Madatov's command. The province of Karabakh was reestablished and was ruled directly by the Russian government. The province in its turn was divided into mahals. The officials which had served the khan were dismissed from their administrative posts, and mahals were ruled by newly appointed Russian officials.

Thus with all the above-mentioned political changes and affairs Karabakh entered a new stage of its history.

THE MEDIEVAL CULTURE OF ARTSAKH (IV-XVIII CENTURIES)

The invention of the Armenian script initiated a new period in the centuries - old Armenian history. Mesrop Mashtots gave a real opportunity to the Armenian people to give the international treasury of culture with pearls of genius.

As it is written in the works of M.Khorenatsi Mesrop Mashtots "opened schools in all the provinces"³⁹⁵ after the invention of letters.

Realizing the importance of new schools Mesrop Mashtots left Vagharshapat and went to the most distant and backward parts of his country to spread the light of literacy there.

In early periods Mashtots had activities in the province of Goghtan, Syounik and only then moved to Artsakh. It is known that at the beginning of the fifth century he opened the first school of Artsakh in Amaras temple of Haband district. The school of Amaras played an important role in spreading literacy in the eastern provinces of Armenia. From Haband Mashtots went to Tsor-a settlement in Dizak, and then passing along the places of pilgrimage of doctor Pandaleon he moved to the western part of the country, that is the provinces Metsarank and Metskvenk. Then, together with his disciples he went down to the field part of Artsakh from where he moved to Utik, the burgh of Gis, which was the second famous sanctuary of eastern Armenian provinces. On his way from one place to another he preached the word of God and thus also carried out a religious- enlightening mission.

It should be mentioned that Amaras was repeatedly attacked and ruined throughout centuries. Nevertheless the school of the temple worked incessantly for a long time. In a further period the schools and education in Artsakh experienced a great advance under the rule of Vachagan Barepasht (Vachagan the Pious), who realized the importance of literacy in preserving the national self-dependance of the Armenians. First of all Vachagan the Pious

liquidated all the activities of the ardent sects of the country's unapproachable places. This king of the Armenian Albania converted into Christian religion all those who adopted Zoroastrianism by force. Movses Kaghankatvatsi wrote that first and foremost Vachagan the Pious opened schools for those children whose parents had formerly been Zoroastrians. He also wrote that when Vachagan went to any village, he visited schools, gathered children around him and asked them to read aloud for him.

No wealth could make the king so happy as the well-doing of the children. He gave the children books and boards for drawing. The children spelled the sacred Armenian words with their innocent lips and their self-confident voices echoed in all the corners of mother Artsakh filling the mountainous land with the powerful throbbing of the mother tongue³⁹⁶.

Under the rule of Vachagan the Pious in the eastern provinces of Artsakh there were also village schools with teachers which were regularly paid for their work. As proved by historical studies during that time schools in Armenia were mainly public and were supported by public means.

Large churches and temples had their spiritual-ecclesiastic schools, where Mother tongue, Philosophy, Musics as well as religious subjects were taught. However the knowledge which was accessible within the borders of homeland was not enough for preparing high ranking officials. That is why the ecclesiastic and secular leaders of Artsakh sent their sons to Assyria, Greece, Persia, Rome, later to Vagharshapat and Gladzor. There they could obtain broader and better education. In the universities of the mentioned places they could learn much about Philosophy, Literature and the achievements of civilization. The young men of Artsakh also received education in the school of Mathematics and Natural Sciences founded by Anania Shirakatsi. After graduating from the school they themselves taught in the province of Syounik, the schools of Amaras and Dadi Vank³⁹⁷.

However during the Arab conquests not only the material but

also the spiritual culture of the Armenian people suffered greatly. From the end of the ninth century the renaissance of the Armenian statehood, the upswing of the social-economic life created new conditions for the development of the Armenian culture and firstly the education in schools.

Various kinds of schools were opened all over the country; among the most well-known were the schools of Amaras, Gtchavank, Dadi Vank.

There appeared many talented teachers who spared no efforts in helping the colleges and universities to grow into Academies of Science. Deacon Hovhannes Imastaser who was a famous philosopher, mathematician, writer and chronologist was one of the outstanding and talented scientists of that time. He was born in Parakhonis village of Parisos district which was in Artsakh province, in a family of a priest in 1045. The deacon died in 1129 and was buried in the temple of Haghbat. The epitaph on his tombstone consists of only the following two lines;

"This Arab tomstone is dedicated to the memory of the Deacon of Sopestos"³⁹⁸.

For many years Deacon Hovhannes had worked in Syounik, Artsakh (Amaras, Dadi Vank) regulating teaching and educational activities.

After graduating from the college of Haghbat deacan Hovhannes went to Ani. There he opened his school where religious subjects as well as Geometry, Philisophy, Chronology, Cosmology and other Natural Sciences were taught. The school (Vardapetaran) of Ani as well as its indefatigable master became famous in Armenia and outside its borders. As one of the chroniclers wrote Georgian king David "respected the Armenian nation, its churches, and the rhetorician teacher (Vardapet) of Haghbat, who was called Deacon. The king confessed to him all his sins and always asked for his blessings"³⁹⁹.

In parallel with his pedagogical activities Hovhannes Imastaser also carried scientific research in Chronology (the

Armenian calendar was fixed mostly due to Hovhannes) Cosmology,Philosophy, History. The deacon also had skills and talent in music. He used experimental methods in his resarch works most of which he completed with discoveries. Hovhannes Imastaser came to the thought that the mastering of discoveries and achievements was not enough and that there was a need of developing and using them in life. Obviosly that thought was a step to the suggestion of the method that has conditioned the progress of science up to now.

In 12-13 th centuries the school (Vardapetaran) of Nor Getik or Goshavank flourished and achieved fame. This was mainly conditioned by the activities of Mkhitar Gosh, who was a great lawyer, literary man, and teacher. At first he opened schools in Karin, Gandzak then with the protection and sponsorship of prince Vakhtang in Khachen. From Khachen Mkhitar Gosh moved to Getik temple, which was destroyed during the earthquake of 1191. With the help of prince Zakare Mkhitar Gosh founded the temple and school of Nor Getik in a gorge called Tandzut. Such outstanding personalities of the Armenian culture as Vanakan, Kirakos Gandzaketsi received their education in that very school.

However the Mongol ivasions put an end to the progress of culture. The situation was especially inauspicious under the domain of Turkmenian tribes and during Turkish-Persian wars. The schools suffered most of all from the hard conditions of the country. Many of them, which had achieved fame in previous centuries, were closed.

Beginning from the first half of the 17th century, when a relatively peaceful situation was created in the country, the Armenian of Artsakh again took to opening new scools.

In 17-18th centuries the schools of the churches of Gandzasar, Dadi Vank, Gtich, St Hakob, Erits Mankants, Shoushi worked with some rare stoppages⁴⁰⁰.

Throughout the medieval era alongside with the churches and schools there also existed repositories of manuscripts

(matenadarans) in Armenia and Artsakh. Armenian manuscripts were written in more than thousand centres of writing, in the fifteen provinces of Mets Haik, Pokr Haik, Cilicia and in Armenian colonies. Unfortunately most of the Armenian manuscripts were robbed. Through numerous ordeals of centuries about 300,000 Armenian manuscripts have reached our days including the ones on history, philosophy, theology, literature. Among the manuscript heritage there are superb literary translations, original miniature paintings and various works concerning different fields of culture. More than hundred manuscript-books were written in Artsakh and Utik⁴⁰¹.

The Armenians started to illustrate and copy manuscripts from early Middle Ages. One of the chroniclers of the Eastern Armenian provinces wrote that many manuscripts had been thrown into River Trtu during the struggle against the sects in the seventh century⁴⁰².

One the famous centers of manuscript-writing was Gandzasar. As it was mentioned by Leo there was a good repository of manuscripts in Gandzasar⁴⁰³.

In one of his works O.Yeganyan wrote, "Being an important center of manuscript-writing and the residence of the catholicos the temple of Gandzasar had also its own repository of manuscripts and a special place where they were written"⁴⁰⁴.

The temple Tarkmanchants founded in 989 had its own centre of manuscript-writing where in 1232 the famous "Tarkmanchants" Gospel by Grigor Tsaghkogh was copied.

In 13-17th centuries meaningful and magnificent manuscripts were written in Khoranashat which was founded by Vanakan in Erits Mankants temple, in Goshavank (Gosh temple) and in the church of St Astvatsatsin (the Blessed Virgin) which was also called Getamej temple.

There were also centers of manuscript-writing in Gandzak, Shoushi, Shamakhi, Gtich, Amaras, Taghaser. About 20 manuscripts came from Shoushi, 35 from Zakama, 15 from Shamakhi⁴⁰⁵.

One of the most interesting facts is that in XVII-XVIII centuries tens of written manuscripts appeared in Kashunik, Kashatagh, Karvajar under the conditions of monotony of the cultural life. Such works as "Karozgirk" (translated as "book of sermons") written in Tsar in 1684 by one Varvare (this book is kept in Matenadaran now under No 2067) "Sharaknots" (translated as "book of psalms") illustrated in village Apahen in 1652 by Moses, "Avetaran" (translated as "The Gospel") written by Martiros Khndzorektsi, illustrated by priest Moses in Mosi in 1653-54, the colophon "Mashtots Dzerats" (translated as "With the hand of Mashtots") and written by psalm-reader Paghtasar in Harar in 1666 are worth mentioning. In 1671 the same psalm-reader Paghtasar wrote another colophony of manuscripts which is now kept in the library of "Welcome" Institute of London⁴⁰⁶.

Due to the survival of the pieces of the Armenian statehood of Artsakh those manuscripts were widely copied. Works concerning the culture of the Armenian manuscript-writing were collected from different Armenian provinces, stored and preserved. Mongols sold the manuscripts they stole from the temples and churches to the Armenians at incredibly high prices⁴⁰⁷.

One of those who bought manuscripts then was Grigor Tsaretsi⁴⁰⁸.

In XIII-XIV many precious manuscripts were brought to Artsakh and kept there. Nowadays they are kept in Matenadaran under N 6202, N 1252, N 0090, N 7347, N 6764, N 2588, N 6288⁴⁰⁹. It is most important to note "The Red Gospel" written in Mets shen (village) in 909. It is the oldest Armenian manuscript after the "Gospels of queen Mlike and the Lazaryans (is kept now in Matenadaran N 6202).

The Armenian works of belles-lettres style originated in the 5th century. The writings of the first Armenian authors were extremely national in their content. It was conditioned by the certain real needs and demands of their country. In early periods the literary works were overfilled with Christian-religious spirit and ideology.

In the 7th century Davtak Kertogh wrote his "Lament for the death of Jevanshir, the great prince", which was a great discovery on the way to making the Armenian literature secular. Davtak Kertogh wrote his "Lament" following the norms of Greek oratorical art.

In his work Davtak first eulogizes Jevanshir, the prince of Gardman, then tells the story of his death. As it has been stated by a famous critic and writer Manuk Abeghyan, "The lament" was written with poetic feelings, sad, lyrical and sometimes ardent effusions. It has a lively style and is also distinguished due to the correspondence of its metric forms to the contents of writing⁴¹⁰.

Davtak Kertogh came from eastern Armenian provinces. He was the compatriot of Jevanshir and considered the death of the prince to be the tragic loss of the Armenian country and people⁴¹¹.

The poem of Davtak was later translated into Russian, English, French, German, Spanish, Polish.

The next period of making the eastern Armenian literary works secular was connected with the name of prince Yesayi Abu-Muse, who was the leader of Gtich defense against Bugha. In answer to the threats of the enemy he wrote a "Letter", in which he spoke about the courageous spirit of the Armenian highlander and his unbreakable will to win in a poetic style.

Hamam Vardapet Areveltsi was a poet and musician (the contemporary of king Hamam Areveltsi) who lived, wrote and composed in the 9th century. He left a rich literary heritage which included poems, biblical commentaries, grammars and other works.

The psalm-writer Ananun, who protested against the foreign invaders in his works lived in IX-X centuries.

In the second half of the twelfth century a new tendency appeared in prose works. The originator of the tendency was Mkhitar Gosh, who wrote a collection of about 190 fables⁴¹², which aimed at rearing, educating, consolidating, and enlightening the wide masses of the people.

In his fables Gosh touched upon social and everyday problems. He wrote about the interrelations of different classes, groups and persons. He also focused his attention upon the importance of statehood in protecting the nation. From this point of view the fables of Gosh can be considered to be the logical continuation of his "Code of law".

In XIV-XVIII centuries collections of poems (called "Tagharan") appeared in different provinces of Armenia and there were many works of political-patriotic content among them. The collection "Mashtots" contained laments for the sad fates and deaths of some outstanding Armenians. Similar collections of laments and poems were kept together with the manuscripts in several temples of Artsakh.

In the V-XVIII centuries Armenian historical science in the eastern provinces remained on a high level in spite of all the hard conditions.

Moses Kaghankatvatsi is a historiographer who lived in the seventh century. He was the chronicler of the royal family of the Armenian eastern provinces and he started to write the history of his country from the time of Aran. His "The History of Albania" is a book consisting of three volumes. The first and the second volumes by Moses Kaghankatvatsi were written at the end of the seventh century. The third volume was written in 10th century by Moses Daskhurantsi who also completed the millennium history (I-X cent.) of Artsakh and Utik. In "The History of Albania" the authors distinctly described and spoke about the geographical borders of the Armenian Albania. Due to both chroniclers we now have an opportunity to read about the struggle of the Artsakhians against the foreign tyrants, the activities of the members of Aranshahik royal family. It was this history book that first contained the "Lament" of Davtak Kertogh, which was the first lyrical Armenian poem. It was Moses Kaghankatvatsi who left valuable information about Albania, Georgia and especially Khazars.

The parts of the history book telling about the period of Arab domain, the reacquisition of statehood by the Artsakhians in the tenth century belong to the pen of Moses Daskhurantsi. A whole chapter entitled "The patriarchs of Albania, their fame and activities" was added to the history book. In that chapter Daskhurantsi wrote about all the catholicoses of Albania that lived up to 998. He also spoke in detail about the spiritual values of the Armenians from Artsakh and Utik.

Without any explanation of facts and realities the Azeri scientists relate both historiographers to non-Armenian origin and consider "The History of Albania" to be a work about the history of Azerbaijan.

The Armenian historiography acquired new glamour and quality in Artsakh and Utik. There appeared a new group of historiographers who excelled the historiographers of previous periods in their original approach towards the issues of history and of course the length of the historical periods they encompassed in their study.

Another outstanding representative of the Armenian culture, Vanakan Vardapet became the originator of the Armenian historiographical school. He was born in Tavush, Utik in 1181. He founded the school of Khoranashat, where Kirakos Gandzaketsi, Vardan Areveltsi, Grigor Aknertsi received their education.

In 1236 Vanakan Vardapet and his pupils were taken as captives by the Mongols. The residents of Gag castle raised money and set them free. Vanakan Vardapet could again continue to educate, enlighten the young generation. As stated by Vardan Areveltsi and Kirakos Gandzaketsi Vanakan wrote many works about the days he lived in and especially about the Molgol invasions. Unfortunately those works have not reached our days.

Vanakan Vardapet also had many works of spiritual, religious content, in which he defended the principles of the Armenian church. Fortunately his religious works have been preserved up to our days. His "Answer and Question" collection was used as an

educational curriculum in medieval Armenian schools.

Vanakan Vardapet died on March 18, 1251 and as it was his will he was buried in the cemetery of the poor near Khoranashat.

However Vanakan Vardapet had many bright pupils, Kirakos Gandzaketsi, one of the brilliant representatives of the Armenian historiography among them.

He was born in 1202/1203 in Gandzak. First he was the pupil of Mkhitar Gosh, in the school of Nor Getik, then he moved to Vanakan Vardapet. In 1236 the bandits of Mongol Molar Nuin captured Tavush, robbed the school, took the pupils (Kirakos among them), as captives. However the future great-historiographer managed to escape and settle again in Nor Getik. Up to the last day of his life Kirakos Gandzaketsi was indulged in historiographical and literary works but at the same time he was actively involved in social, religious-administrative and cultural life. Kirakos Gandzaketsi died in 1271 in the temple of Nor Getik.

His "Armenian history" starts from the fourth century and presents the history up to the year 1265. The foreword tells about the circumstances of writing the history. The first part of the book starts with the descriptions of events connected with the names of Grigor Lusavoritch, king Trdat and the adoption of Christianity as a state religion in Armenia. Then using the written sources of the previous periods the author embraced into his "History" the description of the events that took place till the end of the 12th century including the history of Cilicia of corresponding period.

The second part of the work starts with the events of 1197 and finishes with those of 1265. The author himself was the witness of the most of events described in the second part, that is why it is more valuable than the others. Kirakos Gandzaketsi introduced the detailed history of the political and military strengthening of Georgia, the Armenian-Georgian unity, the liberation of Armenia from the Seljuk yoke during the rule of Zakaryans, the advance and prosperity of Armenian political, social-economic and cultural life.

The historiographical work of Kirakos Gandzaketsi is especially valuable and important for elucidation of the history in the period of Mongol domain in Armenia and Near East. He gave not only the vivid description of victor invasions, plunderings, massacres organized by Mongols, but he also described the heroic resistance they showed. Gandzaketsi devoted numerous pages to the introduction of the the social-economic, legal-public conditions and religious-cultural facts of that time in Armenia. In laying down his "History" he used many different sources referring to almost all previous Armenian historiographers and to many new and old lithographical inscriptions. The historiographer translated the sources into Armenian, processed and used the folk lore legends, the evidences of witnesses. He was very critical towards every detail. No wonder he was considered to be "the follower of Moses Khorenatsi and the predecessor of Stepanos Orbelyan"⁴¹³.

The work of Kirakos Gandzaketsi is a reliable source not only in the Armenology but also in oriental studies and caucasology.

Another famous representative of the medieval culture was Vardan Areveltsi. This person was a historiographer, philosopher, geographer, writer, translator, teacher and a national-public figure. He was born in Gandzak at the end of the twelfth century.

At first he learned in Nor Getik and then moved to Khoranashat. After gaining a brilliant command of knowledge he founded a school in St Andre temple of Kayenaberd. He also educated the young people in the temple school of Haghat. With the persuasion of catholicos Constantine Bardzraberdtsi he spent some period of his life in Cilicia, where he actively participated in the reinforcement of the ideological basis of the Armenian church and the struggle against the policy of Byzantia and Rome.

Vardan Areveltsi spent the last decade of his life in the temple of Khor Virap where he founded one of the high schools of the Middle Ages. Such outstanding representatives of the Armenian medieval culture as Hovannes Pluz Yerznkatsi, Gevorg Skevratsi, Nerses Mshetsi, Yesayi Nshetsi, Grigor Bijnetsi were the pupils of

Vardan Areveltsi in different places and at different times.

Vardan Areveltsi was in close contacts with Hulavu khan so he managed to change the state of his compatriots to the better.

He left a large number of commentative works. Many biblical ideas, questions concerning natural-philosophy, cultural life are reflected in such works as "Meknutyun Saghmosats" (translated as "the explanation of psalms"), "Meknutyun yergots yerguyn Grigor Narekatsvoi" (translated as "the explanation of the best poems of Grigor Narekatsi") etc. Vardan Areveltsi was also the author of a collection called "Zhghlank" (zhghlel means to speak about knowledge, various events and facts), in which he discussed problems concerning nature and society. "Ashkharhatsoyts" written by Vardan Areveltsi was the second in its significance in the given field after the work of Anania Shirakatsi which is of the same name. In "Ashkharhatsoyts" Vardan Areveltsi presented valuable information about the geographical state of Armenia of that time, about the regional-administrative divisions, and the neighbour countries.

The most famous work of Vardan Areveltsi was "Havakum Patmutyan" or otherwise called "Patmutyun tiezerakan" (tr-d as "General History" or the "Summary of History") which was the second attempt of laying down new general history in Armenian historiography. He used different sources including the works of Armenian literary men, lithographic inscriptions, folk narrations and also Assyrian, Persian legends.

The history book by Vardan Areveltsi starts with the story of Babel, Hayk and Bel and ends with the description of the events of the twelfth century. The historiographer also gathered much interesting information about the historical past of Armenian and Transcaucasian peoples, the Armenian state of Cilicia, Persians, Byzantines, Arabs, Seljuks, Crusaders, Mamluks, Mongols, Turkmenian tribes.

Vardan Areveltsi wrote many orations, odes, psalms, precepts, tales. He also made translations from Greek into Assyrian. Among

the best works belonging to the pen of Vardan Areveltsi was the translation of the oration of Hakob Srtchetsi who was a famous Assyrian churchman and publicman. The great part of the Armenian translation of "Chronicle"- a historiographical work written by Assyrian patriarch Mikhail (XII cent.) reached to our days due to Vardan Areveltsi.

In 1271 this great enlightener and scientist died and was buried in Khor Virap.

Grigor Aknertsi (XIII cent.) was born in Khachen, Artsakh. He was one of the pupils of Vanakan Vardapet and the classmate of Vardan Areveltsi and Kirakos Gandzaketsi. His works "Patmutyun vash azgin netoghats" (tr-d as the "history of netoghats nation") embraces a short (1220-1273), but very meaningful period of history, when the Armenian people fought against the Mongol domain. The historian gave interesting information about the modes and manners of Mongols, their policy of heavy taxation, the system of governing.

Grigor Aknertsi also wrote about the struggle of the Armenians of Cilicia against Mameluks. His works also contain much information about the neighbour countries of Armenia and Cilicia. The literary-historiographical life of the eastern provinces of Armenia also experienced advance during further centuries. In spite of the fierce conditions, the leaders of the Armenian intellectuals continued to create spiritual values in the chambers of the most famous temples of Artsakh and Utik.

In XVI century Hovhannes Vardapet Tsaretsi carried out a diligent work. According to many sources Hovhannes Tsaretsi and a group of historians wrote many books in Dadi Vank. The books were later robbed and burnt by the foreign invaders. One of those manuscripts is kept now in Matenadaran under N 6879. Hovhannes Tsaretsi died in 1583 and his body was buried in Vasakashen, Syounik.

Hovhannesik Tsaretsi, who came from the famous princely family of Jhanshahs of Tsar had also prolific activities in culture.

He was born in Tsar in 1560 Hovhannesik received fundamental education in Dadi Vank, his teacher was Nerses Gnunetsi. Soon he started writing new manuscripts and mending the old ones. The most valuable work of Hovhannesik Tsaretsi is "The History of South-Eastern Armenia"⁴¹⁴.

In his book he presented the history of north-eastern Armenia through 1572-1600. In his chronicle he wrote in detail about Turkish-Persian wars and the famine and epidemic. In parallel with scientific work Hovhannesik Tsaretsi and a group of other devoted men built the church Astvatsatsin in Geghama.

This patriotic and diligent person died at the time between 1621-1623. (The exact date is not known).

On the previous pages of this book it has been written about the military talent and the mission of the spiritual leader of Yesayi Hasan Jalalyan. However the patriotic catholicos had also a talent of a chronicler and he left also an undelible line in the field of historiography. His "History of Albania" described the events of 1160-1711 with bright, true colours, and presented the history of the Armenian independence movement in the first quarter of the 18th century. The book was published in Shoushi in 1839 and in Yerusalem in 1868. Unfortunately the original of this work by catholicos Yesayi has not been preserved to our day. As regards this Raffi wrote, "The original of the work of catholicos Yesayi was very detailed which is proved by one of its original pages which has been preserved but unfortunately is half-spoilt. If the whole of the work could be found, then it would give rich material to our new history"⁴¹⁵.

The lack of legal norms for the regulation of public life was obvious in Artsakh and Utik. The first person who tried to create a system of legal norms was David Alavkavordi. He was born in Gandzak, where he lived and worked to the middle of the twelfth century. The "Norms" written by Alavkavordi is a collection of 97 legal norms or rules provided for the regulation of every-day and family matter⁴¹⁶.

The "Norms" by D. Alavkavordi can be considered an important source for studying the history of the Armenian law and social-political thought.

Another personality who made progressive steps in the field of studying the laws and creating new codes of laws was Mkhitar Gosh (Gosh was his nickname which meant scanty-haired or scanty-bearded). He was born in Gandzak in 1120s. His teacher was Hovhannes Tavushetsi. After receiving education M. Gosh was bestowed the title of Vardapet. However he was not satisfied with the knowledge he had. So with the patronage of prince Kurd Artsruni he went to Cilicia. There he again received the title of vardapet after he had gained rich knowledge in the spiritual centre of Sev Ler.

Returning to his homeland he first lived in Gandzak. But the local Muslim rulers and the Armenian catholicos harassed him, so he moved to Haterk. Prince Vakhtang - the ruler of Khachen who was an apologist of the Armenian culture took Mkhitar Gosh under his protection. In 1184 he wrote his "Code of law". From Haterk Mkhitar Gosh moved to the temple Getik. Due to Mkhitar Gosh the school of the temple of Getik won fame all over Armenia. Young people came to the school of Getik even from the distant corners of Armenia.

Mkhitar Gosh wrote many works. The most famous of them are "The Armenian code of Law", "The evidence of st. Khosrov", "The patriarchs of Albania" etc. He also wrote numerous fables and prayers.

No doubt that the most exclusive and valuable work of Mkhitar Gosh is "The code of laws". The necessity of the regulation of the relations of different social classes and groups was conditioned by the changes in social-economic, political, cultural life which in their turn occurred under the conditions of developed feudalism. That necessity led to the creation of "The code of laws" which can be considered to be the masterpiece of Mkhitar Gosh.

"The code of laws" was made up of three parts - "the

introduction" church rules (about 124 articles concerning the church), and secular rules or norms (about 130 articles). In the introduction ("Nakhadrutyun") the author raised the problems and questions of his approach towards the judicial system, legal proceedings. He also explained in it the circumstances that urged and led him to the creation of a system of laws.

Human being, irrespective of his social class, is in the centre of "The Code of Laws". M. Gosh is a humanist and in his work he expressed ideas that were ahead of his time. He didn't accept and tolerate any encroachment upon the life of a human-being. It doesn't matter to what religion or to what class of the social hierarchic system the person belongs.

In "The Code of Laws" the author outlined the vital necessity of creation of the Armenian statehood, commented upon the legal basis of the future kingdom and introduced the rights of the king. He also presented the matters concerning the interrelations of princes and various classes of society, the system of taxes etc.

"The Code of Laws" by Mkhitar Gosh was so perfect that it was used for about 700 years not only in Armenia but also in several other countries of the world. It started to be used in Polish Armenian community in 1519. Not long after it the Latin version of the book was translated into Crimean Tatar language. In the middle of the eighteenth century the Armenian community of Astrakhan used the work of M. Gosh as a basis for writing upon it their own code which was confirmed by the Czarist government and used among the Armenians of southern Russia before the establishment of judicial reforms.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century "The code of laws" was translated and included into Georgian code by the order of the Georgian king Vakhtang VI⁴¹⁷.

In the thirteenth century the masterpiece of Gosh served Smbat Sparapet as a basis for writing a code and putting it into practice in the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia.

Mkhitar Gosh died in 1213. He was buried in Nor Getik, which

was later called Goshavank in the name of Mkhitar Gosh, the outstanding representative of medieval Armenian thought.

Being part of the culture and having centuries-old traditions Armenian architecture experienced advance, attained new quality in early Middle Ages. The basis for the compositive, artistic, constructive principles of church-building were laid in this very period. The development of Artsakhi architecture was in parallel and in close contacts with the architecture of the other Armenian provinces.

In early Middle Ages the churches of Artsakh, Syounik and central Armenia mainly had three-nave basilicas hall.

One of the typic construction of early medieval Armenian architecture is the temple of Amaras. According to Armenian chroniclers the temple was founded by patriarch Gregory the Illuminator⁴¹⁸, and its building works were completed by bishop Grigoris - the grandson of the patriarch. The temple soon became the seat of the same bishop Grigoris.

Grigoris died while preaching in Derbed in 338 and his disciples buried him in Amaras. In the fifth century king Vachagan the Pious built an underground chapel-crypt near the grave of Grigoris. The crypt was under the aisle of the church. It is known that Mesrop Mashtots opened one of the first Armenian churches in Amaras.

Amaras was not only spiritual, but also cultural, economic centre. It was also the Artsakhian centre of independence movement. That is why in all times the invaders - Persians, Arabs, Seljuk-Turks, Tatar-Mongols tried to raze to the ground that house of God. According to one of the legends after ruining the temple, Tamerlane ordered his soldiers to stand in a row from Amaras to Araks (about 45 km) and pass the stones of the temple to each other and fill the river with them. However after it the temple was rebuilt and was again one of the most beautiful samples of Armenian architecture. In the second half of the sixteenth century the temple was again rebuilt with the efforts of bishop Petros

Gishetsi. At the same time a new country church called St. Grigoris was built in village Herher.

In XVI - XVIII centuries Amaras was walled in, many subsidiary constructions, lodgings were built. The length of the wall of Amaras was 85m. Early in the nineteenth century the temple was abandoned. The Turks called it Agh-Oghlan. When Artsakh was annexed to Russia, Amaras was turned into a customs-house. In 1848, with the help of metropolitan Bagdasar temple Amaras with its estates was given back to the Armenian spiritual leaders. The customs - house moved to a new place, exactly the bank of Araks river. Amaras was thoroughly rebuilt in 1858 with the means of the people of Shoushi.

Tsitsernavank church in Kashatagh region is another famous construction of early medieval period. According to M. Hasratyan this church which had three-nave basilica was founded on a place of a pagan temple.

Specialists believe the church was built in the sixth century. The portal, bell-tower, and the walls of the church were built later. The cemetery of one-time Armenian-populated village has been preserved beyond the walls of the church.

Monasteries Gilkho or Horeka, Yeghishe Arakyal (tr-d as "apostle Jeghishe"), temples Vachagan Barepasht, Okht Drnani, Khozhoraberd, Khtudrenk and churches in Mokhrenis, Sghnakh, Pavrevend, Tazakyand (Aghjabedi region) are considered to be the constructions dating back to IV-VII centuries. In accordance with the writings of Moses Kaghankatvatsi there were two churches, st. Grigor and st. Astvatsatsin in Partav in VI-VIII centuries⁴¹⁹.

The church of Getabek was built in the 8th century.

In early medieval period many churches were built inside the rocks. Even today several such vestries and one such church can be seen in Kashatagh region- 1km far from village Ghara-ghshlagh. There is also one such church in Aghdam region- 2 km north from church Vankasar.

The tradition of building hewn-in-stone churches took a new course in further periods. The masterpieces of this tradition are the hewn-in-stone churches of Ayrivank, which were built by the order of Proshyan princes. In the period of developed feudalism, under the rule of the Bagratids, Zakarianys and during the existence of Cilician Armenia architecture and town building experienced an unprecedented advance. Especially in the XIII century the building works were in full-swing.

Another famous construction, exactly medieval monastery was built in Martakert region, near the village Vaghuhhas, on the right bank of river Tartar, on a forest-covered swordish mountain-arm. That monastery is called Khadavank. According to the legend the monastery, which was the spiritual centre of Tsar principality was built in early medieval era and was called in the name of one of the first Christian preachers- bishop Khad. In the twelfth century the monastic complex was destroyed by an earthquake and also in the result of Seljuk-Turkik invasions. The monastery rose again due to the efforts of Hovhannes I Vardapet from Khachen. In 1204 he finished the building of the main temple. In 1215 prince Hasan who was the brother of Hovhannes and the ruler of Tsar built the church St. Karapet together with Shushik, his mother. In 1225, after the death of his husband, princess Dop added to the construction a porch, thus giving to the monastical complex a complete appearance.

It must be mentioned that the building of Amenaprkich church and its porch in Sanahin (1181) as well as the porch of Haghbat temple and the rebuilding of St. Grigor monastery Katoghike temple (1184) is ascribed to Hovhannes I from Khachen.

Many valuable architectural constructions such as Tarkmanchats monastic complex (989), St. Astvatsatin (1071) in Haghartsn, st. Astvatsatsin (1198) in Makarvank, st. Nshan (1190-1200) in Nor Varagavank, Moroy Dzoroy (1213), the Red (1221), Goshavank (1191-1241), Dadi Vank (1214) cathedrals in Varanda, Hovhannes Mkrkich church of Gandzasar (1216-1238), the

Cathedral of Khoranashat (1211-1222), the main churches of Goshavank (1191-1214), Gitchavank (1241-1248), Arakelots church (1240-1245) in Haghartsni, the complex Bri Yeghtzi (1230), the church of Sulok (1279) and st. Astvatsatin (1301) in Tsar. Each of the mentioned churches and monasteries is considered to be a miracle of architecture.

One of the masterpieces of medieval Armenian architecture is the monastic complex of Gandzasar, situated to the south-west of village Vank (Martakert region) on the top of a forest-covered, picturesque mountain. It is called Gandzasar, because there were silver mines in this territory (Gandzasar can be translated into English as "a mountain of treasures") in old times. The monastic complex consists of a church, porch, monk cells, some subsidiary constructions and a two-storey building of a school. All these were enclosed in walls.

Bibliographical data give evidence to the fact that there was a church at the same place in IX-X centuries.

According to the legend Hasan Jalal, the prince of Khachen buried the relic (head) of Hovhannes Mkrkich in Gandzasar in his family grave yard. Later, in 1216-1238, he built a cathedral upon the grave of the saint and called it in his name. For centuries the church has been an unexceeded miracle. Sh. Dill, the professor of Byzantine architecture considered Gandzasar⁴²⁰ to be the third (after Surb Khach of Aghtamar and Hripsime of Ejmiatsin) among the five Armenian constructions that had entered the treasury of the world culture.

The Russian scientist A. Jakobson referred to Gandzasar as "the encyclopedia" and "pearl" of medieval architecture⁴²¹.

Dadi or Khuta Vank is the second in its significance. It lies near village Haterk on the left bank of Trtu (or Tartar), on a hillock (Armenian for "hillock" is "khut"). In accordance with one of the legends, the complex is also called Dadi Vank in the name of Dadi, one of the seventy disciples of apostle Thaddeus. In the first century AD a church was built on the grave of Dadi⁴²². The

monastery was an eparchic center, so it was a thorn in the eyes of foreign tyrants and invaders, and they repeatedly destroyed it. But again and again people rebuilt their spiritual center. About 30 different constructions of Dadi Vank have been preserved up to our days. Meanwhile there is no doubt that the cathedral church of the complex is its best construction. It was built in 1214 with the means and efforts of Arzu-Khatun, the wife of prince Vakhtang from Haterk. There are five chapels (two of them standing, and three - half-destroyed) near the holy complex.

Despite the incessant influx of Turkish-speaking tribes in further centuries building of the church was not stopped. Churches built in the 15-18th centuries were mainly without cupola. Their plan and the volumetrical - territorial composition was plain. The churches of the mentioned period are also described as having simple outer and inner architecture. Among such constructions in Artsakh one can mention temple Kusanats anapat (1616) of Avetaranots village, st. Astvatsatsin (XVII cent.) in Meric, the church (XVII cent.) in Jermaghbyur, church st. Astvatsatsin (1651) in Avetaranots, temple st. Grigoris (1667) in Herher, the church of Yeghishevank (1655), the cathedral of Tzaghkavank (1682), the church of Yerits Mankants (1691), church Parin Pizh (1658) in Berdadzor (Gharaghshlagh), churches st. Stephanos (1747), st. Hovhannes (1736) in Togh, Dzithan temple (1772) of Khndzristan, Anapat (temple) of Jraberd (1715), church Kavank (1749) in village Hogher, church Amenaprkich (1749) in Tsor.

Beginning from the early Middle Ages and especially the late medieval periods a large number of castles, strongholds and other defensive fortifications were built in strategically important places and in the forbidding mountain mazes of Artsakh. The most famous from them are Khokhanaberd, Kachaghakaberd, Shikakar, Khachenaberd, Tsitanakar, Akanaberd, Handaberd, Jraberd, the castles of Giulistan, Parisos, Mayraberd, Matsnaberd, Dogh, Goroz, Tsoraberd, Khozhoraberd, Amatuk, Diza-

payt, Kochiz, Shosh castle and the others. These defensive complexes were connected with each other with a special signal (alarm) system and in case of danger the population of neighbouring villages found shelter in the mentioned castles and strongholds.

With the annexation of Artsakh to Russia the military-political situation of the former was stabilized to some extent and the huge castles and strongholds gradually lost their significance. In the course of years and in the result of natural disasters as well as the ungrateful, indifferent treatment of the man, most of those samples of civilization irretrievably vanished.

The most characteristic for the architecture of Artsakh in XII-XIII centuries was the unprecedented development of its secular branch. New-style lay edifices and palaces were built with the use of centuries-old traditions of national dwelling-building. The mansion of prince Hasan - Jalal in Khokhanaberd (the beginning of the XIII cent.), the Vakhtangyans in Dadi Vank (XII-XIII cent-s), the Dopyans in Tsar (built in XIII cent., rebuilt in 1658) and the eparchal palace "temple" in Dadi Vank (1211) are worth mentioning as such.

With the confirmation of the official rank of meliks in XVI-XVIII centuries and in the result of their further branching the building of the residences (mansions, palaces) for these lay masters got a new swing. About one part of them we obtain information from historical sources, and we can see the other part today in a half-destroyed state. Melik-Shahnazar I and his relatives possessed mansions in Akanaberd (XV-XVI centuries) and in Metz Mazra (XVI-XVII centuries). Melik Haikaz of Kashatagh and his successors - in villages Kashatagh (XV century) and Khnatsakh (XVI century), Melik Yegan of Dizak - in burgh of Togh (1737), the masters of Giulistan - within the castle of the same name (XVII-XVIII centuries) and in Horekavan, Hakob, the son of Abraham Sparapet - in village Giulistan (1772), Melik Israyelyans of Jraberd - within the castle of the same name (XVII-XVIII), Melik-Adam

Israyelyan - in village Mokhratagh (1771), Melik-Alaverdyans - in village Gyulatagh (1799), Melik- Shahnazaryan Melik- Baghi II, Melik- Huseyn I and Melik- Shahnazar II of Varanda - in village Tukhnakal (XVIII cent.), Avan Sparapet - in Shoushi (the beginning of XVIII century), another branch of Melik-Shahnazaryans - in Voskanapat, Melik - Arstam - in village Bars, Melik-Moses - in Khachakap, Melik-Mnatsakan - in Getashen (XVIII cent.)⁴²³.

One of the eye-striking and rare samples of the medieval secular architecture is the house built by an Avanes in Tsar in 1658. The originality of the house is in the thing that instead of using ordinary logs as columns of the house, the builder used stone⁴²⁴.

The rugged geographical location of Artsakh, the presence of many rivers, the partial enlivening of economy and trade created favourable conditions for bridge building.

Tens of medieval one-bay and multi-bay bridges have been preserved upon such rivers as Araks, Tartar, Khachenaget, Hakari, Hochants. The most interesting of them are those which are near Khudaperin and stretch over Araks. They are 750 metres far from each other. One of them is 150 metres long and consists of 15 bays. It was built in the seventeenth century and is used even in our days. The other has eleven bays, but is mostly sunk. Specialists think it was built in the seventh century and rebuilt a century later.

Near almost all the villages of Artsakh one can see water-mills which are also considered to be architectural constructions.

In Artsakh sculpture experienced great progress in parallel with architecture. A fourth century capital was accidentally found during building works in village Tchartar(Martuni region)and a fifth century capital - near the holy complex of Bri Yeghysi of the same region.

In further centuries the art of church ornamentation developed and many new forms of decoration appeared. The importance of

decoration and ornamentation art grew with the spreading of figural sculpture. In this connection we are to mention Gandzasar which in its "sculptural nature" yields only to Aghtamar⁴²⁵.

The details of ornaments never repeat here. The main aisle-front is decorated with geometrical and natural sculptural motives. Heads of ox, man and eagle are sculptured beneath the stone belt, which in its turn is under the temple-dome.

Groups of sculptures that hold the model of the church above their head are placed at the edges of the wings of the temple cross, and above the corners of the facade-walls. Inside the tympanum of the western facade of the dome there is the sculptured image of Jesus Christ. Beneath it- inside the facade-columns ,the scene of "The Fall" is depicted.

The high-relief of a big cross on the western facade-wall is the most magnificent ornament of the temple. In the centre of the cross there is the scene of Jesus Christ's crucifixion. There are also many sculptures of different images on the sides of the dome's drum.

Dadi Vank is also distinguished due to its decorative ornamentations. On the southern and eastern facades there are low reliefs of the founders with the sculptures of the temple's model. The life-size pictures of Hasan and Grigor, the sons of Arzu-khatun are sculptured on both sides of the southern facade's window.

Many interesting sculptures can also be seen in Khadavank, , Goshavank, Nor Varaga ,Surb (st) Nshan of Utik.

A large number of medieval tombstones have been preserved up to our days in the cemeteries of Artsakhi old settlements. In medieval times people decorated the tombstones with the sculptures symbolizing eternity and other Cristian ideas, as well as sculptures of musicians, military-men with their horses, Armenian clergy-men and peasants in their national clothes. The tombstones with the sculptured pictures of ox, which are especially wide-spread in Karvajar region are also worth mentioning.

The art of making khachkars (cross-stones) developed as an independent branch of art in IX-X centuries. It should be mentioned that the art of khachkars belongs only to Armenians. However many Azeri "scientists" try to prescribe it to their reality and call the Armenian khachkars "khachdashes"⁴²⁶.

Throughout the medieval era, the art of cross-stones developed in an unprecedented way in Artsakh. Thousands of khachkars have been preserved up to our days in cemeteries, the yards of temples and churches. Numerous cross-stones have also been set in walls. The meaningful sculptures, the proportionality of geometrical forms, the subtle and expressive compositions which are common for the Armenian cross-stones speak of the perfection of that branch of art. Khachkars (cross-stones) were made and raised in memory of outstanding personalities and to commemorate the important historical events and facts. Sometimes the khachkars were also dedicated to the building of springs and sanctuaries.

The khachkars of Artsakh are original, but from the point of view of composition and decoration art motives they have much in common with the khachkars found in other Armenian provinces.

The oldest Armenian khachkar (cross-stone) dates back to 853 and is in st. Hakoba temple⁴²⁷, which is near village Kolatak, Martakert region (former Metsarank district).

Another old cross-stone (916) was found after the liberation of Karvajar. Today it is kept in Gandzasar. Samvel Karapetyan- a great expert on the Armenian architectural monuments found a cross-stone (XII-XIII centuries) near Handaberd (Karvajar district). A mother breast- feeding her baby is depicted on the lower part of that cross-stone and it should be mentioned that khachkars with similar depictions are quite rare.

Dadi Vank also has two famous cross-stones which are unique in their artistic perfection. The Armenian as well as the foreign authors described and still describe those wonders with undisguised admiration. After seeing the cross-stones (1873)

Herman Abikh wrote, "It seemed to me my feelings were oppressed by impressions and then I realized that it is not everything that can be expressed by words"⁴²⁸.

No wonder that at the end of the nineteenth century some English- and Frenchmen offered large sums of money to the spiritual leaders of the temple for the khachkars (cross-stones)⁴²⁹.

The khachkars (cross-stones) have been sanctified in the course of years. People believed that they had the power of treating deceases, saving from evil forces, and preventing natural disasters. The horders of the enemy intruded into the Armenian land and ruthlessly destroyed most of the khachkars.

The Kurds destroyed Getamijo st. Astvatsatsin church of Tsar and built a school using the stones, parts of cross-stones and holy inscriptions as ordinary building material. S. Karapetyan counted about 133 such fragments (37 from them with inscription) in the walls of the school⁴³⁰.

One of the noteworthy branches of medieval culture was wall-painting. The Armenian spiritual and lay masters decorated their temples and palaces with splendid frescoes. The descriptions of those frescoes in some historical sources give evidence to the fact that the art of wall-painting was on quite a high level in Armenia.

One of the chroniclers of eastern Armenian provinces wrote about the magnificent church of Gardmank built by the order of Jivanshir. He noted that the same church was later decorated with frescoes painted by the talented painters. Jivanshir spared no money or gold for making the church more splendid. He gave an order to silver-plate and decorate with sculptures the door of the church⁴³¹.

Many superb frescoes have also been preserved on the walls of St. Arakelots (XIII cent., Ijevan region) and the small church of Aratchadzor (XIIIcent.). Two different churches are painted on the main altar of the latter church.

Speaking about the art of frescoes in Artsakh, one must mention the wall-paintings (XIII cent.) of Dadi Vank cathedral.

Those paintings are on the northern and southern walls.

A walking person is painted on the northern wall. Near that person another one is depicted. On the same wall we can see the painting of the scene of Jesus Christ's birth, and that of the throwing stones at Deacon Stephanos (on the right part).

The biblical large-scale scene, in which Jesus Christ is being presented with a hood by st. Nicholas the Miracle Man and with a robe by the Blessed Virgin Maria is painted on the southern wall of the cathedral. The worship of Nicholas the Miracle Man was not wide-spread in Armenia even in late Middle Ages. It means that the depiction of his personality on the fresco of the southern wall must have had a special explanation and sense⁴³².

Some pieces of frescoes can also be seen on the walls of Tsitsernavank. Under the conditions of the harmonious development of all the fields of culture, the decorative applied arts also experienced great advance in Artsakh.

One of the separate branches of decorative applied arts is carpet-making. It was wide-spread in Artsakh in Middle Ages. Writing about the silk and brocade weavers, gold and silver, elite furniture and services the seventh century chronicler Moses Kaghankatvatsi recalled the multi-coloured carpets of Artsakh.

The Arab sources spoke about the craftsmen of the eastern Armenian provinces with great admiration. One of them named Al-Maksudi wrote that carpets, vordan karmir (special red paint), covers and paints made in those provinces had their equals nowhere on the earth⁴³³.

Carpet-making started to develop from the beginning of the thirteenth century. It is worthy to note that we first came across the word "gorg" (English for "carpet") in the lapidary inscription of Kaptavank church⁴³⁴. The inscription dates back to 1242-43.

For carpet-weaving people used sheep wool, soft goat fluff, cotton. In expensive carpets they also used silk, golden and silver threads. Only natural paints (those made from madder, nutshells, onion skin) were used for dyeing yarn. The colours of the ready

carpets were made brighter by various minerals (lime, alum). That is why old carpets have not lost their former colours and shine.

The oldest Armenian carpet with memoirs dates back to 1202. It was woven in Banants village (Artsakh)⁴³⁵ and is kept now in Vienn.

The dragon-, snail- and eagle-carpets of Artsakh are especially famous. Collections of Artsakhi carpets are exhibited in many museums of the world.

The medieval Armenian weavers made also other cloths with many geometrical and natural patterns, pictures of animals and birds. Much information about the making of needle-work curtains and covers in medieval period can be read in literary works.

Kirakos Gandzaketsi wrote that Khorishah, the mother of Hasan-Jalal, did needle-work⁴³⁶. The chronicler also told how Arzun-khatun- the pious wife of Vakhtang, the ruler of Haterk, wove curtains with her daughters and gave them to Goshavank, Haghpat, Makarvank and Dadi Vank⁴³³⁷.

The decoration of book-covers was also a branch of applied arts. It is known that the gospel "targmanchants" had a silver cover, gilded with gold and decorated with precious stones.

The Armenian masters also made beautiful cups, jugs, candle-holders, lampions and pixes from silver, copper and gold. They covered them with pictures of animals, plants and sometimes with geometric patterns.

Many silver-plated swords have been preserved to our days. The dark-green, jade blade cover of prince Hasan Jalal's sword with drawn ornamentations and the engraving "Hasan-Jalal, the prince of Khachen" is one of the eye-striking samples and it is now kept in Hermitage⁴³⁸.

The Armenians of Artsakh also contributed greatly to the origin and development of Armenian printing traditions. In 1656 catholicos Hakob IV Jughayetsi sent psalm-reader Matthew Tsaretsi to Europe where he could study the printing art. After much roaming in Rome and Venice, Matthew Tsaretsi settled in

Amsterdam once and for all. With the help of the Dutch printers he soon founded an Armenian printing-house there. However he died prematurely in 1661.

The printing-house of Amsterdam prospered during Voskanyans. About 11 books, the "History book" ("Girk Patmutian") by Arakel Davrizhetsi among them, was published up to 1669. "History book" was the first Armenian work that was published during the life time of its author. The cultural values created in the eastern provinces of Armenia in all the medieval periods are original but at the same time they have some certain generalities with the works created in the large Armenian provinces. The cultural values of Artsakh are undividable from the universal Armenian culture and art.

ARTSAKH AS PART OF THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE (1813-1917)

THE RUSSIAN-PERSIAN WAR OF 1826-1828. THE DEFENSE OF SHOUSHI. After the peace treaty of Giulistan had been signed, Persia did not want to recognize its territorial losses in Transcaucasus. Incited by England, Persia tried to get back the lands it had lost. Russia, for its part, besides having no intention of making any territorial concessions, tried to take control of the whole of Armenia and consolidate its positions in Transcaucasus.

On July 16, 1826 Abas-Mirza and his army of 60 000 broke into Karabakh even without reading a war upon it.

When Persians attacked Karabakh, there were only 6 military companies there. The companies led by colonel Rehut were settled in Chanakhchi (Avetaranots) village. The small military unit of 1,000 led by lieutenant-colonel Nazimka which was in Goris was ordered to join the forty-second regiment of Rehut. In spite of all the persuasions of the Armenian guides to go to Karabakh by secret paths, Nazimka went by the main dangerous road, because he also wanted to take the cannons with him.

But the Tatar rebels led by Haji Aghalar Bek and the united Persian forces encircled that Russian unit, killing part of them, and taking the other part as captives.

Without losing a moment the military unit of Rehut fortified its position in the impregnable castle of Shoushi. After the Persian army had occupied Avetaranots, it besieged Shoushi castle on July 26. The next day Abas-Mirza suggested to Rehut that he should leave the castle and prompt the peaceful passage of this garrison to Tiflis. However Shoushi garrison of 1,700 and the 1,500 Armenian volunteers made a resolute decision to defend the castle and the population of the neighbouring twenty-two Armenian villages, that had found shelter in the castle.

For having a reliable rear Rehut ordered to send the pro-Persian young Turks out of the castle. He did everything to encourage the Armenian volunteers.

The Persians' suggestions were refused and they again started their attacks. Several times they mined the walls of the castle with the help of the English specialists. But all was in vein. Abas-Mirza suffered heavy losses. For sparing forces and for the occupation of Tiflis he again entered into parleys with Rehut and signed a 10 days' armistice. Abas-Mirza hopefully waited for the order of general Yermolov to leave the castle of Shoushi.

However, Rehut received quite a different order from Yermolov, "Defend the castle up to the last person; you will answer with your heads, if you yield the castle. I demand the use of all the means for defence. Take the provisions of the Tartars, let those betrayers die of hunger. Be generous towards the Armenians. Give them arms and they will defend themselves. Wait for us"⁴³⁹. For his part Rehut wrote to general Yermolov the following, "I am in duty bound to explain that due attention should be paid to the service of Armenians, because all of them were fighting with an exclusive heroism. They resisted numerous assaults, fought back the enemy, inflicted them heavy losses, acted neglectful of the lack of food and never thought of yielding the castle to the enemy, though complete famine had set in"⁴⁴⁰.

Like their brave ancestors the Armenians of Artsakh heroically defended their homeland. The Armenians of Shoushi not only fought in the front-line but at the same time provided provisions, made gun powder, rebuilt the ruined walls of the castle. Women and children supplied the soldiers with bread and water and nursed the wounded.

At that time the name of Khatun of Shoushi was known to everybody in Karabakh. Workman Poghos made 20-30 pounds of gun-powder each day. The Armenian rich families such as the Melik-Shahnazaryans, the Kakhumyans, the Tarumyans gave their entire property for attaining a victory. At night people carried sacks of grain on their shoulders to the water-mills of Shosh and returned with ready flour. More than once Abas-Mirza tried to

occupy those mills which were hateful for him, but his attempts were in vain, because several Armenians led by Safar and Rostom Tarkhanyan brothers showed a heroic resistance. H. Altunyan, captain Madatov were also among the best defenders of Shoushi⁴⁴¹.

As testified by V. Potto, the garrison of Shoushi would not have been able to resist the siege of Shoushi if not for the help of Armenians. Later many Armenian volunteers were praised and given privileges. Rostom Tarkhanyan was given the rank of ensign of the Russian army and a life pension. After the death of his brother Safar, the members of his family were given allowances from the Russian state depository⁴⁴².

After many resultless attacks Abas-Mirza tried to cause dissidence between the Armenians and the Russians that were in the castle at that time. By his order several hundreds of Armenian families were gathered and sent to the walls of Shoushi castle together with archbishop Sargis of Gandzasar. There they made the Armenians persuade the defenders to surrender and yield the castle. In case of refusal they promised to kill all of them. However the Armenian defenders answered, "We shall not betray the Russians...we'd sooner let several hundred Armenians die, than again let the Armenian people fall under the heavy yoke of ghzlbashes"⁴⁴³.

Taking advantage of the shameful defeat of the Persian army at the walls of Shoushi castle the Russian command organized a counter-attack and took on the military initiative.

On September 3, 1826 the Russian army of 2,000 led by Valerian (Rostom) Madatov (from the village Avetaranots by birth) defeated the Persian army of 10,000 and liberated Gandzak. For this victory Madatov was bestowed the rank of general-lieutenant and a sword decorated with diamonds. The sword had the inscription, "For bravery". On September 13, 1826 the Russians won a new brilliant victory at Yelizavetpol.

The enemy had lost its main forces and was unable now to show serious resistance. Madatov moved in the direction of Karabakh. Being panic-stricken Abas-Mirza crossed Araks and settled on its opposite bank on September 17.

The heroic defense of Shoushi that lasted 48 days had a great influence on the further course of Russian-Persian war. The enemy focused its attention and forces upon the castle and thus there appeared an opportunity to gain time, centralize the scattered forces of Caucasian corps, receive additional help from Russia and finally defeat the Persian armies that had intruded into Transcaucasus.

Shoulder to shoulder the Russian troops and the Armenian volunteers won new victories in different parts of the front-line.

On February 10, 1828 a peace treaty was signed in the village Turkmenchai, which is on the road leading from Tavis to Tehran. River Araks was recognized as a frontier between the two countries. Eastern Armenia was liberated from the Persian yoke once and for all.

THE COLONIAL POLICY OF THE CZARISM. When Eastern Armenia (including Artsakh) became part of the Russian Empire the Armenian people did not achieve the desired freedom. The yoke of Persia was substituted by that of Russia. The czarist government resorted to new measures for the consolidation of the Russian rule in Transcaucasus.

The czarist government tried to make Transcaucasus its adjunct of raw material and the market of its production and as written by Paskevich, senators Mechnikov and Kutaisov, "it tried to tie Transcaucasus with political and civil ties to Russia, as if they were one body and make the local population speak, think and feel like Russians"⁴⁴⁴. The mentioned ideas were made more precise and clearer in the letter of Kankrin, the minister of finances. The letter was written in 1827 and was addressed to Nikolai I. Here is the part of it concerning Transcaucasus, "The

provinces of Transcaucasus can be considered to be our colonies. Due to the products of its southern climate it can be of a great benefit for our country"⁴⁴⁵.

Gradually significant changes were introduced in the governing system of the country. The czarist authorities tried to create similar form of governing in all the lands of Transcaucasus and govern them with general rules. At the same time the czarist authorities took to the creation of administrative units with mixed population. They aimed at making use of interracial discrepancies. For the same purpose a decision was made in 1840, according to which two administrative units - the Georgian - Imerethian province with Tiflis as its centre and the Caspian district with Shamakhi centre. The Georgian-Imerethian province included such eastern Armenian provinces as Yelizavetpol, Yerevan, Nachijevan, Alexandropol, Akhaltskha. The other Armenian territories including Karabakh were incorporated into the Caspian region⁴⁴⁶.

In fact czarism started to lead undisguised colonial policy ignoring the national peculiarities of the entire territory.

Being dissatisfied with the changes already made, on December 14, 1846 the government submitted Transcaucasus to new administrative division. This time four districts- those of Tiflis, Kutais, Shamakhi and Derbend, appeared in Transcaucasus. Tiflis district included Yerevan, Nachijevan, Alexandropol provinces, and Shamakhi district included provinces Karabakh and Zangezur⁴⁴⁷. Again the national peculiarities were ignored and the Armenian provinces were again divided into parts.

Per the new decision made by the czarist authorities on December 9, 1867, Transcaucasus was divided into districts of Kutais, Tiflis, Yerevan, Yelizavetpol and Baku. A considerable part of eastern Armenian territories were included into Yerevan and the other parts - into Yelizavetpol, as well as Tiflis districts. Mountainous (Nagorno, Nogorni) Karabakh appeared within the Yelizavetpol district⁴⁴⁸. In 1868 Gandzak, which exceeded

Shoushi in population number and in other features typical for a town, became the centre of Yelizavetpol.

In this way Tartar became the provincial center of Jivanshir which included the former principalities of Giulistan, Jraberdand part of Khachen. Jebrayil was the centre of the province of the same name, which included part of Dizak. Soon Shoushi became the centre of the same-name province and included the entire territory of the former principality of Varanda, a considerable part of Khachen and Dizak.

Those regional administrative divisions remained unchanged till 1917.

It should be mentioned that the issue of drawing new borderlines in Transcaucasus became a point of argumentation in 1916.

The Armenians set up a project according to which the Armenian as well as non-Armenian but Armenian-populated territories of Transcaucasus were to form one district or to divide into four small districts. Yerevan, Mountainous Gandzak or Karabakh, Alexandropol and Karin. Per that project the eastern part of Transcaucasus was to be divided in 2 - Armenian and Tatar parts. The Armenian part was to include Shoushi provinces of Gandzak district, Yerevan district, Khazakh, Gandzak, Jivanshir, and Zangezur. Gandzak city was to be divided into Armenian and Tatar parts. The Armenian populated parts of Akhalkalak, Lori and Tsalka (Tiflis) were to be united to Alexandropol⁴⁴⁹. Though the Russian government accepted that project, it never tried to realize it in practise.

For making its position firmer in Transcaucasus, the czarist government deprived the local rulers of their official ranks and gave them to Russian officials. On April 10, 1840 the Russian czar ratified a new law, which ousted the local "high class", that is beks and aghas from the sphere of administrative activities, considering them not competent for solving the new problems and tasks of czarist policy ⁴⁵⁰.

The czarist authorities deprived the Armenian meliks of their properties and rights, but they dexterously used the military talent and strivings of that class. Many generations were involved into the Russian army and very few people into the governing sphere. The doors of noble, military academies and schools were always open for the children who came from the families of Armenian meliks. The children came here at a very early age. Then they served in the army to very high ranks. Very often the czarist authorities sent those military men to Transcaucasus⁴⁵¹.

Under such conditions Tatar khans and beks cajoled and bribed Russian officials and became the masters of the Armenian villages and the former lands of meliks and then mercilessly exploited the Armenian villagers.

The letter written by the population of the village Banazur of Dizak principality in 1849 and addressed to the viceroy of Caucasus and Catholicos Nerses, gives evidence to that fact. The letter ran, "Jafar Kuli khan, the colonel of Karabakh and the ruler of Banazur harasses, extremely oppresses and punishes us. We are even deprived of the possibility to earn a living and in fact have nothing to eat. He mocks the people. The other day he threw the frock of our priest Ter Minas on a dog and made the people follow the dog and worship it. Ter Minas got ill from his moral offence and died. The khan beats many villagers to death.

The state of the villagers is so horrible and they are so desperate that they now consider that the times of Ibrahim khan were happy"⁴⁵².

The villagers were scattered all over the neighbouring places and tried to break out from their captivity. After establishing new administrative orders and systems in Armenia, the czarist government took up to the definition of the rights and responsibilities of the church. On the one hand the government wanted to deprive the Armenian clergy of their right of participation in the governing of the country and on the other hand it tried to use the authority of Armenian ecclesiastic leaders in

spreading its influence upon the Armenian people.

On March 11, 1836 the government adopted the charter of managing the affairs of Armenian Apostolic Church in Russia (Polozhenie). Per the new document the Armenian Church (which was also within the rule of Russian Empire) was divided into six sees - the sees of New Nakhijevan and Besarabia, Astrakhan, Yerevan, Georgia, Karabakh and Shirvan⁴⁵³.

The charter abolished the patriarchate of Gandzasar, instead of which a metropolity was founded. On July 1, 1837 Baghdasar Hasan-Jalalyants was appointed to the prelate of Karabakhian see and at the same time to the head of the see's consistory. The fervent activities of the newly appointed metropolitan Baghdasar resulted in the great advance of education and culture in Shoushi. Thanks to his persistent struggle the estates and other properties that had been requisitioned from Khatravank of Gandzasar, Surb Hakoba temple, Hurek, Amaras were given back to its owners. Metropolitan also did much for rebuilding of Amaras. About 196438 dissatisfied of the lands was illegally occupied by various tribes, mostly Kurds. However those areas were taken back and given to Dadi Vank⁴⁵⁴.

Metropolitan Baghdasar defended his compatriots' elementary rights that were being violated by Turk beks. The anti-Armenian policy of czarism caused the anxiety of different classes of the population. This circumstance made the czarist government closer to the local ruling class.

At the same time for fortifying the new form of governing in Transcaucasus the czarist government tried to attain the social support of the local land-owners. Thus in 1840-1850 the government adopted a number of Laws and orders which aimed at improving the state of the land-owners.

On December 6, 1846 the czarist government recognized the khans, beks, aghalars and meliks as the hereditary owners of the lands. By the same laws the lands that had been previously taken from the Armenian ruling class were given back to them. The

landlords were again the absolute owners of their land and they had the right to will, present, sell and inherit their land, but only to the representatives of the "high class". The land-owners also acquired some administrative rights.

For the achievement of his ambitions in Transcaucasus the Russian Czar needed a national support. So beginning from the early nineteenth century he settled the most fertile lands with the migrants from different districts of Russia.

However the settlement of the Russians in the newly liberated lands became a real evil for the Armenians. At first an attempt was made to create military settlements. But this did not solve the problem. Then the state council decided to settle the Russian dissenters-dukhobors, ikonobors and the others in Karabakh. But there were no free areas of land in Karabakh, so it was possible to provide the Russian dissenters with areas of land only on the account of the local villagers' allotments. For rousing the interest of the Russian migrants the government even released them of their taxes for about twenty-six years⁴⁵⁵.

In this way the Russian populated villages Nickolayeva, Koryagino, Skoboleva, Levonarkh were founded on the account of the areas of land of the villages of Dizak, Varanda and Jraberd.

THE SOCIAL-ECONOMIC LIFE OF KARABAKH. After solving the political problems, the Russian government started the process of the economic appropriation of Transcaucasus. The czarist government tried to make Transcaucasus the market of its products and adjunct of raw material.

The czarist government took up to a number of measures which enlivened the economic life. First of all there was a need to clear out and make exact the amount of taxes that the khan collected from Karabakh, and that later were to enter the state depository. For this purpose the government held the inventory of all the settlements, registered the number of family members and fixed the possible amount of taxes⁴⁵⁶ in 1822-23.

The foundation of "The Caucasian Industrial Company"⁴⁵⁷ in 1836 also aimed at using the economic potential of the newly liberated lands.

The charter adopted on February 19, 1861 abolished the serfdom in Russia, and after it, in 60-70s of the nineteenth century the czarist government held peasant reforms in the extreme parts of the Empire.

The peasant reforms in Eastern Armenia were held by the law adopted on May 14, 1870. The new law also abolished the communal use of the land and substituted it with the individual form of use. The allotment of each villager was fixed and the villagers acquired the right to sell, present or pawn their lots and gardens. These reforms favoured the development of commodity money relation.

However Karabakh remained as a backward agrarian country, where agriculture was the main branch of production. The arable lands were extended year by year. The cultivation of cereals dominated in agriculture. From 1883 to 1896 the sowing areas and crop yield of Yelizavetpol district increased in 2 and 2.5 times⁴⁵⁸. In Shoushi province the crop yield of grain cultured-plants in 1883 was equal to 424, 566 quadrants and already in 1895 it increased to 620,700 quadrants⁴⁵⁹. Most of the grain products was consumed in the markets of the province.

The extension of the domestic market and the development of industry in Russia favoured the specialization of agricultural goods industry in various parts of Transcaucasus. If silk-worm farming was quite developed in Shoushi province then cotton-growing and wine-growing were developed in Jivanshir province.

In Shoushi province the amount of the produced silk-cocoon in 1890 was equal to 2, 138 poods, in 1894 that amount increased to 17.000 poods, 4.300 of which was exported⁴⁶⁰.

For the increase of the crop-yield of agricultural cultivated-plants it was necessary not only to extend the arable lands but also to improve the quality of raw materials. Great attention was

paid to the improvement of irrigation system. Water-canals that were built in almost all the villages of Karabakh at that time, are still being used.

There appeared many companies which imported high-quality grape and cotton-seeds from Brazil, Northern America, Egypt, India and technical crops recycling machines from France and Northern America.

Cattle-breeding was still one of the main branches of agriculture.

If in 1891 69,161 heads of cattle and 144,865 heads of sheep and goats were bred in Shoushi, then in 1895 both figures increased to 76,180 and 164,080 heads correspondingly⁴⁶¹.

The recycling and cultivation of agricultural goods also prospered. The production of grape and vodka started to develop from the end of the 60's. The wine-making centres of Shoushi province were villages Gishi and Ghzghla. The production of the wine in the province in 1884-1894 increased from 95,406 piles to 186,000 piles⁴⁶².

Vodka was made also from mulberry.

According to the data of 1872 there were about 3624 factories of vodka distillation, producing 75,000 piles of vodka⁴⁶³ annually in Yelizavetpol. In this field of production Yelizavetpol district was second to none in Transcaucasus. In Shoushi province alone the number of distilled vodka in 1895 was equal to 300,000 piles. The production of vodka and wine in Shoushi province brought in an income of 1,323,270 rubles.⁴⁶⁴

Most of the Armenian rich persons began to invest their money in the more profitable fields of production, they founded different factories and works. The Khublaryans and the Soghomonyans founded works of spirit in Aghdam in 1880s. Later a small cognac factory was founded on the basis of those works⁴⁶⁵.

With the development of capitalistic relations and the rapid advance of economy in the Russian Empire in the last decades of the nineteenth century, the Armenian village with all its patriarchal

customs was involved in the general, the all-Russian market. In Karabakh new private works appeared and grew up like mushrooms after rain. Most of those works produced silk. The Armenians of Karabakh had farmed silk-worm from very old times. However, the farming started to develop actively from 80-90s of the 19th century. The seeds of silk-worm were brought to Karabakh from different countries and in different ways.

Up to 1890 Japanese small yellow silk-worms ("japons"- called so by the Karabakhians) were widely farmed in Karabakh. It was first transported from China by sea-way to Greece, and then to Karabakh⁴⁶⁶. At the end of the nineteenth century most of the silk-worm farming factories of Transcaucasus belonged to 3 families, one of which was from Karabakh. It was the family of Ter-Grigoryans.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the villagers, which farmed silk-worm, also threw silk yarn using primitive machines for it. The local merchants sold their silk yarn in foreign towns and cities. The natural silk of Karabakh was widely known in the foreign market. It is worth mentioning that in 1882, in the fair of Moscow the Artsakh silk (Honashen- Hadrut) won a bronze medal and in 1883 it was awarded a gold medal at the fair of Philadelphia in the USA. The curtains of presidential palace in Paris were made of Artsakhi silk⁴⁶⁷.

In the 50s of the nineteenth century the silk-weaving mills of Karabakh were small enterprises where mostly manual work was used. In 1868 in Shoushi province alone there were 490 silk-weaving mills which brought an income of 76,000 rubles⁴⁶⁸.

The first attempt of producing silk-yarn in an industrial way was made in the middle of the nineteenth century. 1856-1857 Aghababa and Grigor Khachatryans, Karapet Shahmuradyan from Karabakh founded a silk-making factory in Stepanakert where about 25-30 Armenians (invited from Nukhi) worked. In the 60's of the same century the merchants of Shoushi visited Marseilles, Lyons, Milan, Venice, Genoa where they first saw silk-

throwing and silk-spinning machines. Soon the same machines and the "celivis" method of getting healthy seeds started to be used in Karabakh.

In 1873 merchant G. Harutyunyants from Shoushi founded the first silk-throwing factory of his mother-town where the special cocoon-drying mechanical equipment was used for the first time not only in Transcaucasus but also in Russia.

The factory of G. Harutyunyants was in close co-operation with such famous companies dealing with silk-trade as "A and V. Sapozhnikovs", "A. Ilyin with sons and K.", "E. A. Sokolnikova"⁴⁶⁹.

In Varanda 2,138 poods of cocoons were produced in 1890. Already in 1895 the amount of produced cocoons was equal to 9,000 poods, 4,300 of which was exported to European countries⁴⁷⁰.

There were 18 silk-weaving factories in Artsakh in 1888. They were in Shoushi, Stepanakert, Krkzhan, Karin Tak, Sghnakh, Chanakhchi, Gharabulakh, Ghshlagh, Taghut, Togh, Hadrut, Shosh, Baluja, Khanatsakh, Gishi villages⁴⁷¹. Their owners were mainly local capitalists- the Harunovs, Nersesovs, Ter-Grigoryans, Ter-Mkrtchyans, Kamalyans.

By 1896 there were 26 silk-weaving factories in Mountainous Karabakh⁴⁷² and on the eve of the World War I that number had increased to 36⁴⁷³. Shoushi was a great cocoon market of Transcaucasus. A branch of Caucasian silk-weaving station was founded in Shoushi in 1894. At that time there were about 120,000 silk-worm growing farms in 85 settlements of Karabakh, which made the 45% of all the existing farms. In Artsakh the rapid advance in the silk-yarn production was conditioned by a number of favourable factors. Here are several of them: Artsakh was located in junction of transit trade roads; its merchants and factory owners held in close connection with the business circles of European, American and Asian countries; the Armenians of Artsakh had certain old traditions in this field and they added to it their diligence and aptitude for trade; it was easy to find cheap and

high quality labour; besides forests were near the settlements and it was also easy to obtain fire woods.

The silk-yarn of Mountainous Karabakh was widely known in Europe and Asia. Up to 1888 the yarn produced in the country was exported to Marseilles, then in further years to Moscow.⁴⁷⁴ Karabakh was the second great silk producing country of the Russian Empire and it produced about 34% of Transcaucasus' silk⁴⁷⁵.

At the beginning of the twentieth century G. Harutyunants founded Caucasian silk-making industrial company which united 2 silk-trowing, 6 silk-weaving and 3 cocoon drying factories.

However the political events soon interfered with the natural course of the development of silk-worm farming and silk-waeving.

During the World War I the silk-weaving factories of Mountainous Karabakh were destroyed in the result of interracial clashes. The economic ties with European and Asian countries were also upset. The dangerousness of roads did not allow the merchant to export their products. So, there was a problem of consuming the goods.

It is important to note, that apart from silk-weaving factories there were also 6 leather, 4 soap, 10 paint and 2 brick factories in Shoushi in 1895⁴⁷⁶.

Shoushi was more famous as a handicraft center. The carpet-weavers, jewellers, copper-smiths, black-smiths, carpenters, bricklayers and shoemakers of Shoushi achieved fame all over Transcaucasus.

The encyclopedia by Brockhauz and Yefron tells the following about Shoushi, "It is an important Transcaucasian centre of carpet-weaving. The carpets of Shoushi are sold in Moscow and Petersburg. Shoushi is also a great market of silk-yarn, where most of the traders are Armenian"⁴⁷⁷.

According to the data of 1895 22 out of each 1,000 residents of Shoushi were craftsmen⁴⁷⁸ and in the same period there were 500 kinds of handicraft there⁴⁷⁹.

The czarist government wanted the political and economic subjection of Transcaucasus to Russia. For this and other purposes it encouraged the merchants and traders to more active business.

According to the law adopted on October 8, 1821, 5% of the duties were levied from goods imported into Transcaucasus. However a duty-free transit was established for the goods imported into Persia. In 1822-1870 the income brought in by trade increased from 1,289,108 to 15,399,969 rubles⁴⁸⁰.

The duty-policy led by Russia spurred the traders of Shoushi into active business. As stated by the official sources of the Russian royal court already by the 30's the Armenian traders had taken into their hands "the trade of Tiflis and entire Transcaucasus"⁴⁸¹.

The Tarumyans and Hakhumyans from Shoushi were among the most famous Armenian traders.

In 1808 the duties of Baku were given to Baba Tarumyan for 4 years⁴⁸². He also had the lease of exporting the oil, fish and the salt of the Caspian sea. Zohrap and Marcos Tarumyans built church Aguletsots by their own means. Before his death Marcos Tarumyan gave back the promissory notes of Ejmiatsin and gave two sacks of gold to the poor.

Later Mesrop Taghiadyan wrote that Tarumyan was buried with great honours and cites, like king Artashes Arshakouni⁴⁸³.

Three Armenian families of Shoushi supervised the great trade that connected the 4 ends of the world from China to Western Europe, from India to Russia and Scandinavian countries. The issue of German newspaper (November 15, 1846) "Algemeine Zeitung" covered Shoushi with the Gibraltar of Caucasus⁴⁸⁴.

According to the data of 1880 there were 952 trade and industrial-enterprises in Shoushi⁴⁸⁵.

In the nineteenth century Shoushi had numerous trade-ties with foreign countries. The rich men of Shoushi had factories,

offices in Russia, Iran and in many European countries.

The Hakhumyans and the other famous rich families had about one million rubles⁴⁸⁶ in the banks of the Russian Empire.

The development of trade fostered the building of new roads and the improvement of the work of the transport. Such roads as Shoushi-Yevlakh, Shoushi-Goris-Nachijevan-Yerevan were metalled. The Shoushi offices of the companies "Nadezhda" and "Rosiyoscoe" organized the transportation of goods⁴⁸⁷.

One of the interesting facts is that the dominant part of the trade and industrial capital of present-day Azerbaijan and especially Baku was in the hands of the Karabakhian and other east-Armenian capitalists. It is known that the biggest oil-wells of Baku belonged to Mantashyan, Lianozov, Ghoukassyan, Pitoyev, Mailyan, Aramyants, Tadevosyan, Tsatryan, Mirzoyan families; the silk producing factories belonged to the Mesropians, Gyanjomyans, Harutyunyants, Kamalyans, Nersissyans, Zurabyans; fishing-industry was mainly, in the hands of Lianozov, Ghoukassyan, Mailyan, Piralyan families, trade was the monopoly of the Aramyants, Ananyan, Mailyan, Hovhannisyan, Arapelyan(Arapelov), Dovlatyan, Janpoladyan, Africyan families.

The Armenians controlled the wine-making and tobacco industries. 10% of the chemical and 22% of the mechanical industries was also controlled by them. According to some data of 1900, in Baku province 29% of industrial enterprises, belonged to Armenians, 27% - to Russians, 18% - to Azeris and 13% - to foreigners⁴⁸⁸.

The Armenian capitalists became the leading forces of the society. So Leo was right to write that, "It was that class which after the Armenian clergy played the most important role in the society of that time"⁴⁸⁹.

In the second half of the nineteenth century the social-economic changes created certain favourable conditions for the development of education and culture. The new economic relations required well-educated specialists. The Armenian

capitalists often sponsored the education of not only their own children but also of their young gifted compatriots.

There were many schools in Shoushi at that time and most of them were supported by sponsor means .

In 1898 the new building for the parish school of Shoushi was built by the money contribution raised by the local population. In 1908 College Realakan moved from the house of Movses bek to a magnificent building which was built by the means of benefactor Arafelyan.

The female Mariamyan college was functioning in the house that was presented to Maryam by her husband Hambardzum Hakhumyan. Capitalists (from Shoushi) Poghos, Arshak, Hakob and Abraham Ghoukassyans sponsored the building of a female school. They named it "Mariam Ghoukassyan" to perpetuate the memory of their late sister.

In connection with the 75 th anniversary of the Parish school of Shoushi, benefactor Baghdasar Arzumanyan presented the school with 200, 000 rubles. He also gave the school his mansions (Pokrovka, Chistiye Prudi) only on a single condition that each year the school was to educate 2 poor children from Zardanashen, the village of the benefactor without any tuition fee. In the same connection Mikael Aramyanyan presented a house of the value of 30,000 rubles to the same school.

THE PROBLEM OF THE LIBERATION OF WESTERN ARMENIA AND THE ARMENIANS OF ARTSAKH. In the second half of the 19 th century, when the east-Armenians (that were within the Russian Empire) had incomparably more favourable conditions for economic and cultural life and the more so for physical existence, the considerable part of the Armenian nation, (about 3 millions) - the west-Armenians, writhed with pains under the merciless Turkish yoke.

The state of west-Armenians became still worse in 1877-1878, after the Russian Turkish war.

After Berlin summit, Turkey, in fact, turned into an Asian state which was losing its European as well as African provinces one after the other. Witnessing the created state of affairs, the Turkic-Tatar nations which lived under the dominion of Russia acquired new dreams. They now openly resorted to the help of "great caliph" and asked him to transfer the focus of his attention from Europe to Asia Minor, where he was suggested to lead their national independence movement and found an all-powerful, Islam state, which would gradually spread its influence and control over Asia Middle and Afghanistan, also over Pakistan and India.

However with all its geographical and political significance Armenia stood as an obstacle on the way of Pan-Turkists and the Ottoman Empire, which wanted to rally all Turkish-speaking nations of Caucasus round Hamid and create a vast Turkish state in Asia.

So the Turkish statesmen consistently kept to a horrible plan, the goal of which was to annihilate the West-Armenians. The Grand Vizier, Kyamal Pasha already at that time announced that the massacre of 1878 was a state-policy, "In Europe we warned the serpent in our bosom, which later did not obey us. We must not make the same mistake and be disobeyed in Asia. It is right to annihilate every thing that can later be a danger and an obstacle to you.... So we are to annihilate the Armenian nation and wipe it from the earth"⁴⁹⁰. Thus the Turks found the solution of the Armenian question only in the physical annihilation of the nation.

No wonder why the Sultan government abruptly changed the methods of leading its colonial policy in Western Armenia. Its administrative and demographic policy acquired new shape and now mainly aimed at artificial increase of the Muslim population percentage in the general number of West-Armenian population. For this purpose the Turkish government tried all possible and impossible methods and means. By the decree which was proclaimed by Sultan Hamid on August 30, 1880 the

authors of official documents and writings as well as the editors and reporters of the Armenian newspapers were not allowed to use words like "Armenia", "right", "freedom", "heroism", "tyranny", "king" and the others. The Turk censors demanded to translate all the words beginning with letter "H", doubting that those words could mean Armenia ("Hayastan"). It is absurd, but the fact is that the same censors demanded to eliminate the chemical formula H_2O from all the textbooks of chemistry thinking that the formula could mean "Hamid is (equal to) zero".

Hamid realized that the Armenian intelligentsia was together with its nation and made attempts to withstand and avert the realization of monstrous plans. And soon he ordered to organize the mass imprisonment and exile of the Armenian writers, publicists, statesmen and clergymen. Soon Diarbekir became the residence of the Armenian and Bulgarian prisoners who underwent unprecedentedly inhumane and cruel corporal punishments.

The anti-Armenian policy was realized by regular army, Kurdish detachments called "Hamidie", the police and the so called "bashibozuks", which in fact were the dregs of society. They robbed, killed the peaceful, defenceless, innocent people and burnt their houses. The bandits were promised money (20 ghurushs) for their participation in slaughters. They also had the opportunity to take the possessions of the Armenians.

Pashas and beks bought the villagers and exchanged them with the areas of land which were called "zer-kuri" (bought with gold). The Armenian villagers paid taxes to the state. Pashas and beks levied duties from them, and made the poor villagers work in their fields, houses, gardens etc. The state of the people was so horrible that sometimes parents had to sell one of their children in order to save the other one.

The Muslim tribes of Muhajers that had moved to west Armenia during the Russian-Turkish war of 1877-1878 also brought misfortunes to the west-Armenians. Being protected by the governing authorities, they robbed the Armenians, snatched

their arable lands, the crops and cattle. They ruthlessly killed those who tried to show resistance and even took revenge for the relatives whom they had lost in the war upon the defenceless people. And for all these they were sooner praised than punished.

On July 26, 1887, 1,000 houses were set on fire in Zeitun at the command of the Ottoman Porte. On October 27, 1,200 houses of Armenians were burnt in the Armenian-populated Skyutar district of Constantinople. In April, 1888 Marash was committed to flames.

Soon most of the Armenian population had to migrate to foreign countries and as it was laconically mentioned by Mkrtych Khrimyan, more famous as Khrimyan Hairik (an outstanding ecclesiastic and public figure), "No Armenians, no Armenia".

The wave of the Armenian independence movement rose in answer to the exploitation of the Armenian people and the oppression it was under. In the given period, after bitter disappointment and long searches the leaders of the movement developed their own ideology of struggle. Consequently the Armenian revolutionary-political thought acquired a new shape. Like a magnet Western Armenia drew to itself the Armenian young people, that were scattered all over the world. As a culmination of all this three Armenian national-political parties were formed, which in spite of some discoordination, still exist and function in our days.

The rise of the Armenian liberation movement, especially the lessons taken from the summit of Berlin, the historical experience of the independence movement of Baltic nations, the formation of the Armenian political parties led to the new stage of the Armenian liberation movement in the 80's of the 19th century.

This stage of the movement was characterized by the fact that people started to realize that they could not acquire freedom by pleas and begging and felt that they should rely only on their own force and resistance supplies.

The "fedayeenish" movement played a great role in the

struggle of West-Armenia against the Turkish oppression. The "fedayeenish" or "haidukish" movement broke out spontaneously before formation of the parties. The haidukish struggle of West-Armenia was led by Arabo, Serob Vardanyan (Aghbyur Serob, Serob pasha), Armenak Ghazaryan (Hrayr, Urvakan, Dzhokhc), Andranik Ozanyan (Andranik), Gevorg Adamyan (Gevorg Chaush). All these heroes were born in West Armenia and brought up with patriotic and freedom-loving spirit.

They gave direction to haidukish struggle and wrote undelible pages in our history. The Armenian young people which were grieved by the Ottoman government bristled up against it and joined the fedayeenish groups. Raffi described this struggle as a protest of a nation that had been deprived of its human rights, as a rising of slaves against the ruling barbars⁴⁹¹.

The Armenian of Artsakh could not stand aside with indifference, to the bitter state of the west-Armenians and to the struggle that was going on there. The call of blood summoned tens of Artsakhi fedayees to support their brothers who were fighting in those distant mountains. They supplied them with arms and additional help, recruited volunteer groups. The first fedayeenish group that dared to cross the border (in September, 1890) and help its compatriots was the group led by Sargis Kukunyan (from the village Nizh, Nukhi province, by birth). With the money received from the Mantashyans and Tsaturyans⁴⁹², Sargis got armament. Then he gathered a detachment of 100 which mainly consisted of east-Armenians including such Armenians of Artsakh as Constantine Lisinyan from Sghnakh, Yeprem Davtyan from Barsum, Hovhannes Margaryan from Shoushi. The detachment came across the Turkish, Kurdish and Russian armed forces at the boundary. Six fedayeenish died in the unequal struggle and the others surrendered to the Russian border-guards.

Twenty-six haiduks were arrested and sent to the prison of Kaghzvan; S.Kukunyan was exiled to Sakhalin, where he

remained for 15 years.

In 1906 he returned to his homeland. When he tried to cross the border a second time, he was again arrested and as a capital punishment sent to the prison of Oryol - the place of all the dangerous political culprits' imprisonment. There he fell ill and died with unbearable sufferings. Sargis Kukunyan embodied the love and self-sacrifice of all the Armenians⁴⁹³.

From military perspective the expedition of Kukunyan was a complete failure. Nevertheless it made a great impression on the public mind and summoned all the Armenians to struggle. As S.Vratsyan wrote, "S.Kukunyan opened up a new stage of the Armenian liberation movement, the standard-bearer of which was the Armenian Revolutionary Party (Dashnaktsutiun)"⁴⁹⁴.

Later on Yeprem khan Davtyan (from the village Bars(Artsakh) by birth) one of the heroes of Kukunyan's expeditions took part in the Persian revolution of 1908-1911 by the decision of Dashnaktsutiun. He led the revolutionary armed forces and the police of Persia.

In 1890-s there was a rise in the fedayeesh struggle of Western-Armenia. New volunteer groups were gathered and sent to Western-Armenia (which was also called "Yerkir") by the Armenian political parties, mostly by Dashnaktsutyun party.

The Armenian liberation and independence struggle was full of heroic and inspiring episodes. One of such episodes was the invasion of Khanasor which was organized and led by Nickoghayos Der Hovhannisyanyan more famous as Nicol Duman (from the village Ghshlagh of Khachen province by birth). Nicol Duman was first baptized by fire in Dereka temple which is on the Turkish-Persian boundary in summer 1894. Derek was the center of the Armenian fedayeenish struggle and had great significance for the transportation of arms and ammunition. The enemy was defeated both in Derek and Boghaz Kyasan. During the last battle (autumn, 1895) fedayeens led by Nicol Duman evaded from the enemy and found shelter in the haylofts of the village Boghaz

Kyasan. After many futile attacks kurds set the haylofts on fire. But like a whirlwind Nicol unexpectedly came out from the hayloft, killed two kurdisch tribal chiefs and moved with its group away to the nearest mountain. Being thunderstruck by the incredible feat of Nicol, the kurds called him "Duman" which is kurdisch for whirlwind. They also called him Ghara Duman (black whirlwind). Then the detachment led by Duman reached Van and joined the defenders of the town. For gathering new military groups and getting arms he left for Salmast and reached Derek. But soon the enemy belaguered Derek and during the passage of arms the temple took fire. The haiduks of Duman broke through the circle of siege and again went away to a safe place.

In June 1896 the citizens of Van and the groups of the fedayeens successfully resisted the slaughterers but while moving to Persia they (about 1,500 Armenians) were attacked near Varaga mountain by Turks and Kurds. Only 30 of them fled to Persia.

It was after this event that Nicol Duman took on the initiative of organizing the invasion of Khanasor which took place on July 25-27, 1897. Duman wanted to punish Mazrik, the Kurdisch tribe, that had killed the Armenians at Varaga and to draw the attention of the European powers to the "Armenian question". As regards this, he wrote the following to the administrative body of Dashnaktsutiun party, "It is high time to consider seriously the old methods of our struggle, and adopt a new, more decisive tactics the axis of which will be fight and not slaughter"⁴⁹⁵.

The fedayeenish detachment of 275 led by Vardan Mehrabyan from Shoushi (Khanasori Vardan) secretly moved from Salmast and climbed mountain Araul, which is on the Turkish-Persian boundary. From this mountain (on July 27, 1897) they unexpectedly attacked Mazric tribe, which lived in the field lying in the bottom of Araul. They killed most of the people of the tribe and then retreated.

Being the commander of the vanguard of 50 Nicol Duman

immediately led the attack and organized the retreat. With the invasion of Khanasor, Duman raised the authority of the Armenian revolutionaries in the eyes of the people. After the invasion Nicol Duman realized that homeland could be liberated only by the All-Armenian forces, and their well-organized rebels.

In 1904 Duman gathered the group "Potoric" (Armenian for "storm") and made a decision to help the rebels of Sasoun. However they failed to do this, because coming across the great number of enemy forces they were obliged to retreat.

Nicol Duman was not only the organizer of the fedayeenish struggle but also one of the best ideologists of that national struggle. He was one of the few vanguards of the Armenian liberation struggle, who could use his theoretical knowledge in practise. "The Draft of the National Self-defence" and "Practic and Brief Instructions" were the books written by Nicol Duman and published in Geneva in 1907. The directions and instructious which were risen and touched upon in the books were developed throughout many years and successfully used during liberation struggle. The famous feedayins Gevorg Chaush, Hrayr, Andranik, Ruben Ter-Minasyan "and the others were always ready to obey with love the iron-will of that Karabakhian highlander"⁴⁹⁶.

It seemed the massacres organized by the sultan in 1890s had managed to kill the freedom-loving spirit of the Armenians and paralyse their struggle for freedom. However the new heroes that appeared on the historical stage of the time again inspired the people that had been reduced to despair. For enlivening the fedayeenish struggle the Armenian Revolutionary party Dashnaktsutiun founded a ruling center for organizing the self-defense of the people.

Receiving the command of the resistance center Torgom (Tuman Tumyan) (from Shoushi by birth) and Menak (Yegor Arustamyan) recruited new volunteer groups.

At the end of 1903 a group of 27 led by Torgom reached Sasun. On June 26, 1904 "Artsiv"(English for "eagle"), the

haidukish group of Hnchakyan party crossed the Russian-Turkish border.

In 1904 a fatal danger overhung Sasun. So Torgom came back to Karabakh and recruited the voluneer group called "Mrik"(English for"storm"). The group included such famous leaders of the last rebel of Sasun as Farhat, Murad, Sepuh, Vorsord, Gevorg, Arakel⁴⁹⁷.

The triumphal entry of "Mrik" into Sasun rose the excitement and inspiration of not only all the Armenians. Andranik, the famous hero of this struggle, also greeted the entry into Sasoun. Several years later he wrote in his memoirs, "I learnt the news that a group of 20 riders had come to Semal. I went there, met Tuman and some of my friends, that fought in his group..."⁴⁹⁸.

In Sasoun Torgom was occupied with organisational, propoganding and correspondent activities. Soon Torgom and Kaitsak left for Caucasus to participate in the general meeting of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (party). During the meeting it was again decided that Torgom should return back to Sasun in order to show resistance against the heavy oppression of the Turks. On June 28, 1904 the group "Vorskan" (English for "hunter") of 61 passed along Olti and while crossing the border it clashed with the armed groups of Turks and Kurds. The group was divided into two parts; the one part being led by Torgom, the other - by Vorsord.

The state of group was made still worse by the stroke inflicted from the rear by the Russian border-guards at the command of colonel Brikov. Most of the fedayeens, Torgom among them, died and the wounded were taken as captives. At the command of the same Brikov the Russian border-guards bayonated the captives in the presence of the Turks. Many years later fedayee Hmayak Janpoladyan shot colonel Birkov and took the revenge for his friends on him⁴⁹⁹.

Gabriel Kafian, Barsegh Zakaryan, Martik Sarukhanyan, Nickol Mikaelyan, Margar Zhamharyan, Sargis Hovhannisyan,

Aram Manukyan, Mikael Hovhannisyan (M. Vardanyan), Levon Atabekyan, Bakhshi Ishkhanyan, Isahak Danielbekyan, Hakob Hovhannisyan, Simon Narinyan, D. Ter-Danielyan (D. Ananun), Misak Ter-Danielyan (Aramayis) - these are still not all the names of those Artsakhians who selflessly devoted their lives to the struggle for the liberation of Western Armenia from the Turkish yoke.

The haidukish struggle against the sultan tyranny, the rebels and resistance fights did not bring to the throwing off the Turkish yoke. But the Armenians realized that no nation could attain freedom and win a victory without struggle and bloodshed. This struggle did not let the Armenians who had been deprived of their rights, become obedient slaves of the Turkish masters, instead it inflamed and kept the freedom-loving spirit of the people burning.

TRANSCAUCASUS AND NOGORNO (MOUNTAINOUS) KARABAKH IN 1905-1920

At the beginning of the 20th century like their western brothers the Armenians of Caucasus lived in a troubled atmosphere; they were involved in interracial conflicts. The main grounds for the more frequent Armenian-Tartar conflicts were economic, political and religious.

At the end of the 19th century Baku was already an important oil industry centre. Like Russian, Jewish and European well-owners the Armenian business-circles also started to buy the oil-wells of Tatars (Azeris) and accumulate considerable wealth due to their business skills. This circumstance annoyed the Azeris, which were practically outsiders in the economic competition.

For its part the prospering economy conditioned the political life of the Armenian society. The formation of the Armenian political parties, the liberation struggle of the fedayeens and the rebel against the colonial policy of czar in Caucasus caused the anxiety of the local authorities.

It should be mentioned that the Armenians also participated in the revolution that had broken out in Russia in 1905. The czarist government knew well the possible, serious consequences of the united rebel of the peoples, that were under its domain. For this reason, czar took up to a reliable measure which consisted in stirring up religious and national hatred among the rebelling peoples. In this way he tried to force them out of the rebel and thus press it.

The ideology of the Ottomanism and Pan-Turkism had a decisive role in Armenian-Tatar (Azeri) conflicts.

In 1905 the Russian newspaper "Russkie Vedomosti" (Russian news) among the other things informed, "With the awareness of Germany the khans and beks (according to V.B. the khans and beks from Karabakh) organized a conspiracy in Constantinople and taking advantage of the revolution going on

in Russia, they freely realized their plans. No one can deny that the same khans and beks incited the backward Muslim masses against Armenians, Russians...⁵⁰⁰.

If we add to all this the mutual hatred of Christian Armenians and Muslim Turks, the reasons for conflicts will become more clear and understandable to the reader.

Making use of the fact that the Muslim population was fanatic and obscurant the czarist officials and the Turk landowners tried to persuade the masses of Muslim population that it were the Armenians who were guilty in their poverty and misery and thus called them for revenge.

All this led to the Armenian-Tatar conflicts in Baku, Nakhijevan, Shoushi, Gandzak and other cities which took place through 1905-1906.

On February 6-9, 1905 the Tatar rabble assisted by the local authorities assaulted the Armenian districts of Baku and took the Armenians unawares. For two days the enemy was executing its slaughter. The members of the famous families Lalayan, Adamyan as well as many other families fell victim to the infuriated rabble.

In those severe and disturbed days, when the Armenian people was deprived of its statehood and governing bodies, the Dashnaksutiun party took on the responsibility of organizing the self-defence and resistance of the Armenian people. The activists of the party believed that, "If a nation wants to be respected, if it does not want to disappear, it must always be ready to fight and defend itself"⁵⁰¹. One of the leaders of Dashnaksutiun who firmly believed in the above mentioned ideas was Nickol Duman. In those horrible days Duman with its small group halted the offensive of the rabble. Encouraged by the success of Duman many Armenian young men joined his group. He made up resistance groups of 5-15, which guarded the Armenian districts and made secure against any danger.

Being unable to sneak into the Armenian districts the enraged

Turks tried to wreak their rage on the Armenians living in Turkish-populated districts. However Nickol Duman worked wonders of heroism there too by evacuating his compatriots from there. The heroic resistance showed by the city's Armenian population was led by Duman. Soon the Turkish ruling clique raise a white flag and started negotiations.

During all this time the police and the state troops were mere observers. Moreover they even sometimes helped the slaughterers by giving them arms. Later Nakashidze, the governor of Baku, tried to justify himself saying that the authorities did not have enough forces to halt the Armenian-Tatar conflict. Meanwhile many witnesses testified to the fact that during the armed clashes Nakashidze openly helped and encouraged the Tatars (Azeris). The opinions of the Russian society pilloried the bloodthirsty headman. In an open letter addressed to governor Nakashidze, the former mayor of Baku, Alexander Novikov wrote, "I consider it to be my duty to give the name of the culprit. It is you: you are the initiator of the slaughter. You are worse than Kayen, because Kayen killed only one brother, but you drenched your hands in the blood of hundreds of your innocent brothers... You are worse than Judas, because after betraying Jesus Christ, Judas wanted to strange himself, but you find it possible to live with such a horrible sin... You have brought shame to Georgia and Russia against which the victims could complain thinking that you have something in common with those countries. Curse your name for ever"⁵⁰².

The Baku committee of Dashnaksutiun decided to condemn governor Nakashidze to death. On May 11, 1905 Drastamat Kanayan and Martiros Charukhyan shot the governor. Mikelidze and Shakhtakhtinsky who were among the organizers also fell from the bullet of the Armenian revengers. 205 Armenians and 111 Tatars were killed and 121 Armenians, 128 Tatars-wounded during the three-days long clashes. The rabble robbed and destroyed 451 shops belonging to Armenians⁵⁰³.

The impunity and the protection of the czarist government incited the Tatar rabble to execute the new slaughters of the Armenians of Baku through August 20-30, 1905. These new slaughters and clashes were more horrible than the previous ones. The rabble was so enraged that apart from setting the Armenian houses and shops on fire, it also burnt numerous oil-wells belonging to them. During all those events 270 Tatars, 130 Armenians died⁵⁰⁴. The third conflict of Baku was given cause by the manifesto of the czar announced on October 17, 1905 and so the monarchic forces and troops were the active participants of the conflict. However in the given period there occurred armed clashes and slaughters not only in Baku. The Armenians of Nakhijevan also suffered great losses. The number of Tatar population predominated over that of the Armenian population. This circumstance was made still worse by the lack of armament, the participation of many Turkish tribes (not without the allowance of the local authorities) gave no possibility to the Armenians to prepare for resistance fights in an appropriate way. At that very time the czarist government appointed to the governor of Nakhijevan Tatar Alikhanov, who organized the slaughter of the Armenians (in Nakhijevan). For two weeks the Muslim rabble was robbing, setting on fire and destroying everything that belonged to the Armenians.

Sometimes when the Tatars and the sub-units of the czarist army failed to divide their trophy among each other there also occurred skirmishes between them.

400 Armenians fell victim in Nakhijevan city and province.

For avoiding the repetition of the tragic events of Nakhijevan in other Armenian-populated areas, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (party) or Dashnaktsutjun summoned a council during which Nikol Duman introduced a military plan. According to the plan, each village and province (or district) was to recruit a self-defense group. But the group was to be led by a non-local experienced fedayee. So it was decided to send Haji, Aryuts

Avag, Sebastatsi Murad, Keri and Dro to Zangezour and Daralagyaz. Later Murad, Kaitsak, Arakel and Avo took the defense of Agulis upon themselves. Smbat Baroyan (from Moush by birth) started to show resistance in Ghamarlu district. Seyto-Poghos - in Aragats district, Usul Grigor and Aramayis - in Aghbaba district, TsurDalo-in Koghb region. Abraham Gyulkhandaryan, Sepuh and Martiros Varzhapet from (Bulkhan) were sent to Gandzak. Tiflis and the nearby Armenian settlements were guarded by Karo Bastrmajyan. Khanasori Vardan, Hamazasp fulfilled their patriotic duties in Artsakh. Nikol Duman, Sargis Ohanjanyan and Galust Aloyan pledged themselves to defend the population of the large Yerevan district.

The resistance groups of Nakhijevan (Aylapar, Znaberd, Ghazanchi, etc.) not only succeeded in throwing off the assaults of the slaughters, in avoiding plunder and destruction, but they also attacked and devastated several Tatar villages (Jahri, Gharabulagh, etc.).

A serious conflict broke out in Gandzak, where about 20,000 Armenians lived. On November 18, 1905, when Abraham Gjulkhandaryan and Hamazasp, the commanders of the fighting units were in Tiflis, dali Ali and his 300 bandits took advantage of the moment, intruded into the city, plundered and burned it. The infuriated bandits killed 100 persons. Before the return of the commanders Alexan Balasanyan organized the resistance activities of the Armenians. The self-defending forces of the Armenians of Batum, Baku, Tiflis also helped Gandzak. Soon groups of armed riders came to Gandzak. The group from Talish was led by David Bek Melik Beglaryan, the group of 50 from Getashen - by Arustam Yusbashi, Yervand, Alexander Melik Mnatsakanyan, the group from Banants by ghachagh Hambo and Bashkhin.

The Tatar slaughters were encouraged and protected by the governor Takayashvili. The Armenian-Tatar armed clash took place on November 22. Though the numerous Tatar forces first

managed to encircle the Armenian district of the city, the Armenian defenders inflicted several accurate strokes and made the Tatars retreat in a disorderly way. Thus the Armenians emerged as victors from this clash. One after the other they ruined Molla-Jaylu, Dogilar, Sarisu, Todan, Haji-Magadlu, Balulagh, Ali Ushaghli, Bairamlu, Engisha villages, which were the dens of the bandits. The defenders also managed to back the cattle and the property of the Armenians.

However the bloodiest and the most severe Armenian-Tatar armed clashes on Transcaucasian territory took place in Karabakh, exactly in its centre, Shoushi.

The archival documents and the contemporary press testify to the fact that the Turks had secretly transported arms and ammunition to Shoushi and its neighbouring villages long before the horrible events.

The skirmish of Shoushi which started on August 16, 1905, was provoked by the publication of newspapers containing anti-Armenian issues. The fire that broke out on the first day of the clash made the situation still more critical. The fire devoured the considerable part of the Armenian part of the town. From August 16-22, 300 people were killed and wounded, 400 houses, more than 500 shops, all the important buildings of the main street were destroyed in Shoushi. Among the burnt buildings and constructions there were those of the Khandamiryan theatre, the town council, the two Armenian markets, the military hospital, town inn (karvansaran), the printing house of Mahtesi Hakobyan. The incensed Muslims bursted into the Armenian church Aguletsots, put the Koran on the altar and swore upon it "to start Pan-Islamic war against the Armenians".

The desire to plunder incited the Tatars to new offences. In those days they robbed and destroyed the spirit factory of Aharonyan and Soghomonyan in Aghdam. They also burnt the silk-weaving factory of Nersissyan in Ghaibalishen. The defenders of Shoushi managed to halt the Turks in the outskirts of the upper Armenian district. They repaired an old cannon and

fired the enemy, which being horrified and panick-stricken, offered peace.

However, Shoushi was cut off from the outer world. A Turkish detachment of 2,000 tried to enter Artsakh from Aghdam, but the Armenians of Varanda and Khachen led by Hamazasp and Vardan belaguered the gorge of Askeran and routed the enemy. Almost at the same time, the haiduks lying in the ambush between Askeran and Khojalu, encircled a Turkish military unit of 200 and only 6 of them fled.

At that very time 6,000 armed Turks assaulted the villages Kyatuk, Nakhijevanik, Prjamal, Varazabun and Ghzghala. The punitive unit of lieutenant-colonel Ozerovski, which was sent to Artsakh to establish law and order, passed along the gorge of Askeran and shelled Armenian villages.

1906 saw the new horrors of the Armenians of Artsakh. The armed clashes grew more fierce. On July 13 the Turk and Kurd bandits tried to enter Shoushi, but the people of the villages Karin Tak and Ghaibalishen inflicted mighty strokes and made the enemy retreat. Moreover the Armenian defenders led by Vardan urged the enemy leave a number of significant positions. Witnessing the success of the Armenian heroes, the Georgian officer Machavariani sent troops to halt their offensive. The official troops, at the same time, allowed the entrance of many Muslim (Turkish) tribes, which hurried to help their brothers to intrude into the country.

On August 19, 1906 fierce fights took place in Khramort. The Armenian fighters heroically resisted the assault of the Tatar tribes.

Recruited by the human forces from Turkey the Muslim rabble also attacked in the direction of the village Sos. The Turks bursted into the temple of Amaras, robbed and ruined it. The people of the villages Sos, Majkalashen as well as the other neighbouring villages united and counter-stroke the Turkish rabble and killed their commander. Later pressed by the Armenians, the Turks

offered to stop military actions.

In 1905-1906 about 193 people were killed only in 43 villages of Khachen, Varanda, Zangezur. The enemy destroyed the villages Jamillu, Ulubab, Khramort and Ghazanchi. 127 people fell victim in Shoushi⁵⁰⁵.

It should be mentioned that the czarist authorities of Transcaucasus as well as the Tatar rabble were surprised by the resoluteness of the Armenian fighters. The Tartar rabble which was accustomed to win easy victories over defenceless people, realized that it could not break the will of the Armenians of Artsakh.

Still before the interracial conflict of Transcaucasus, in 1905-1906 Nickol Duman had foreseen the Great Genocide and exhorted the West-Armenians to follow the experience of east-Armenians in self-defense strategies. In his book "Project of National Self-defense" he wrote, "I feel the same storm is going to rise in Western Armenia (Tajkahayastan). We just have to organize the self-defense on firm basis"⁵⁰⁶.

Turkey took advantage of the October revolution of 1917 and the confused state of Russia and tried to square accounts with the Armenians of Karabakh. The several hundreds of soldiers, who were returning back to Karabakh from the front were killed in the gorge of Zabukh. The Kurds and Tatars barbarly killed also many refugees from West-Armenia who were trying to cross the border of Karabakh. They arrested the Armenian state and public figures, destroyed the villages of Khanabad, Prjamal, Aranzamin, Aghbulakh, Dahraz, Kyatuk, Berdadzor subdistricts, blocked the roads leading to Mountainous Karabakh. The Russian garrisons and citizens which were in Karabakh at that time were also put in a deadlock. The barbarians plundered the military units of Karyagino district. One of the Azeri witnesses wrote, "An all-embracing revolt has broken out in Karyagino. The Tatars attacked military units, soldiers, robbed the officers and killed them. The weak garrisons of Jeb-Vank are besieged and die of hunger. The reserve of

military uniforms and the store-house of Julfa-Baku railroad have been robbed. During one of the plunders the gun-powder making factory exploded and a large number of houses were set on fire. No post or telegraph office works... Delay is fraught with dreadful consequences for the peaceful population and the remaining part of the Russian troops. The khans and beks ordered the rabble to attack the railroads and goods wagons, devastate the Russian-populated villages of Yelizavetpol and Ghazakh districts. Learning the news of the attack of the railroads the Armenian officers and soldiers were obliged to return to Karabakh on foot, by the mountain and forest passes of Nakhijevan and Zangezur. But many of these soldiers and officers fell from the bullet of the enemy when passing along Zabukh"⁵⁰⁷.

The Russian dwellers of the villages Kotlyarovski, Kurapatkino, Novo-Nikolayovski and Skobolevka (plain part of present-day Martuni region) left 14,000 hectares of arable land, their property and migrated to Northern Caucasus⁵⁰⁸.

The Armenian-Azeri conflict grew more acute in 1918-1920. On May 27, 1918 "The Musavat" party proclaimed the former districts of Baku and Yelizavetpol to be Azerbaijanian territories. In this way a new state was outlined on the map of the world and this state started to claim to Karabakh and Zangezur which made part of the historic Armenia. By that time Azerbaijan had decided to solve the problem of Artsakh-Zangezur by annihilating the Armenians of Artsakh.

The Turks first cut off Mountainous Karabakh and ruined six villages of Berdadzor. The vanguard of the enemy entered Shoushi on September 25. "Thousands of local Tatars followed the army in order to plunder and devastate the captured villages. At that time more than 60 intelligents, Yeghishe Ishkhanyan, the speaker of Armenian National Assembly (Council) of Karabakh, were arrested and sent to prisons, Though Shoushi (the province taken as a whole) surrendered, the other provinces remained impregnable and firm. Self defence groups were organized

everywhere and it is the resistance showed by this groups that hindered the entry of Turks into the district of Jraberd. After this fierce fights broke out in Varanda and Dizak.

At the end of 1918, after the defeat of Turks in the World War I, the English substituted them in Transcaucasus. For their part, they wanted to possess the oil of Baku, so they supported the claims of Musavatians and demanded from the Armenians of Karabakh to recognize the supremacy and dominion of Azerbaijan. On January 15, 1919 Khosrov Bek Sultanov was appointed to the governor-general of the south-eastern Armenian provinces of former Yelizavetpol district and with the approval of general Thomson he took up to attaining the recognition by force. Sultanov planned to organize a "blood-bath" in Artsakh. On June 4-5, 1919 he executed a slaughter in suburban Ghaybalishen, Krkzhan, Pahlur, Jamillu, Khanatsakh, Dashushen and other villages. About 500 Armenians fell victim to the barbarians.

In 1920 at the outset of spring the situation of Artsakh became more dreadful. Military actions went on the territory stretching from Gandzak to Zangezur. The Kurdish units "hamidie" fought in Aghdam-Askeran-Shoushi direction and along the boundary-lines of Kirs-Tumi-Khtsaber.

In the battle of Dizak, the Armenian defenders led by Hovak Stepanyan and Manuk Sasountsi threw off the assault of the enemy, which was predominant in number.

The most tragic events took place in Shoushi in March 1920. On hearing the news that an Armenian detachment had entered the town and tried to snatch the weapons from the Turks, Sultanov ordered "to commit to flames the Armenian district of the town". The Muslim rabble led by the Turkish officers broke into the Armenian districts of the town, plundered, burnt the houses, shops and other important buildings. They mercilessly killed the defenceless population. As it was written in newspaper "Slovo" (published in Tiflis), "The Armenian part of the town has been raised to the ground"⁵⁰⁹. The approximate number of the victims

was 10,000.

In the result of the Armenian-Azerbaijan conflicts 58 villages were ruined, 57,000 people became homeless and 7,000 farms were destroyed. And the saddest fact is that 25,000 people died (20.1 percent of the country's population). In other words Shoushi, that was once a prosperous and beautiful town was reduced to ashes⁵¹⁰.

THE CULTURAL LIFE (1800 - 1920)

At the outset of the nineteenth century, after Artsakh had been annexed to Russia, the cultural life experienced a great advance. This advance was also conditioned by the phenomena peculiar to the preliminary accumulation of capital. Life set forth new tasks for the cultural workers and they considered it to be their duty to teach the people to read and write and enlighten their minds.

The new time demanded that the education of the young generation should pursue its requirements and use the progressive methods of pedagogy and the common educational system.

At the beginning of the century there were schools working adjacent to Gandzasar, St. Hakoba temple and the church of Shosh. Hovsep Vardapet (teacher) Ter Avagyan (Artsakhetsi), the author of theological, rhetoric, grammar works had prolific activities in the first two schools. One of the outstanding pupils of Hovsep Vardapet was Poghos Vardapet Gharabagtsi, who in his turn was the teacher of the famous pedagogues Mesrop Taghiadyan and Stepanos Nazaryan.

As told by Mesrop Taghiadyan the "Wise" Vardapet Hovsep Artsakhetsi and Poghos Karabakhetsi had been invited by the richmen of Shoushi, who wanted to give their sons good and high-quality education⁵¹¹.

It is important to note that early in the 19th century Shoushi had already become one of the economic, intellectual and cultural centers of the Armenians of Transcaucasus.

The foreign visitors sometimes called it "Armenian Small Paris"⁵¹².

According to the national census of 1862-63, 14,897 Armenians lived in Baku and 19,765 - in Shoushi⁵¹³. The prospering Armenian town attracted people of different nationalities and countries.

August Ditrikh and Filitsian Zarembo, the representatives of the "Evangelic Preaching Society" of Bazel (Switzerland) came to Shoushi in 1823 and 4 years later founded Armenian high school (college), which trained a large number of teachers and preachers.

In 1830-s there were 25 Armenian schools with 252 pupils in the parish of Artsakh. In Shoushi town alone there were 3 Armenian schools with 100 pupils in 1835⁵¹⁴.

In 1837 the czarist government prohibited the functioning of the "Evangelic Preaching Society" in Shoushi. In the same year Baghdasar Mitropolitan (1775-1854), one of the offsprings of Hasan-Jalalyans dynasty was appointed by the imperial command to the head of Karabakhian consistory which was transferred to Shoushi. The metropolitan greatly contributed to the progress of education and culture in Artsakh. The parish school of Shoushi was founded by his efforts in 1838 and functioned till the tragic events of 1920. Leo, the outstanding historian (from Shoushi by birth), wrote "History of the religious school of the Karabakhian Armenian parish" and dedicated it to the 75th anniversary of the school. The work was published in Tiflis in 1914 with the sponsorship of the same parish school. The school won a special fame during the supervision of P.Shanshyan, Kh.Stepane, V.Papajanyan, Gh.Aghayan.

P.Proshyan, Makar Barkhudaryan, S.Mandinyan, M.Abeghyan, L.Manvelyan, E.Lalayan, A.Kanayan, St.Demuryan, Vrt.Papazyan, H.Ajaryan, A.Chilingaryan, Nickol Abalyan, Spiridon Melikyan, L.Takhtajyan (the father of academician Armen Takhtajyan), A.Ter-Poghosyan, H.Musayelyan, Kh.Samvelyan and the others ranked to the best teachers of the school. They changed the old methods of education and upbringing, made up new curriculums, plans and-wrote new textbooks.

Most of the graduates of the parish and the other schools of Shoushi continued their education overseas and became celebrated scientists, cultural workers, state and social figures.

Simon Hakhumyan, Konstantin Melik-Shahnazaryants (Tmblachi Khachan), Leo, Muratsan, Arsen Terteryan, chemist Hakob Hovhannisyan, Gabriel Ghulikevkhyan among them.

Beginning from the 50-60s of the 19th century new schools were founded in a large number of Artsakhian villages. In 1861 new schools were opened adjacent to the temple of Yerek Mankunk, Gtchavank.

The Armenian patriotic workers of culture and education imparted great attention also to the education of the girls in Artsakh.

Thus Mariam Hakhumyan, the wife of the famous capitalist Hambardzum Hakhumyan (from Shoushi by birth) opened a new fe-male school in her own house on April 7, 1867. The aim of that patriotic lady was to prepare "well-educated teachers and mothers"⁵¹⁵. This fe-male school like the parish school worked up to horrifying events of 1920. In 1880 another fe-male school, exactly S. Mesropyan school was opened in Lower Taghlar village (Dizak).

This does not mean that the schools of Artsakh were only fe-male and male. There were also mixed schools in Shoushi and Nukhi.

According to the data of 1875, 18 out of the 52 schools of the Artsakhian parish were fe-male⁵¹⁶.

At the end of the nineteenth century a Russian fe-male school (Mariinski school) was opened in Shoushi. The school had 257 pupils, 240 of which were Armenians⁵¹⁷.

Capitalists (from Shoushi) Poghos, Arshak, Hakob and Abraham Ghoukassyan sponsored the building of a fe-male school. They named it "Mariam Ghoukassyan" to perpetuate the memory of their late sister. The school was opened in 1914 and had a complete course of studies.

The opening of the state real (akan) college in Shoushi was an important event in the cultural life of the Artsakhians. The teaching in the college was in Russian language. About 80% of the

students were Armenians, 15% - Tatars, 5% - Russians and Georgians⁵¹⁸.

The development of education system in Shoushi and in other parts of Artsakh was conditioned by the large number of published textbooks, manuals and other helpful material.

The Armenian printing, as it is known, originated in Venice and for a long time Armenian books were published outside the homeland. The first publishing house was founded in Ejmiatsin in 1771 and the second one - in Shoushi in 1828 by "The Evangelic Preaching Society" (Bazel). The first book printed in Shoushi was titled as "The History of Saint Script". Being dissatisfied with the print run of the books, the preaching society of Bazel printed part of the books in Moscow, in the printing house of Lazaryan Lyceum⁵¹⁹. In the course of eight years the society printed tens of books of religious, moralizing, scientific, teaching content.

After the preachers from Bazel had left Shoushi, metropolitan Baghdasar bought the printing house and it started to be called "The publishing house of the Armenian church administration". In 1837 the house published "The Prisoner of Shilon" by Bayron (translated by M. Zohrabyan), "The History of Albania" by Yesayi Hasan-Jalalyan as well as other religious and belles-lettres works.

After the death of Baghdasar metropolitan (1854) the printing house functioned due to the funds which were regularly raised by the Armenian capitalists. The printing house was again renamed and called "The printing house of St Ejmiatsin".

The new printing house of Mirzajan Mahtesi Hakobyan was opened in 1881 in Shoushi. As a separate book "Khent" (tr-d as "Mad man"), the historical novel by Raffi was first published there. "Nmushner", the collection of poems by M. Abeghyan, "Davit and Mher", studies of the epos, "Novel or history", "Vahan Mamikonyan", "My Memoirs" by Leo, the translation of "Shahname" by Firdusi and of the works of A. Dobe, J. V. Dreper were also published there.

The printing houses of Bagrat Ter-Sahakyan and Melkon

Babajanyan functioned in Shoushi from 1905 to 1920 (March 23). From 1827-1920 about 150 books were published in the five publishing houses of Shoushi⁵²⁰.

1872-1920 saw the issue of 21 newspapers, 19 of which were Armenian and 2-Russian. The first newspaper published in Shoushi was "Haikakan Ashkharh"(1874) edited by Khoren Stepanyan, then came "Gorts"(1882-84) edited by Simeon Hakhumyan, "Azgagrakan handes"(1896) edited by E.Lalayan, "Kharabakh"(1911-12) edited by N.Yaramishyan, Sim.Ter-Minasyan, Russian Weekly newspaper "Shoushinski listok"(1911), "Shoushinskaya zhizn"(1913-14), "Miutyun"(1913), "Mirazh"(1913-17), "Tsitsagh"(1916), the political newspaper "Paikar"(1914-17), the weekly "Pailak"(1915-17) edited by Khachik Samvelyan, monthly "Tsiatsan"(1915-19) edited and published by M.Petrosyan, "Aparazh"(1917-19) two-weekly edited by H.Musa-yelyan, "Sring"(1917), "Ashakert"(1912) pupils' magazines, weekly "Netsuk"(1917) edited by A.Hovhannisyan, "Yerand"(1917), the weekly "Artsakh"(1919), "Gharabaghi surhandak"(1919, edited by A.Kamalyan), "Nor Kyank" weekly (1919).

The periodicals published in Shoushi reflected the ideology of different social and political groups. They had their own attitudes towards the urgent social-political as well as agricultural, national liberation, national culture and the other issues.

In the period discussed Armenology also experienced great advance.

In 1829 "The Brief Armenian Grammar" written by Poghos Nersisyan, the studies of Hovsep Vardapet Artsakhetsi were published during 1830-1840.

Of special interest is the two-volume literature written by Arakel Vardapet (from Dizak) in the first half of the nineteenth century. The literature was discovered by Raffi⁵²¹ in Gtchavank and deposited by him in the library of the Armenian Ethnographic society.

The work of Arakel Vardapet is a valuable source for studying

the history of the principalities of Artsakh and especially Artsakh-Russia political relations⁵²². The two-volume literature of Arakel Vardapet also contained interesting information (material) about the inroads of Tamerlane.

One of the distinguished culture workers of Artsakh in the second half of the nineteenth century was Mirza Farukh (Harutyun Gharabaghtsi). He was born in the village Taghut, in 1798. During the Russian-Persian war of 1805, the seven year old Harutyun was taken as captive. Years later he was taken into service in the Persian court for he had a command of a number of eastern and European languages. The name Farukh was given to him in the court. During the Russian-Persian war of 1826-1828 harutyun fled from captivity and settled in Shoushi, where he actively cooperated with the evangelic society of Bazel and started the publication of scientific-educational works. He wrote a book entitled "Tarikh-Safi" in which he introduced the history of Karabakh from the very beginning up to 1820s.

Shoushi was also the birthplace of such highly merited person as Leo(Arakel Babakhanyan, 1860-1932) the greatest Armenian chronicler, publicist, writer, and literary critic. He touched upon various issues of Armenian history and literature in his 60 studies and hundreds of articles. The works of Leo are absorbed with patriotic spirit and they are written in a highly artistic style.

Most of the works of Leo such as "Novel or history", (1887), "The Blind girl", "Vahan Mamikonyan"(1888), "My memoirs", "The Murdered Father"(1891) were first published in Shoushi. Among the most valuable historical works of Leo are the three-volume "Armenian History"(pub. in 1917-47), "The Armenian printing"(2 volume, 1901-1902), "Stepanos Nazaryants"(1902), "Grigor Artsruni"(3 volume, 1902-1905), "St Mesrop"(1904), "The Armenian question"(1906), "The kingdom of Van"(1915), "The Ratifications of the Armenian question"(1915), "Ani"(1946), and the monographs concerning the history of the parish schools of Yerevan and Karabakh.

Vahan (Khachik) Ter-Grigoryan-Dadayan (from the village Zardarashen, Verin Taghavard by birth) was also one of the outstanding workers of culture. In 1888 he was consecrated into a monastic priest and officiated in St. Grigoris, St. Hakob and Khuta temples. He carried archaeological excavations in Arachadzor, village Kolatak, Sagsaghan castle, Maku, Khoy, Salmast, Urmia, Baranduz, Marand, Dvin, Armavir, Zvartnots, collected numerous valuable documents concerning the Armenian history and gave them to St. Ejmiatsin. He also collected national, folk-lore songs, put down the stories told by the eye witnesses of the Genocide.

The issues of the Armenian history were also touched upon and studied by Mirza Ter-Sargsyan (Mitsar). He became the author of the collection of prose works, which were titled "Katil" and were published in Shoushi in 1914.

The three-volume work entitled. "The social development of the Russian-Armenians in the nineteenth century" (pub-d in 1916-1926) and written by David Ananoun is a study of the problems of the new period of Armenian history. The other work "The National Question and Democracy" (1913) by the same author is also propitiated with patriotic spirit. Speaking about the highly-merited ethnographers and archaeologists of Artsakh we must mention the name of Yervand Lalayan, whose works influenced the development of Armenian ethnography and archaeology. After receiving education in the universities of Geneva and Lozan he became the editor of "Azgagrakan handes" published in Shoushi and founded an Ethnographic Publishing Association in Tiflis in 1900. It should be mentioned that the History Museums of Armenia and Georgia were opened due to the efforts of that Association and the material they had collected.

Shoushi gave birth to Muratsan (Grigor Ter-Hovhannissyan (1851-1908)), one of the greatest classics of the Armenian prose. Muratsan firmly believed that the people of the villages constituted the bulk of the population and were in fact the main

defenders of the homeland. That is why the Armenian village and villagers were in the centre of his works, which were mainly historical dramas. "Ruzan or patriotic lady" (1881) was the drama that brought real, great fame to Muratsan. Besides it was the first work performed on the stage of the Khandamiryan Theatre (1891). Nevertheless the historical novel "Gevorg Marzpetuni" is considered to be the masterpiece of the writer.

In those years the Armenian humouristics also developed rapidly. One of the celebrated writers of the genre was Constantine Melik-Shahnazaryan (Tmblachi Khachan), who achieved fame due to the collection "Zurna-tmbla" published in Vagharshap in 1908.

Melik Shahnazaryan also wrote nursery rhymes, plays, made translations, collected folk songs and fairy-tales.

The development of the Armenian literature was conditioned by the wide translation and publication of the world classics. Soon there appeared the first Armenian translations of "Taras Bulba" by Gogol, "Shahname", "Rostom and Zohrab" by Firdusi. The Armenian translations of the works of such classics as Haïne, Geote, Shiller, Bayron, Pushkin, Lermontov, Dobrolyubov were published in "Knar khosnak" literary magazine⁵²³.

The picture of the cultural life of Shoushi will be incomplete without the introduction of its theatres and theatrical groups.

The first amateur theatrical groups appeared in Shoushi already in 1860s. The groups mainly included students, pupils of high school. Apart from performing different plays, they organized literary-artistic matinees and evening plays.

The first steps on the way to founding a professional theatre was made in 1895 when the Tiflis Armenians G. Chmshkyan, M. Amerikyan and S. Mandinyan came to Shoushi and with the help of the local amateur troupes staged the plays "Samvel", "Vardan Mamikonyan", "Shoushanik" and others.

The summer of 1882 saw the performance of "Pepo", "Khatabala", "Who is guilty?" with the participation of Petros Adamyan whom the people loved first of all for his brilliant performance of

Hamlet's part in Shakespear's tragedy "Hamlet".

The 1880s also saw the staging of "Samvel", "Shoushanik", "Yervand or Virgin Sandukht" with the participation of husband and wife Safrazyans⁵²⁴. The first professional theatre of Shoushi was the "Khandamiryan" Theatre founded in 1891.

The two Armenian theatres that had been founded before 1891 were outside the homeland; the one was the Tamamshyan theatre in Tiflis (1851) and the other - The Eastern Theatre in Constantinople (1861).

The founder of the theatre was Mkrtych (Nikita) Khandamiryan, who received good theatrical education in Paris. In a very short time the theatre won fame all over Caucasus. The press of the time wrote much about the activities of the theatre and its actors⁵²⁵.

119 performances were staged during 5 years (1891-1896)⁵²⁶. The theatre mainly staged the works of such playwrights as H. Paronyan, Shirvanzade, Pushkin, Gogol, Lermontov, Ostrovski, Naidonov, Chekhov, Nemirovich-Danchenko, west-european writers Ibsen, Servantes, Shiller, Molier, Hugo, Giacometti, Zuderman and the others. Unfortunately Khandamiryan Theatre burnt to its grounds during the tragic events of Shoushi in 1905. However, the Armenian (Artsakhian) theatrical troupes continued to perform their plays in the parish school of Shoushi; in the hall of the house of Melik Haikazyan, and the town club.

Such popular artists as Siranuysh, G. Petrossyan, H. Abelyan, G. Avetyan, H. Zarifyan, V. Papazyan, A. Voskanyan, O. Gulazyan came on tours to Artsakh. Artsakh (Shoushi) was the birthplace of the famous actors Grigor Avetyan, Gurgen Gabrielyan, Vagharsh Vagharshyan.

In 1910, the theatrical troupe led by Amo Kharazyan was among the most popular and loved ones. There were theatrical, amateur groups also in such villages of Artsakh as Chartar, Baluja, Khanatsakh, Dahrav, Prjama⁵²⁷.

At the beginning of the twentieth century there was only one

theatrical club in Vararakn (Stepanakert)⁵²⁸.

The population of Shoushi also had an opportunity to see circus performance. The first performance took place in 1848⁵²⁹. Shoushi has always attracted workers of culture, talented musicians and poets among them. The melodies of such famous folk songs as "Majkal yez", "Mi lar blbul" were composed in Shoushi by Yegor Hasratyan and Yeghishe Baghdasaryan correspondingly⁵³⁰. From the end of the 18th century to the beginning of the 20th century Shoushi (village Mets Taghlar, Shoushi province) gave birth to the famous goosans (Armenian bard) of the Chitchyan family. In 1895 Shoushi already had its choir organized and led by G. Mirzoyan, S. Demuryan. In 1916-17 the latter staged the opera "Anoush" composed by A. Tigranyan. For many years the choir of Shoushi sang during the holy masses of the towns churches. Shoushi also had its own brass band directed by H. Ioannisyan. The tar-players Mirza Sadghyan (1846-1902), Grikor Melikov (1895-1929), Bala Melikyan (1888-1935), Soghomon Seyranyan (1907-1974), kamancha-players Avanes and his pupils Sasha Oganezashvili (1889-1932), Levon Karakhan (1889-1937) became the followers of the rich musical traditions of Shoushi. At different times such famous Armenian singers and composers as Komitas, Cristaphor Kara Murza, Arshak Kostandyan, Beglar Amirjanyan, Nerses Shahlandyan (soloist of theatre), Grigor Syuni (Mirzoyan), Daniel Ghazaryan, Nikolai Teymurazyan, Yeghishe Baghdasaryan had concerts in Shoushi⁵³¹.

The contemporarists called Shoushi "the conservatory of Transcaucasus".

In the second half of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century the Artsakhian school of fine arts experienced an unprecedented advance.

One of the outstanding painters of time was Stepan Aghajanyan, whose paintings were a kind of connecting circles between the 19th and 20th centuries art.

Stepan Aghajanyan (1863-1940) was born in Shoushi. He received education first in the parish school and then in the Real(akan) college. In 1886 he left for France to continue his education and returned back in 1900. With his paintings "The portrait of father", "The portrait of mother", "The portrait of sister", "Contemplation", "Marietta Shahinyan", S. Aghajanyan raised and set the Armenian portrait-painting on a new, high level.

Margarit Aleksanyan, one of the famous painters of the time (1858-1902), published an album called "Armenian painting". M. Aleksanyan painted "Avetaran", a masterpiece, which is now kept in the museum of Ejmiatsin cathedral.

The celebrated Armenian sculptor Hakob Gyurjyan was also born in Shoushi (1881-1948). First he received education in Realakan colleges of Shoushi and Moscow. In 1910 he graduated from the Zhulien Academy of Paris and started to attend the studio of O. Roden. Among the 300 works of Gyurjyan the following have become most famous and distinguished: the busts of M. Gorki, L. Tolstoy, A. Shirvanzade, F. Shalyapin, M. Shirvanzade, V. Dobroveyn, V. Teryan, Henriet Paskar. Today the bust of Henriet Paskar can be seen in Artsakh State Museum of History and Country Study. This artist had a unique talent for blending the best traditions of the oldest Eastern and the newest European arts. Gyurjyan was one of the first artists who presented the Armenian sculpture on the international arena.

Shoushi, one of the most important Transcaucasian centres of education, culture and economy, had an art-lover and reading public, which spent part of its time in libraries, reading-halls and clubs.

By the efforts and donations of the Shoushi branch of the Armenian Charitable Company a public library was founded in Shoushi in 1859. As it was written by Leo, the library supplied the people with Armenian and foreign literature thus contributing to their spiritual, moral and cultural renaissance⁵³². In 1896 the same charitable company opened a library and a reading hall

which had 4,000 Armenian and Russian books. From March 10, 1896 to January 1, 1896 85% of the readers were Armenians, 8% - Russians, 4% - Turks and 3% - outlanders⁵³³.

Speaking about the architecture of the time it should be mentioned that the architects continued to follow the medieval traditions. Beginning from 1813 many new buildings were built in Shoushi with the principles of regular town-building.

The Armenian capitalists patroned and sponsored Mesrop Taghiadyanin who wrote much about the architecture in Artsakh. Thus according to his works in 1820s the old wooden churches and houses of Shoushi were replaced by magnificent stony temples, two-storeyed apartment-houses, hotels, shops and many other buildings for cultural-elucidative activities⁵³⁴.

At that time the architects of the town drew 4 plans and realized all of them⁵³⁵.

Each of the Armenian districts of the town had its center and church. Kusanats vank (Anapat), Surb (Saint) Astvatsatsin (built in 1816, has not been preserved), S.Hovhannes Mkrtych also known as "Kanach zham" or Gharabaghtsots, Ghazanchetsots (1868-87) were the churches of Shoushi town. However at that time there were magnificent samples of architecture also in the other parts of Artsakh.

We can surely mention the newly reconstructed church of Amaras, S.Astvatsatsin in Talish, the three nave basilica of Getashen, Mariam Astvatsatsin in Arakyul, S.Astvatsatsin in Sarov and the church of Gandzak.

According to the data of 1914 the Karabakhian see of the Armenian church had 222 working churches, 188 churchmen, 206,768 believers, 224 Armenian villages⁵³⁶.

During the 19th century many apartment houses and public buildings were built in Shoushi, Hadrut, Togh, Mets Taghlar, Chartar, Gishi, Avetaranots, Talish, Getashen, Haterk. Unfortunately most of the buildings, especially those of Shoushi were destroyed and burnt during the armed Armenian-Tatar

skirmishes. Of special interest was the architecture of the apartment houses of the Armenian districts. Those 2-3 storeyed houses were built with rough limestone, but their angles, frames of ambrasures, eaves and other decoration elements - with polished stone.

Here is what Hrachya Ajaryan wrote about Shoushi; "Town Shoushi is beautiful ... the houses are mostly built of white, polished, big stones. The housetops are triangular and wooden. They are painted red and green and if you look from a high place, you will be amused by that play of colours"⁵³⁷. As if adding to the words of H.Ajaryan, the architect Rafael Israelyan wrote, "Though all houses here are built with similar "architecture", this doesn't make the town boring and non-attractive. Shoushi is picturesque in part due to the "repetition" of the "architecture" of the buildings"⁵³⁸.

The apartment houses of Shoushi of the 19th century are valuable samples of the Armenian national architecture. It must be mentioned that the Armenians of Artsakh also built a large number of castles and strongholds. Among the most famous castles are those of Shoushi and Askeran (Mairaberd).

Shikakar, the oldest castle of Shoushi stood already in the Middle Ages and the name of the castle was first mentioned by M.Kaghankatvatsi, when he wrote about the anti-Arab rebels of 821. In 1720s Avan Haryurapet (commander) made Shikakar a military center, and fortified it with new walls.

The western, eastern and southern parts of the castle, which occupy about 370 hectares, are enclosed with natural bulwarks and as it was pointed out by Deacon Hakob Shoushetsi "... the God himself fortified it..."⁵³⁹. The northern wall has a 2,5 km long stronghold with 50 towers and four gates. The walls of the castle are 7-8m high. The castle was fortified anew in the first quarter of the 19th century, during the Russian-Persian war. The famous castle (Mairaberd) of Askeran with 1,5 protection wall was built in Karkar valley in 1788-89.

The applied arts continued to develop in Artsakh. There was a great advance in the techniques of carpet-weaving. The Artsakhian picture-carpets, stair-carpets were widely produced. They had all the elements common for Armenian carpet-weaving, but were unique in their own way⁵⁴⁰.

Nowadays 19th and 20th century carpets, soft-carpets, khurgins (a special sacks for putting on a donkey or horse), mafrashs (a kind of big sack), salt-sellers as well as the embroideries made by the Armenian women can be seen in Artsakh State Museum of History and Country Study. Thus, all the above written and commentaries given are evidence to the fact that in the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the 20th century the Artsakhian culture developed constantly absorbing the progressive ideas of the time and preserving the national core.

THE ARMENIANS OF ARTSAKH IN 1917-21

THE STRUGGLE OF ARTSAKH ARMENIANS AGAINST AZERBAIJAN. After the victory in the February bourgeois-democratic revolution the Provisional Government established a special Transcaucasian Committee (Ozakom) on March 9, 1917. By the order of Ozakom on March 13 an Executive Committee of Karabakhian Affairs including 40 members was organized.

The Provisional Government declared Artsakh, Gandzak, Akhalkalak and Sharur-Nakhijevan to be Armenian territories⁵⁴¹. This circumstance as well as the religious intolerance of the Muslims deepened the mistrust between the Armenians and Azeris. This brought to the abolishment of the Executive Committee, after which the Armenians established the National Council of Karabakh and the Azeris - a National Committee⁵⁴² for governing the inner affairs.

After the October revolution of 1917 the political situation of Transcaucasus changed. It got separated from the Russian Empire. The power passed to the Transcaucasian seim (Bureau), which included Armenian, Georgian, Azeri (Turk) representatives. However that unstable unit soon collapsed. In 1918, at the end of May the Provisional Government abolished and three republics emerged from the three parts of the collapsed government. On May 27, 1918 the Muslim (Azeri) Musavat party declared the districts of Baku and Yelizavetpol to be Azerbaijanian and started to claim for Karabakh and Zangezur, the constituent parts of Armenia. Per the peace treaty signed in Batum and by the will of the Ottoman Empire Azerbaijan seized the power over the 2 districts which had been proclaimed by the Russian Empire. So in fact, the conflict between the newly proclaimed Azerbaijani state and Karabakhs became inevitable.

And thus a new state was outlined on the world map, a state which had neither historical nor ethnic belonging principle in its basis. The state was born to realize the plans of great powers and

Pan-Turks and to liquidate finally the Armenian question and as Mirza Ter-Sargsyan, one of the outstanding writers of the time wrote, "The Ottomans and the Englishmen united and created the Azerbaijani state"⁵⁴³.

The newly proclaimed Azerbaijani state hurried to put an end to the self-dependence of Mountainous Karabakh with the help of the Turkish occupants. In essence the actual power of Azerbaijan was at the command of the Turkish army, which organized armed gangs from the local Muslims. The so called "wild division" which controlled Shoushi-Yevlakh road acted especially cruelly. Very soon Mountainous Karabakh was cut off from the outer world and driven into a siege circle.

It was necessary to start a self-defense and to preserve the sovereignty of the land. For this purpose through July 22-26, 1918 the first congress of Armenians of Karabakh was convened on the initiative of Dashnaksutiun party. Mountainous Karabakh was declared an independent political entity. National Council and a democratic Government of seven members were elected consisting mainly of the representatives of Dashnaksutiun party. The head of the Government was Yeghishe Ishkhanyan⁵⁴⁴. At the same time a volunteer detachment was recruited from the Karabakhians of Tiflis. The regiment which was ready to defend the Armenians of Artsakh, also fought heroically in the battle of Sardarapat.

For organizing the self-defense of the Armenians of Artsakh colonel Mikael Melik-Shahnazaryan came to Shoushi from Tiflis. However the events developed to the detriment of the Karabakhians because the Turks decided to oppress the resistance of the Armenians of Karabakh by force. The Turks first cut Karabakh from Zangezur and ruined the villages of Berdadzor subdistrict. Jemil Jahid Bey - the commander of the second Turkish division located in Aghdam set a deadline and demanded from the Government of Karabakh to stop showing resistance and to submit. He also demanded "to avoid meeting Andranik"⁵⁴⁵. The

second (through September 7-11, 1918) and the third (through September 18-22) congresses of the Armenians of Karabakh were convened to discuss the state of affairs, during which it was decided to deny the demands of Turks. At the same time new military stations were founded and new commanders were appointed in the provinces according to the traditions of the former sghnakhs. Sokrat Bek Shahnazaryan was the commander of Varanda, Artem Lalayan - of Dizak, Aleksan Dai - of Khachen, Bagrat Nazaryan - of Jraberd. On September 22, the Turkish army accompanied by the local Muslims, invaded into Mountainous Karabakh and ruined the villages Dahraz, Varazabuyn (Prjamal), Nakhijevanik, Kyatuk, Khramort, Khanabad, Ghlishbagh, Karaglukh. The Turkish detachments intruded into Shoushi on September 25. The Tatar rabble of 1,000 was moving after the army in order to plunder and ruin the occupied villages⁵⁴⁶.

Soon the Turkish command abolished the democratic Government of Karabakh. More than 60 intelligents, Yeghishe Ishkhanyan - the speaker of the National Council among them, were arrested and imprisoned. Though Shoushi surrendered and was defeated, the other Artsakhian provinces stood firm and impregnable. Self-defense units were organized in all parts of the country and it is the resistance showed by the unit of Martakert that threw off the assault of the enemy and did not let it intrude into Jraberd. Then fierce struggles also took place in Varanda and Dizak.

In October 1918 the Turkish-Tatar detachment of 400 tried to break into Karyagino from Shoushi (through Varanda) The aim of the attack was to destroy Varanda and Dizak. Artem Lalayan, the commander of Dizak, rallied the volunteers of Dizak and Varanda and ordered Aslanik (Aslan Muradkhanyan from the village Kemrakuj by birth) to block the way of the enemy. On October 18, 1918 a Turkish military detachment was completely smashed in the village of Msmna of Varanda region . Several days later a second Turkish-Tatar detachment of 600 tried to intrude into

Varanda from Karyagino⁵⁴⁷. Again the volunteer units of Dizak and Varanda threw off the assault and made the Turkish command order the detachment to retreat to Shoushi.

Soon, Turkey was defeated in World War I and substituted by England in Transcaucasus. And again Azerbaijan wished to occupy Karabakh with the help of England. In those days (November 16, 1918) general Andranik was moving in the direction of Karabakh with his detachment. After he had occupied the hills of Zabukh, Andranik entered Avdallar and was about to move to Shoushi. However on December 1 Andranik received a telegram signed by general Thomson- the commander of English troops in Transcaucasus. In that telegram the general demanded the immediate stoppage of the moneuvre. The next day (December 2) the military legation of the Antant arrived in Avdallar and delivered this time the letter of Thomson which ran, "I warn you. If you don't fulfill my commands, you will be personally responsible for the blood-shed that will take place in result of your acts. Any attempt to avoid fulfilling my command will, by all means, seriously influence on the treatment of the Armenian question in peace conference..."⁵⁴⁸.

Andranik was obliged to go back to Goris. Though general Thomson (representing England) had announced that the issue of the disputable lands would be discussed and solved by the Peace Conference of Paris, he made up prefectures general in Karabakh and Zangezur on January 15, 1919. The famous anti-Armenian social figure Khosrov Bek Sultanov was appointed to the post of the governor. One of the official notifications of colonel Shattleword, who had substituted Thomson mentioned, "...doctor Sultanov is appointed to the post of the governor general of Shoushi, Zangezur, Jebrayil, Jivanshir and he is taken under the protection of English command..."⁵⁴⁹.

Encouraged by such protection Azerbaijan announced a new deadline to the National Council of Karabakh. To discuss the deadline of Musavatian Azerbaijan the fourth congress of the

Armenians of Artsakh was convened in the parish school of Shoushi on February 12-21, 1919. The resolution of the congress was the following, "The Armenian Karabakh has kept the world aware that it has not recognized and will not recognize Azeri rule over its own territory"⁵⁵⁰. The resolutions adopted during the fifth and the sixth congresses were determined in the same way. The resolution adopted during the 5th congress ran, "The political, historic, cultural, legal and especially the economic conditions of the Armenians of Karabakh can never serve Azerbaijan as a basis for intruding its administrative form of even temporary rule upon the Armenian nation"⁵⁵¹.

For supporting the Armenians of Artsakh, the Armenian government appointed lieutenant colonel Arzumanyan to the plenipotentiary agent of Karabakhian Affairs and the British command⁵⁵² at the beginning of April, 1919.

The Armenian government also sent a group of politicians and officers (from Artsakh by birth) with a task of organizing the self-defense of the local Armenians.

Infuriated by resoluteness of the Artsakhians, Sultanov decided to kill the population in the claws of hunger. So he ordered to block all the roads to Karabakh (field Karabakh), execute slaughters and set on fire several Armenian villages. The losses and destructions of the village Ghaibalishen were especially horrible. "the houses of the village were burning, and the half burnt and destroyed houses were full of corpses. Only 160 persons managed to flee. The English, who watched all these from the town (that's Shoushi, V.B.) did not do anything to stop the slaughter"⁵⁵³. This is an extract from one of the archival documents. It should be mentioned that Karabekov and Rustambekov, who were the members of the Azerbaijanian parliament at that time, also testified for that and other evil deeds of Sultanov⁵⁵⁴. Almost all the slaughters and the attacks then were organized and executed by Turkish emisars⁵⁵⁵.

And under such strained conditions the seventh congress of

Armenians of Artsakh was convened in the village Shosh in August 1919. Trying to avoid new slaughter, gain time and centralize the existing forces, the congress decided to agree to a compromise. The delegation of 16 members elected by the eighth consulted with Sultanov and signed an agreement consisting of 26 points⁵⁵⁶. According to the new document Mountainous Karabakh temporarily, exactly before Paris Peace Conference, was to consider itself to be within the borders of Azerbaijan, the troops of Azerbaijan were not to enter Karabakh. The country, as formerly, was to be led by the National Council and the Armenian congresses. Sultanov demanded from the National Council to submit finally to Musavatian Azerbaijan. At the same time he ordered the Musavatian army to move and concentrate in places of military significance aiming at intruding into Zangezur from here.

The eighth congress of the Armenians of Artsakh which was convened in the village Shosh through February 28-March 6 for the discussion of the created situation denied the demand of Sultanov and nullified the argument of August 22, because of the regular infringements committed by Azerbaijan. The congress demanded from the Musavatian government to stop executing slaughters and reminded that "otherwise the Armenians of Karabakh were ready to take up to appropriate measures for protecting their life and honour"⁵⁵⁷. A central self-defense organization with branches in regions was founded in Karabakh⁵⁵⁸.

In March a nation-wide rebel broke out. The attack of the Azeri forces started on March 22, 1920. The most fierce fights were waged in Askeran front. The scanty Armenian forces led by Dali Ghazar threw off the assaults of the Azeri troops with several crushing blows through March 27-29. The Azeri soldiers had to flee from Aghdam and the neighbouring villages. For the shameful defeat Selimov, the chief commander of Azerbaijanian troops, was relieved of his post. Infuriated by their defeat the Musavatian government sent new forces to the front. Already by March 30, 70-